



Update for key stakeholders

24 September 2021

COVID cases

We had 1,050 new cases in the seven days to 12 September. The infection rate is 327.3/100,000 across the NHS Highland area: 431.9/100,000 in Argyll and Bute and 289.3/100,000 in North Highland.

We have 21 patients in hospital with COVID-19, including 6 ITU. We have 7 ITU beds, currently flexed up to 9, of which 3 are occupied with non-COVID-19 patients.

There have been 192 recorded deaths in the NHS Highland area since the start of the pandemic: 116 in Highland and 75 in Argyll and Bute. This represents an increase of 4 in the last 7 days.

Vaccination

94.6% of people over 18 in the NHS Highland area have received one COVID vaccination, compared to a Scottish average of 91.6%. 88.4% have received two doses, compared to a Scottish average of 85.7%. 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.

12-15 year olds can now attend drop in clinics. We recognise that locations and opening hours may not be suitable so clinics are being arranged across NHS Highland near or at the locations of High Schools. Further information on these additional vaccination clinics will be communicated as plans are finalised.

The COVID booster (third dose) programme will begin shortly.

Mental health

Mental health and learning disability services are experiencing particular challenges at the moment, with increased demand, alongside staffing and clinical challenges. Recruiting clinical staff has long been problematic. Despite numerous attempts to improve the picture we continue to have significant nursing and medical vacancies and further need to improve our recruitment of psychology and AHP colleagues.

To tackle this, and to encourage the development of a shared vision and direction for the service, we have:

- Changed how we recruit nurses, with permanent adverts and a national recruitment campaign for all nursing posts across the Board
- Changed the Associate Lead Nurse for mental health from a part-time to a full-time role

We will very soon:

- Interview for a Director of Psychology
- Advertise for a new Associate Nurse Director for Mental Health, which will give parity with physical health in terms of professional leadership
- Advertise for a General Manager for mental health
- Start refurbishment work at New Craigs

The mental health management team are developing an action plan for New Craigs as a whole and plans for each ward area. These will track identified improvements and quickly identify any setbacks so that they can be resolved. Upcoming actions include:

- Strategy development – dedicated support from our Head of Strategy and Development (HSCP)
- People & Change Manager – dedicated advice and support to the Mental Health improvement and transformation plan
- External support from neighbouring boards in order to provide additional assistance, capacity and help with benchmarking
- Additional medical leadership capacity
- Estates and facilities - a new group that will manage the New Craigs site to make best use of the current estate
- Twice yearly sector reviews will prioritise mental health given the importance of the current challenges

Feedback

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