

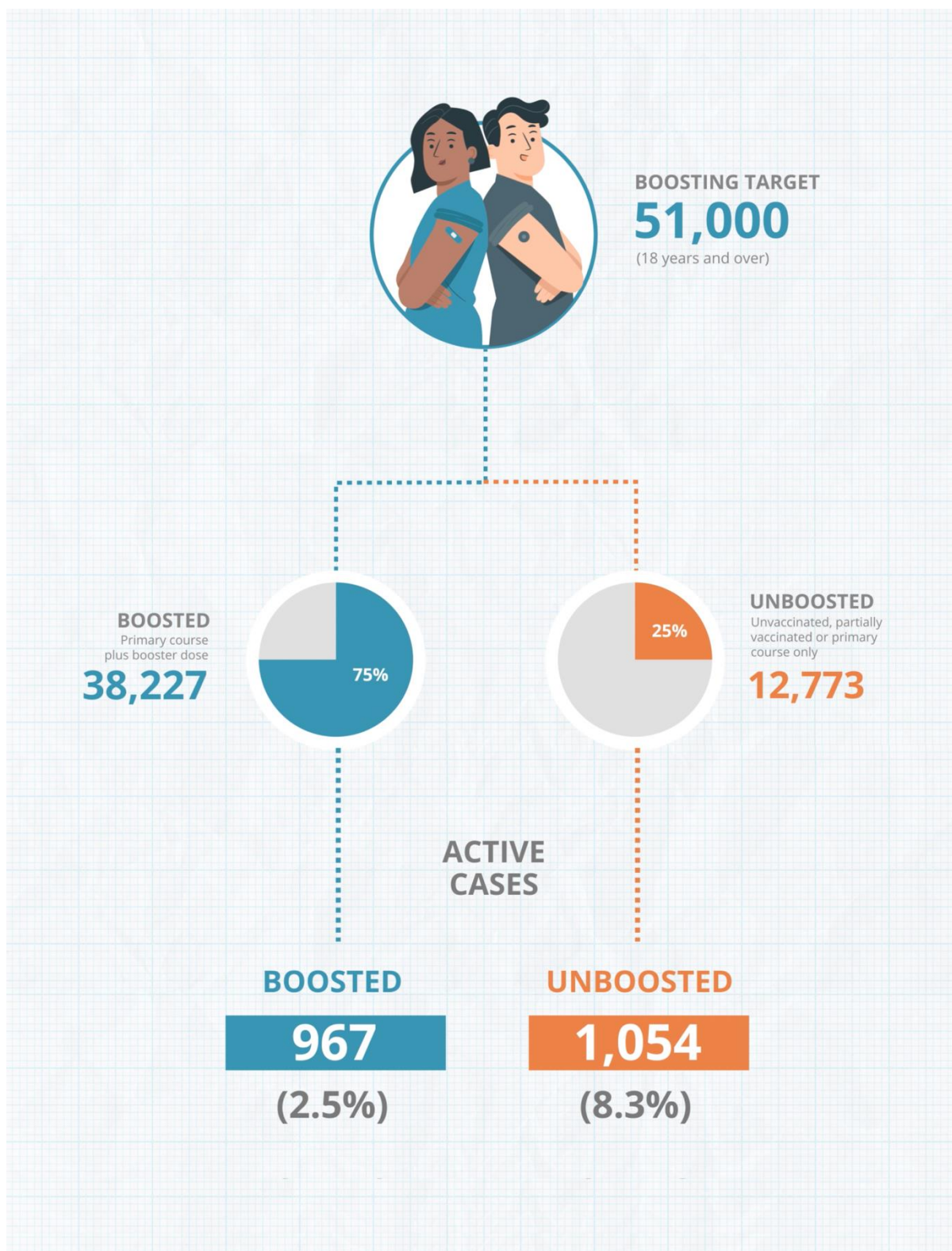
Media Release

Date: 10 January 2022

On Thursday 6th January, 8.3% of non-boosted islanders had COVID compared to only 2.5% of those boosted

Bailiwick COVID-19 data for early January 2022 supports a conclusion that Bailiwick residents who have not yet had a booster vaccination are currently 3 to 4 times more likely to have a COVID-19 infection compared to those who have received their booster.

Using case numbers from Thursday 6th January and their vaccination status, 2.5% of everyone who had received a booster dose had COVID while 8.3% of all those who had **not** had a booster were COVID positive (please see below graphic).



While three quarters of over 18s have taken up the opportunity to have the booster, the numbers attending the Community Vaccination Centre have slowed considerably since the huge numbers daily in the lead up to Christmas.

Aside from offering you greater protection from catching the virus, other benefits of being boosted include:

- Even if you test positive, you're far less likely to experience Covid symptoms — particularly those severe enough to hospitalise you (up to 85% protection against severe disease and hospitalisation).
- Omicron continues to grow faster than Delta with an increased risk of transmission, therefore many more people are likely to become infected. Even if a smaller proportion of these require hospitalisation, it could still be a significant number due to the overall number of infections.
- Vaccines are very important as we progress out of this pandemic. The more people we get boosted, the greater protection there is for the community as a whole. Greater community protection makes it easier to live responsibly with COVID in the long term.

Dr Nicola Brink, Director of Public Health, said:

'We had a fantastic response to the booster programme in the lead up to Christmas. We expected numbers to fall away over the New Year period, but it is now really important that we have a big push now and get as many of those who are yet to be boosted done as quickly as possible. I really cannot understate the importance of being boosted as protection against COVID-19, as quite simply it is so important to help us move out of the pandemic.

'From our own data we have seen recently there are three or four times more cases of COVID-19 in people aged 18 and above who are not boosted, as a proportion of that whole cohort (people aged 18 years and over). We also know that being boosted offers you far greater protection, up to 85% based on recent studies using real world data. In other words; even if you test positive, you're far less likely to experience Covid symptoms — particularly those severe enough to hospitalise you — if you're boosted.

'We have heard various but consistent reasons why some people aren't getting their booster and I just want to go over a three of them. The first is that people believe Omicron is milder so they're prepared to take their chances. Omicron may be milder than Delta but it still has the potential to be serious, or even if not serious very unpleasant. Getting boosted massively increases the likelihood of you having milder disease.

'The second reason we're hearing is that people had a reaction to their primary dose so don't want the booster. I completely understand that for some people the vaccine can make them feel unwell for a day or two, but the vaccine is designed to help prepare your body to fight off the virus should you get it. The virus itself is likely to make you feel unwell for longer than the booster, should you be someone who experiences side effects to it. I would encourage anyone who is concerned about this to attend the CVC and speak to one of our clinicians who will gladly discuss your concerns with you.

'The third reason we're hearing for people not getting the booster is that simply they have vaccine fatigue. They're wondering where it will end and are a bit fed up of

having to deal with COVID now. I think a lot of people can relate to that but I would like to reassure those people that as a person is vaccinated with multiple doses, the immune system broadens its response. We absolutely agree that it is not tenable to boost everyone every six months. It is also important to acknowledge that it is plausible that we need more frequent vaccines in the early stages of disease. As the virus moves from a pandemic to endemic status then I think we will possibly be looking at an annual vaccine. Getting everyone boosted gives us the best chance to get back to a more normal existence as quickly as possible.'

Ends

Notes to Media

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