



Update for key stakeholders

8 July 2021

COVID cases

We had 814 new cases in the seven days to 4 July. The infection rate is 253/100,000 across the NHS Highland area: 205/100,000 in Argyll and Bute and 270.5/100,000 in North Highland.

We have 9 patients in hospital with COVID-19 and 1 in ITU. We have 7 ITU beds altogether (with the ability to flex up if needed) of which 1 is occupied with a COVID-19 patient, 4 are occupied with other patients, and 2 are available.

There have been 170 recorded deaths in the NHS Highland area since the start of the pandemic: 98 in Highland and 72 in Argyll and Bute. This is an increase of 1 in the last 7 days,

Vaccination

As at 6 July, we have vaccinated 88% of over 18 year olds with their first dose, compared to a Scottish average of 87.3%. We have vaccinated 68% with their second dose, compared to a Scottish average of 63.2%. 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.

System pressures

We have continued to see unprecedented levels of demand across health and social care services. Along with this the number of COVID-19 cases across our area has increased significantly – in June alone, we had 1,300 cases, a fifth of our total number since the start of the pandemic. One result of this is that a large number of our staff, across a number of settings, have to self-isolate. This has led to gaps in our service coupled with the start of the school holidays and planned annual leave.

These pressures are happening across all Boards in NHS Scotland currently. While we are grateful that severe cases and hospitalisations for COVID remain low, and would like to thank all involved in the vaccination programme which has helped to achieve this, there remains a substantial impact on staffing.

The impact of these challenges at Raigmore Hospital, in particular, has been quite significant over the past week. The hospital reached capacity with long waits in our Emergency Department. As a result, the hospital is currently at code black status.

The impact on services is also being experienced across our community teams both in Highland and Argyll and Bute. Two care homes are currently experiencing outbreaks and, while vaccination is

largely successful in reducing the severity of symptoms, this does mean that we cannot discharge patients to those homes while the outbreak is ongoing.

Urgent work is taking place to ensure we can treat our patients appropriately and compassionately. Medical, Surgical and Clinical Support teams are meeting regularly to agree the actions that must be taken and to discuss what more can be done to reduce the pressure on services within the hospital.

All non-urgent elective surgery has been cancelled. Cancer and urgent cases will continue and we will also, where possible, carry on with orthopaedic and day case work. This will help with the bed pressures and it will also reduce the pressure on those working in theatres at the moment.

Outpatient activity at Raigmore, with the exception of cancer, urgent, AHP and diagnostics activity, has also been cancelled allowing us to release staff to support other services. Services at our other hospitals are still running at present.

Alongside this we are reviewing nursing rotas, enhancing investigation support, liaising with NHS24 and embedding additional support systems.

Please do all you can to encourage people to follow FACTS. It is also important that as many people as possible regularly test themselves for COVID-19: this helps us to identify cases early and limit the number of contacts having to isolate.

Feedback

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