



# Update for key stakeholders

10 June 2021

## COVID cases

We had 60 new cases in the seven days to June 7. The infection rate is 23.9/100,000 across the NHS Highland area: 19.8/100,000 in Argyll and Bute and 25.4/100,000 in North Highland.

We have 1 patient in hospital with COVID-19 and none in ITU.

There have been 169 recorded deaths in the NHS Highland area since the start of the pandemic: 98 in Highland and 71 in Argyll and Bute. These are deaths within 28 days of a confirmed positive test and represent no change for nine weeks.

## Vaccination

We have vaccinated 77.4% of over 16 year olds with their first dose, compared to a Scottish average of 76.9%. You can view progress on the national [vaccination programme online here](#).

It is our aim to invite 30-39 for their first vaccine in June and we aim to have 18-29 invited for their first vaccine in July. Appointment letters will be sent within the next few weeks.

People invited by letter (blue envelope) are being called via the national system. If they are unable to make this appointment they should let us know as soon as possible by contacting the national helpline number on 0800 038 8013.

People should also keep an eye on our social media and their GP Practice's social media for updates.

People aged 18-29 who have registered using the self-service portal may be invited by their GP practice to be vaccinated or, depending on which GP practice they are with, may receive a blue envelope inviting them to an appointment. In a small number of areas, we are also holding drop in clinics which will be advertised in the local area as appropriate.

## Remobilisation: orthopaedics

We currently have 2,278 patients on our waiting list for orthopaedic surgery. Approximately half are waiting for joint replacement surgery, with the remainder waiting for surgery on their hands, foot and ankle, shoulders and back, alongside some minor operations that are not specific to a particular sub-specialty.

The longest waiting patient has been waiting for 1,086 days (2-3 years) and we have 75 patients who have been waiting in the over 750 day (2 years) category. This group of patients will be the next cohort of patients to receive dates for surgery when our capacity increases at the end of June 2021. 1,358 (around 60%) patients have waited less than one year at the moment and 384 have waited less than 84 days. We have 818 patients waiting between 1 and 2 years.

This demonstrates the variety of different waiting times, as some procedures will be undertaken fairly quickly, such as carpal tunnel decompression, whilst for other procedures, unfortunately, the wait will be significantly longer, for example hip and knee replacement.

We have plans in place to double our capacity to 12 joints a week on 28 June 2021, and thereafter increase further as more bed capacity comes online. We will then have the capacity to see long-waiting patients as well as our highest clinical priority patients, which has been our focus to date. We expect to book the 75 longest waiting patients as soon as possible with the majority receiving surgery by the end of October 2021. It may be that some of these patients receive their surgery in the Golden Jubilee National Hospital (GJNH).

We estimate that a patient listed today for joint replacement surgery (having the longest waiting time) would receive their surgery in approximately 2 years. This projection excludes any additional capacity delivered via the National Treatment Centre in Inverness, which is due to come on stream in October 2022. We will continue to work with the national team and other boards to explore any options to improve on this and bring on additional capacity. We recognise this wait is disappointing and frustrating for people and we are in the process of writing to all long-waiting patients to apologise. We have also established a helpline to communicate with our patients and support self-management.

## **Feedback**

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