



Update for key stakeholders

17 September 2021

COVID cases

We had 1,601 new cases in the seven days to 12 September. The infection rate is 500.5/100,000 across the NHS Highland area: 552.5/100,000 in Argyll and Bute and 479.5/100,000 in North Highland.

We have 23 patients in hospital with COVID-19, including 6 ITU. We have 7 ITU beds, currently flexed up to 9, of which 3 are occupied with non-COVID-19 patients.

There have been 188 recorded deaths in the NHS Highland area since the start of the pandemic: 113 in Highland and 75 in Argyll and Bute. This represents an increase of 4 in the last 7 days.

Vaccination

94.4% of people over 18 in the NHS Highland area have received one COVID vaccination, compared to a Scottish average of 91.6%. 87.5% have received two doses, compared to a Scottish average of 85.2%. You can view progress on the national [vaccination programme online here](#).

Details of drop-in vaccination clinics for first and second doses are available on our [dedicated web page](#). This will continue to be updated as more clinics are added. We have plans in place for vaccination of 12-15 year olds and booster vaccinations for relevant groups, and these will be confirmed next week.

Midwifery cover

Recruiting midwives is currently a national challenge, and we are working on several fronts to overcome it. This includes bringing qualified midwives currently working in other roles back into midwifery on a temporary or part-time basis, working with local communities to promote remote and rural areas as a place to live and work, and partnering with Napier University to offer placements on a 'fast track' course.

The West Highland Free Press stated this week that pregnant women could not be treated at Portree Hospital unless a doctor was on duty. We wish to clarify that midwives on Skye, as with the other community midwifery units in Fort William and Caithness, are available 24/7 via our on-call out-of-hours (OOH) service.

Triage is through the local midwifery team and Raigmore Hospital OOHs. Pregnant women are seen in the CMU in Mackinnon Memorial Hospital in Broadford, however if it was an acute presentation in Portree, or anywhere in Skye, the midwife would respond with back-up from the Rural Practitioner Team, local GP and the Scottish Ambulance Service.

The full statement we sent to the paper in response to their enquiry is:

The NMC states that only a registered medical practitioner or a practicing midwife can provide assessments and pregnancy-related care for pregnant women. NHS Highland has a pathway for pregnant women in which women over 16 weeks pregnant must be referred to either MacKinnon Memorial Hospital or Raigmore Hospital maternity services.

The use of the term “legal” was incorrect in this context but is often used as a general term for the public when practitioners are explaining the process.

No advanced practitioner should work outwith their sphere of competence and maternity care is very specialised. From a safety perspective and to ensure care is not delayed they would always be signposted to MMH or Raigmore. If a pregnant woman presented to Portree MIU in an emergency, appropriate care would be delivered while awaiting emergency ambulance transfer as per the pathway.

Scottish Government Non-Executive Directors

The Scottish Government will be recruiting for new non-executive directors this autumn. They are keen to hear from people from black and minority ethnic communities and disabled people in particular.

This is a role unlike any other non-executive position, where you engage across the range of some of the most important contemporary issues facing Scotland including Covid recovery, health, economy, climate change, communities, children and families, good government and more. It is different from acting as a Board member for a business or charity, where you are collectively accountable for the strategic decisions which govern the organisation. Scottish Government Non-Executive Directors are not responsible for the decisions taken by the Scottish Government. The Permanent Secretary is ultimately responsible for how the Scottish Government discharges its responsibilities and Non-Executive Directors provide challenge, advice and assurance to the Permanent Secretary and her team based on their experience and insight. They promote good governance and the improvement of Scottish Government performance, encouraging diverse and innovative ways of working, thinking and problem-solving, drawing on their unique perspectives.

If you are interested in hearing more about this challenging and rewarding role, [please register your interest now](#) and Scottish Government will let you know when our recruitment process launches.

Feedback

If you have comments or queries please contact nhshighland.feedback@nhs.scot