



## Update for key stakeholders

26 November 2021

### COVID cases

We had 1,183 new cases in the seven days to 21 November. The infection rate is 368.68/100,000 across the NHS Highland area: 378.1/100,000 in Argyll and Bute and 365.3/100,000 in North Highland.

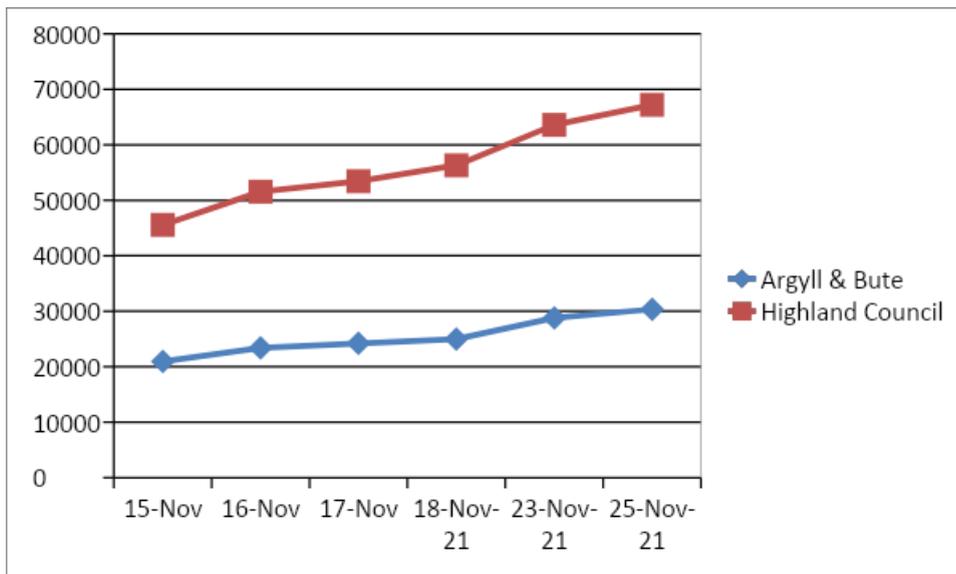
We have 18 patients in hospital with COVID-19, including 3 in ITU. We have 7 ITU beds, currently flexed to 10, of which 3 are occupied with COVID-19 patients and 7 with other patients.

There have been 236 recorded deaths of people with COVID in the NHS Highland area since the start of the pandemic: 144 in Highland and 92 in Argyll and Bute. This represents an increase of 6 in the last 7 days.

### Vaccination

Over 80% of people over 70 in the NHS Highland area have received their COVID booster.

This graph shows the number of third doses or boosters administered.



We have updated our vaccination FAQs – these are available on [our website](#).

### *The National Portal*

Our test clinics on the national portal worked successfully and we are now adding additional clinics in more locations. We are working with the national team running the portal to allow online booking of appointments for second doses, and boosters for people aged 60+. People aged 40-49 should be able to book boosters online from Saturday 27 November. All of these groups will also be appointed by letter and can also attend any drop-in clinic open to their cohorts.

In remote and rural areas the most suitable delivery model is likely to remain GP-led clinics, or clinics with direct appointment, to ensure clinic capacity is used most effectively.

We will maintain other options for booking or changing appointments, including telephone, to assist people who may not be able to book online.

### **Staffing Pressures**

As you are aware, NHS Highland along with all boards in NHS Scotland is experiencing sustained pressures on our services and a shortage of registered colleagues to fill posts. We recognise colleagues right across our organisation are feeling tired and concerned about their ability to provide the high standards of care that they wish to, and we are doing all we can to support them.

We've been actively managing this situation in partnership with staffside colleagues to understand the greatest areas of pressures and to address these. On Thursday last week, we received a letter from our local Unison Branch Secretary, outlining their concerns about the impact of staffing pressures on colleagues and patients, whilst recognising the attempts being made to address this.

We immediately responded to acknowledge the concerns and met with Unison and our other trade union colleagues to understand more about the concerns, outline what actions are already in place and to identify what areas we need to work further on. This was a very constructive meeting and we got a clear understanding of the main concerns.

We are looking at innovative options for additional resource to front line teams and making it quicker for those who are retiring to return to work part time. We're also ensuring that we have appropriate physical space for breaks, fluid and nutrition available and access to support through peers, chaplaincy and our employee assistance programme. We're also committed to ensuring this is a system-wide approach and, whilst some of the focus is on Raigmore and Mental Health, we pick up all of our teams across the Board area including in our communities in this.

We have excellent relationships with all of our trade union colleagues, they are a huge source of support and insight for us and we have committed to working in partnership to address this ongoing challenge. We understand that they will want to proactively share with their members how they are supporting them but our focus is on our collective partnership working.

We will continue to keep board members and politicians updated on our progress with improving the situation for our colleagues, which is a top priority for the executive and senior leadership teams across NHS Highland.

### **Feedback**

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