



MEDIA RELEASE

USE: Immediate

ISSUE DATE: 21 October 2021

CONTACT: Erin Greig 01463 705771

Vaccine Update

The uptake of the COVID vaccine programme in NHS Highland has been excellent and we fully appreciate that many are now keen to get their COVID booster and their flu vaccination.

The COVID booster and flu vaccination programme runs until December 2021 and we are progressing clinic plans to allow us to deliver the vaccinations through NHS Highland clinics, GPs and School nurses. We will also have further support provided by Community Pharmacies, Scottish Ambulance Service and others. This requires to be a mixed model due to the complexity and speed at which this needs to be delivered.

Between December 2020 and July 2021 we delivered approximately 441,000 COVID vaccination doses. The COVID booster programme, along with an expanded flu programme as well as continuing provide first and/or second doses means we will have to deliver over 500,000 vaccinations between September and December this year. Over 50,000 more than we did in the first eight months of this COVID vaccination programme.

Dr Tim Allison, Director of Public Health for NHS Highland, said: “The vaccine programme in NHS Highland has been a great success with hundreds of thousands of vaccinations being delivered across a very large, remote and rural geography.

“The first phase was not without challenges but I am full of praise for our vaccination teams, those behind the scenes, and the general public for embracing it the way they did.

“This next phase, which will see us delivering more vaccinations than we ever have before, will be challenging. Not only do we have a larger number of people requiring vaccination we also have a population that has gone back to work or school and will not find it as easy to attend clinics. The reopening of NHS services also restricts our ability to complete vaccinations across a complex geography as quickly as we aim to.”

Dr Allison added: “Clinic plans are kept under constant review and all options to increase the amount of qualified staff available to carry out vaccination are being considered.

“Please be assured we are working to vaccinate you as quickly as we can but we would ask for everyone’s patience as we work through our plans.”

Members of the public will be contacted as clinics are arranged in their local area with detail on how they can get their vaccination. If you are still waiting to hear there is no need to contact your GP Practice as we will contact you. A list of clinics is also available on our website and these are updated regularly.

It is important for patients who are eligible for a booster to wait to be invited to clinics, rather than contact the hub about their appointment. Exceptions to this will be communicated on our website.

ENDS