**Update for key stakeholders
13 January 2023**

**System pressures**

We have seen several instances of red and black levels of pressure at Raigmore over the past week, as measured by our Operational Pressures Escalation Levels (OPEL) framework. This continues to be affected by high numbers of patients with flu, Covid, and trauma resulting from falls or road traffic accidents.

OPEL currently only assesses Raigmore, but we are constantly assessing areas of pressure across the wider system of health and social care, including rural general hospitals and primary and social care, so that we can follow our established procedures to improve patient flow. You may have heard the First Minister announce additional funding for interim care beds, and this is an option we are actively exploring.

The Belford Hospital in Fort William has also been very busy, and currently has a significant number of patients with respiratory illnesses on both in-patient wards. As part of our standard infection prevention and control assessment and containment measures, we have introduced restricted visiting processes. The Belford Hospital is currently closed to full visiting, but essential visiting continues (essential including, for example, end of life care). Visitors should please contact the ward before visiting so our staff will support them with visiting arrangements.

No other hospitals in the NHS Highland area have visiting restrictions at the moment. We would also like to remind people to avoid visiting vulnerable people in hospitals and other health and social care settings if they have flu-like symptoms or are feeling generally under the weather. We are also strongly advising people to think about whether they really need to come in to visit people in hospital at this time. Reducing non-urgent visitor activity in confined spaces such as hospital wards will help to reduce risk to people who are ill, as well as reducing wider spread of flu in the community.

As always, you can help by sharing the message that those who need medical care should use the most appropriate services and for urgent care that is not life-threatening should call NHS 24 on 111.

**National Treatment Centre**

We are pleased to share that the official opening of the National Treatment Centre Highland will be on 5 June. The Centre will open to our first patients in April.

**Feedback**

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