



## Update for key stakeholders

### 8 November 2021

#### **COVID cases**

We had 1,071 new cases in the seven days to 31 October. The infection rate is 333.8/100,000 across the NHS Highland area: 405.0/100,000 in Argyll and Bute and 307.9/100,000 in North Highland.

We have 27 patients in hospital with COVID-19, including 4 in ITU. We have 7 ITU beds, currently flexed to 9, of which 4 are occupied with non-COVID-19 patients and 5 with other patients.

There have been 223 recorded deaths of people with COVID in the NHS Highland area since the start of the pandemic: 135 in Highland and 88 in Argyll and Bute. This represents an increase of 7 in the last 7 days.

#### **Vaccination**

##### *Timescales*

JCVI advice on COVID booster vaccinations was announced on 15 September, at which point Scottish Government requested NHS boards to complete administration of COVID boosters to people eligible 6 months after their second dose. NHS Highland had already begun its flu vaccination, and began planning and implementing the COVID boosters roll out.

In October Scottish Government requested boards to accelerate the autumn vaccination programme, with target dates of mid-November to complete higher risk groups, known as 'stage 1' (including care home residents, the clinically extremely vulnerable, and over 70s). This was broadly in line with NHS Highland's existing plans.

On 4 November, Scottish Government requested that boards increase capacity to vaccinate all eligible groups by 20 December. This includes COVID booster from 22 weeks after the previous dose in some circumstance, and it therefore increases the eligible cohorts to some extent.

##### *Plans to accelerate*

- Military support and other workforce has been organised to open clinics at more locations already (eg Skye).
- Secondary schools COVID delivery has been planned for November (this will include 16-17yrs where appropriate) - this will be fully complete in December. Flu vaccinations have already been delivered to this cohort.
- Actions to speed up recruitment (eg dedicated 'account manager' in HR, and instruction to release recruits at the earliest opportunity) will contribute to existing plans to speed up.

##### *Delivery model*

- NHS Highland led clinics at 50+ locations across the geography
- GPs are supporting delivery of flu vaccination across Highland except where they have withdrawn
- GPs are supporting delivery of COVID Boosters in the Highland Council areas except where they have withdrawn
- Community Pharmacy are delivering flu vaccination, with a smaller number delivering COVID boosters
- Scottish Ambulance Service supporting vaccination in secondary schools and for the general public (23 clinic days 1st Nov - 20 Dec)
- Council colleagues are supporting vaccination in secondary schools
- 12 military personnel supporting clinics across the Highland council area 5 November - 1 December (subject to review mid November)
- Additional workforce is being sourced from bank, retirees, GPs who have withdrawn, etc and recruitment is continuous and ongoing

### *Vaccination Appointments*

Most people in the Highland Council area will be contacted and vaccinated by their GP. Where GPs are not participating and we are running board clinics, we are now consistently sending appointment letters giving people a week's notice of vaccination appointments.

### *The Vaccination Hub*

The NHS Highland vaccination Hub is a service centre that handle enquiries over the phone and by email relating to the vaccination programme, and you will be aware that levels of demand previously overwhelmed this service. We have increased staffing and are successfully calling back all patients who have called and left messages.

### *Communications*

The [NHS Highland website](#) now lists clinics to the end of November, with more being added regularly. These are divided into North, South & Mid, West, and Argyll & Bute areas. There is also a list of all GPs in each area and to what extent they are participating in the programme. Clinics details are being shared directly with local groups, on social media, and with local press and radio. Almost all clinics are now appointment only, so people should expect a direct communication with their appointment date in the next few weeks.

### **Feedback**

If you have comments or queries please contact [nshighland.feedback@nhs.scot](mailto:nshighland.feedback@nhs.scot)