



Update for key stakeholders

25 March 2022

Covid figures

We had 5,724 new cases in the seven days to 20 March. The infection rate is 1,793/100,000 across the NHS Highland area: 1,519/100,000 in Argyll and Bute and 1,880/100,000 in North Highland.

We have 76 patients in hospital with COVID-19, including 4 in ITU. ITU capacity is 9 beds, of which 4 are occupied with COVID patients, 4 with other patients and 1 is available.

There have been 329 recorded deaths of people with COVID in the NHS Highland area since the start of the pandemic: 215 in Highland and 114 in Argyll and Bute. This represents an increase of 19 in the last 7 days. This refers to the total number of people who died within 28 days of their first laboratory confirmed report of COVID-19 infection and whose death was registered with National Records of Scotland.

Vaccination: spring booster programme

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has advised that everyone in those cohorts should receive a spring booster dose of the vaccine 24 weeks (six months) after their initial booster. Residents across NHS Highland will be invited to attend via letter by NHS Scotland (letters in blue envelope). Our initial focus is those at the greatest risk of COVID-19 infection, including those living in care homes.

There is no need for people in this group to contact NHS Highland or your GP practice, although they will be able to change the appointment date. Details of how to change the appointment are included in the letter.

NHS Highland is using a range of locations across the Highland Council area and Argyll and Bute Council area, including mobile units to maximise the opportunities for people to attend for their vaccine. There will be fortnightly clinics in Tain, Invergordon, Aviemore and Grantown, and Scottish Ambulance Service vaccinators and converted buses will provide clinics in remote and rural communities. We will update the NHS Highland website with information on locations of clinics as they become available. Further work is being completed to enable a number of independent pharmacies to also undertake vaccination clinics to enhance our range and capacity.

The vaccination service is currently recruiting permanent staff to enable a consistent offering to the community and we aim to provide further clinic locations during May but these will be confirmed at a later date.

The expectation is that all urgent cohorts will be complete by the end of June.

Vaccination: 5-11 year olds

5-11 year olds are now being invited by letter for their first vaccination. Children in these age groups who have specific medical conditions which place them at greater risk from COVID-19 will continue to be prioritised. Details of how to arrange appointments are included in the letters.

Children in this age group are being offered a paediatric dose of the vaccine, which is a third of the size of an adult dose.

Those with specific medical conditions or who live with someone who is severely immunosuppressed are eligible for two doses at least eight weeks apart, and those who are severely immunosuppressed are eligible for three doses at least 8 weeks apart.

All other children are being offered two doses at least 12 weeks apart. The expectation is that 5-11 year olds will be completed in August awaiting those that turn 5 years old this year.

Inverness Vaccination Centre

The Vaccination Centre in Inverness is relocating to the Eastgate Centre from Monday, 4 April 2022, where it will run a 6 day a week service.

The service, which has been provided from the Business Park at Highlander Way, will now be delivered on the first floor of the centre where NHS Highland's MSK physio team have been based since Christmas. The MSK service will now move as planned to their newly refurbished location at New Craigs Hospital.

Current situation

Ward GC and 4A in Raigmore continue to be used exclusively for Covid patients.

Raigmore Ward 7C is closed

Raigmore Bignold Ward remains closed

Raigmore Ward 3C remains closed

Lorne and the Isles Hospital Ward I has several positive patients cohorted in a single area

RNI Ward 1 closed and positive patients outwith this ward cohorted together

We have closed bays or contacts in isolation in numerous other wards across the system.

Services for refugees

In light of the situation in Ukraine, we have been asked to share details of how refugees can access health and care services. Refugees should register with all primary care services as soon as practicable on arrival into the area they will be living. This includes GP, Dentist, Optometrist, and link with their local community pharmacy for medications and services such as pharmacy first. More details can be found at this link:

[Healthcare for refugees and asylum seekers - Health rights | NHS inform](#)

[Pharmacy services in Scotland | NHS inform](#)

There are also a few resources available for the patients here:

[Access to Healthcare – The Health Literacy Place](#)

Feedback

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