**Update for key stakeholders
15 July 2022**

**Vaccination**

Vaccination clinics continue to be updated regularly in the local press, social media and on our [website.](https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/COVID19/Pages/Welcome.aspx) Anyone who receives an appointment invitation and needs to change the location or date can call our local Vaccination Enquiry Hub on 08000 320 339.

You can view all vaccination information and other COVID data on the [Public Health Scotland COVID dashboard.](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/phs.covid.19/viz/COVID-19DailyDashboard_15960160643010/Overview/viz/COVID-19DailyDashboard_15960160643010/Overview)

**Dentistry**

Dental Practices continue to work hard to reduce the backlog built up over the pandemic, with a priority on emergency care. However, the nationwide reduction in dental workforce and being unable to recruit to vacancies continues to be a challenge.

Right now there is only one General Dental Practice in Highland and one General Dental Practice in Argyll & Bute accepting new patients for NHS registration. From March 2020 to May 2020 there were approximately 3421 more registrations to General Dental Practitioners than de-registrations.

Both General Dental Practices have agreed to receive patients seeking registration from Dental Helplines. General Dental Practices can offer patients the option of private dental treatment and adhere to current NHS terms of service. Other dental practices may also accept patients directly onto a waiting list for NHS registration.

Recruitment and retention of Dentists and Dental Support Staff continues to be a nationwide challenge that has been exacerbated during Covid, but is an ongoing historical challenge for NHS Highland. Health Board run Public Dental Services (PDS) provide specialist services and access to dental care and advice for communities and priority groups, and offer access to General Dental Services when capacity is available.

As this problem is nationwide and outwith the direct control of NHS Highland, there are currently no straightforward solutions to improve dental access. NHS Highland continues to explore potential solutions, which include looking into available grants and funding from the Scottish Government, Dental Helplines for unregistered patients, and training and recruitment opportunities.

**Pharmacy cover in Fort William**

As we updated last week, there is an ongoing national shortage of pharmacists available to work across community pharmacy, primary care and secondary care pharmacy.

Unfortunately, due to rising cases of COVID and a national shortage of available locum community pharmacists this has led to some unplanned closures. Community pharmacies cannot legally open/operate unless under the supervision of a registered pharmacist.

Local pharmacies are working hard to ensure they are able to provide cover for any absences they have. However, this remains challenging. We are working closely with managers from Boots and Lloyds to ensure they are able to provide cover for any absences they have.

We wish to thank the local communities for their understanding and support to colleagues across pharmacy, primary care and emergency care services during these challenging circumstances.

**Feedback**

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