Issue 77 |26th May 2022

Elected Members Update

for local MPs, MSPs and
Councillors

This fortnightly update is part of our on-going commitment to keep elected members informed of the latest developments at NHS Fife that may be of interest to you and your constituents. We would also encourage you to regularly visit and refer your constituents for the latest news and updates from NHS Fife on our [**website**](http://www.nhsfife.org): or follow us on our social media channels -[**Twitter**](http://www.twitter.com/nhsfife)**,**[**Facebook**](http://www.facebook.com/nhsfife)**,**[**Instagram**](http://www.instagram.com/nhsfife)**.**

**Enquiries**

To ensure accurate and timely responses from NHS Fife, all enquiries from elected members should be directed to the NHS Fife Chief Executive Office for response and co-ordination at fife.chiefexecutive@nhs.scot. Members are politely asked not to approach services or individual members of staff directly for responses.

**Main updates**

**Hospital visiting restrictions eased to two visitors**

Restrictions on hospital visiting in most areas have now been relaxed to two visitors each day at any time. Visiting was previously limited to a single visitor to reduce the risk of Covid spreading, but with a reduction of confirmed cases in our hospitals and across the wider community, these restrictions are being gradually relaxed. More information is available [here](https://bit.ly/3Gfu30c).

**High Valleyfield Medical Practice**

We have been approached by Elected Members and local media outlets to provide an update on the challenges being experienced by High Valleyfield Medical Practice. As has been well-documented, there is a UK-wide shortage of GPs, and this is making recruitment incredibly difficult in Fife. NHS Fife has been working for some time to support Valleyfield Medical Practice recruit additional GPs, however, despite significant efforts, no permanent appointments have been made. While efforts continue, the practice continues to be staffed by salaried and locum GPs, with the support of advanced nurse practitioners, practice pharmacists, physiotherapy staff, and mental health nursing. Several actions have already been taken to ensure patients have access to services, including changes to the appointment system and arrangements for ordering repeat prescriptions. We are committed to improving local healthcare provision in High Valleyfield in the medium and longer-term, and we are exploring a range of measures to enable us to do that. We acknowledge there have been issues for patients calling the practice by phone. To help alleviate this, the telecommunications system was upgraded, and the number of phone lines was increased to provide staff with greater capacity to respond to phone calls. The practice has also changed its process for ordering repeat prescriptions to bring these into line with best practice and provide more capacity for over-the-phone triage.

**Recruitment of new Chair**

Scottish Ministers are currently working to recruit a new Chairperson of NHS Fife, with the Rt Hon Tricia Marwick’s term due to end in December. Mrs Marwick will remain in the role until her term ends. More information is available [here](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/factsheet/2020/03/public-appointments-news-releases/documents/nhs-fife/chair-reappointed-to-fife-nhs-board/chair-reappointed-to-fife-nhs-board/govscot%3Adocument/NHS%2BFife%2B-%2BChair%2Breappointment%2B-%2BNews%2Brelease%2BKR.docx?forceDownload=true)

**Early diagnosis of liver disease**

Following a news release from a local MSP, we were asked to respond to claims that clinical processes for the early diagnosis of liver disease were not in place in Fife. We stated that NHS Fife does have clinical processes in place to support the detection of liver disease in its early stages, and indeed has done for some time. Our local gastroenterology team is continually making improvements to its referral pathways to ensure ease of access to the service. A notable development in this work was the introduction of *Fibroscan* in summer 2021, which is a non-invasive test to aid the early diagnosis of liver disease. Further, earlier this year NHS Fife became only the second Health Board in Scotland to make the Intelligent Liver Function Test (iLFT) early detection lab system available to General Practitioners in Fife, which allows for investigations to be made automatically when abnormalities in blood tests are detected.

**Learning disability ward staffing**

We were asked by a local newspaper to respond to concerns that had been raised over staffing within learning disability wards at Lynebank Hospital , Dunfermline. The Fife Health and Social Care Partnership, which has responsibility for the service, responded by stating that:

*“Staffing levels within the learning disability service, like many other areas, has at times been impacted by Covid, either due to absence associated with the virus or the requirement to isolate. Staffing levels within the service, like all our services, are reviewed daily to support and address any challenges it faces. The safety of patients and staff is our highest priority and staffing levels are continually monitored across the service. To minimise the impact of Covid, the staff working within the service have worked across the four learning disability wards at Lynebank Hospital to ensure better resilience across the whole service. Working within our learning disability wards can be incredibly complex due to the complex needs of the patients, and staff within the service work incredibly hard to ensure patients receive good quality care. In addition to the undoubted dedication they show, the staff working within our learning disability service are highly skilled and specially trained, which can make recruitment more challenging. Despite this, work is underway to actively help us try to recruit both experienced and newly qualified learning disability nursing staff to bolster our clinical teams. We recognise the pressures that existing staff have experienced, and we continue to ensure that a range of support remains in place. Where staff have concerns about any aspect of their role, we listen, and there are well-established processes across NHS Scotland to enable staff to highlight any potential issues in order that they can be looked into and addressed.”*

**Methilhaven Surgery**

NHS Fife is to take over the running of Methilhaven GP Surgery on the 1st of August, after the practice partners gave notice of their intention to terminate their General Medical Services contract. Methilhaven Practice has a patient list of around 6,000 people and work is already underway to develop contingency plans to ensure that patients continue to have access to local services until more permanent arrangements are made. The current premises on Methilhaven Road are owned by the Practice partners rather than NHS Fife, and we have been informed that that the building will shortly be marketed for sale. The surgery will, therefore, move temporarily to new premises within the nearby Randolph Wemyss Memorial Hospital and work has already begun to prepare and redevelop an existing part of the hospital to ensure it is fit-for-purpose. The remaining members of the practice team will continue to work with the surgery to ensure continuity for patients.

**Covid vaccination**

**Local vaccination overview**

Our covid vaccination programme continues to focus on providing booster vaccination opportunities to people over the age of 75, those over the age of 12 who are immunosuppressed or clinically vulnerable, and those who are classified as housebound and unable to attend one of our community clinics.

**Guidance published on autumn vaccinations**

The Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has published interim advice on autumn COVID-19 booster vaccinations. The guidance advises that boosters should be made available for more vulnerable adults and frontline social care and health workers, to maintain their protection over the winter. NHS Fife is carefully considering this guidance and how best to incorporate it into future vaccination planning. The full guidance can be viewed [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jcvi-provides-interim-advice-on-an-autumn-covid-19-booster-programme).

**Mandatory staff vaccination**

Following requests from local and national media outlets to confirm a position from Health Boards on mandatory vaccination, we have confirmed that healthcare staff in Fife are not mandated for vaccination, although we strongly encourage them to take up this option.

**Drop-in clinics and appointments**

A mixture of children and adult drop-in clinics are being held this week. More information on mobile clinics and drop-in sessions can be found [here](http://www.nhsfife.org/dropin). We continue to encourage anyone eligible for any dose of the vaccine to book their appointment via the [online booking portal](https://vacs.nhs.scot/csp) (people who need to recover their username can do so [here](https://vacs.nhs.scot/csp?id=recover_username)) or by calling 0800 030 8013.

**Test & Protect**

**Testing**

Most people no longer need to take a coronavirus test and should follow guidance on staying at home if unwell. Testing remains available to [specific groups](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19#testing) in order to protect highest risk settings and support clinical care. The latest information on testing, isolation, and further support is available [here](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19/).

**Other news**

**Free peer-to-peer online support for young people**

All young people aged 16-26 in Fife can now access free peer-to-peer online mental health support through Togetherall. Togetherall is an online platform, offering anonymous support, self-help resources, local and national signposting, and art therapy, all under the supervision of mental health professionals. Constituents can register [here](https://togetherall.com/).

**Free stress management courses**

NHS Fife is providing opportunities for members of the public to attend a free stress management course across May; delivered via the online video platform, Zoom. The course is based on cognitive behavioural therapy and is delivered by our psychology service. It has three 1.5hour sessions, which focus on learning evidence-based methods of dealing with stress. The sessions are designed to be informative rather than a group therapy session and attendees will not be asked to discuss any personal problems. For more information or to book onto a course, constituents click [here](http://www.accesstherapiesfife.scot.nhs.uk.).

Sharing our messages

We appreciate the support of elected members in sharing our health messages and note that you have already been engaging with the topics we have suggested on social media - we are grateful for your support.

Help us to help you keep your constituents informed

NHS Fife would ask our elective representatives to share our regular updates and guidance via their own channels of communications with their constituents. By supporting us you can help to ensure that we can reach as many people as possible across Fife in a timely manner.

Accessible information and translation

NHS Fife continues to provide interpreting and translation services for patients despite there being no face-to-face interpretation currently. These assets and further information can be found [here](https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/accessible-informationtranslation/).

Additional vaccination information/stats

You can find out about the numbers of people in Scotland who are vaccinated along with data about case numbers, and hospitalisations by accessing the Scottish Government [Daily Update](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-data-for-scotland/) or by visiting Public Health Scotland’s [Daily Dashboard](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/phs.covid.19/viz/COVID-19DailyDashboard_15960160643010/Overview)

All Information correct at time of publishing. Issued by:

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