

**Issue 10|12 June 2020**

## **Introduction**

**As part of efforts to keep you informed, NHS Fife is issuing updates dedicated to our response to the coronavirus pandemic. This briefing is circulated to NHS Fife Board members and Fife’s MPs, MSPs and local Councillors.**

**Please note that following this edition, future updates will be made available on a fortnightly basis.**

##### This digital update includes information on matters including planning and resilience, operational updates, along with signposting to the latest media updates issued by NHS Fife to ensure clear, consistent and timely sharing of information. Updates are also issued on our new public facing Coronavirus micro site ([*http://coronavirus.nhsfife.org*](http://coronavirus.nhsfife.org)) which provides a hub of information and advice as well as our established, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages.

## **Hot Topics**

**Local contact tracing helping to reduce spread of virus**

We are urging people in Fife with any symptoms of coronavirus to access testing as part of the effort to reduce the spread of the virus. Last month the Scottish Government announced the launch of the ‘Test and Protect’ programme, enabling anyone in Scotland who developed symptoms of coronavirus to be tested. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste. Those with symptoms must get tested as soon as possible and this can be requested using the UK Government Citizens’ Portal at: <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 0800 028 2816. Individuals can choose whether to attend one of the UK Government testing sites or request a home testing kit to be delivered to their home. The lockdown has helped contribute to a reduction in the transmission of infection. The easing of lockdown measures may to lead to a gradual increase in the numbers of those developing the virus. The close contacts of those who contract the virus will then require to be traced in order to limit onward transmission.

Contact tracing is an established method of reducing transmission of communicable disease and NHS Fife’s Public Health Team is well-versed in carrying out the process.    It is part of the national Test and Protect approach to containing the virus. The key steps in this programme are:

* Identifying people who have the virus
* Tracing those who have been in close contact with an infected person for a long enough period of time to be at risk of infection
* Supporting these close contacts to self-isolate, so that if they have the virus they are less likely to transmit it to others

A new software system was developed nationally to assist in the tracing contacts of those who test positive for COVID-19 and NHS Fife was one of three Health Boards chosen to pilot its use. The new software enables Health Boards to perform contact tracing faster and on a much larger scale than could have been done previously, while also contributing towards building an informed picture of the prevalence of the virus nationally. NHS Fife has rapidly expanded its contact tracing team with a programme of training completed and providing support to staff in the use of the new software. While the numbers of those requiring contact tracing remains very low currently, more than 30 staff have already been trained in using the new software and it is anticipated that around 50 staff will be available for this task each day by the end of June 2020. This will flex in accordance with Scottish Government guidance as needed. The numbers of contacts traced across Scotland is published by Public Health Scotland (<https://publichealthscotland.scot/>) at 12pm each Wednesday.

**Service remobilisation plan**

We continue to work on ways to gradually remobilise some of our clinical services. At our board meeting on 27th May, a report was considered that sets out how take forward the restart of clinical services across Fife. This 'Remobilisation Plan' is clinically led and takes into account a number of key considerations:

* The impact of physical distancing on our patient flow and capacity; as well as continuing to ensure a safe working environment for staff.
* Continuing to use digital solutions to support outpatient services into our daily working practices.
* Making sure those patients most in need are prioritised for care.
* The continued importance of communication – with staff, patients, and the wider public.

Our immediate priority is to outline the steps we will take to gradually, cautiously, and in phases, move towards a new normality. Our short term future will include 'living with Covid-19' so we need to ensure services remain flexible and adaptable until the virus remains suppressed to very low levels and is no longer considered a significant threat to public health – in other words, when we reach, and not before, Phase 4 of the Scottish Government's Route Map. The current priorities include unscheduled care, primary care, cancer services, mental health, outpatients and capacity and flow through the whole system. The remobilisation oversight group, co-chaired by the Board Medical and Nurse Directors, meets each week and is ensuring that the restart of services is safe and patient centred.

**Testing in care homes**

NHS Fife’s specialist team has been undertaking testing of residents and staff across Fife’s care homes. Testing is currently carried out in homes whenever a resident is displaying symptoms. Samples are taken the same day or next day when suspected cases are reported, and results are usually available within 24 hours. Where there any confirmed cases of staff or residents, enhanced testing is carried out meaning all care home staff and residents are tested regardless of whether they are symptomatic or not. Furthermore, a new testing portal has been launched to enable local care homes to request weekly covid-19 testing for staff.

## **Updates**

**Reminder issued around dangers of blue-green algae**

Following an initial update in April, we are again reminding people to be on the lookout for blooms of potentially hazardous blue-green algae (also known as Cyanobacteria) in Fife's waterways. Blue-green algae are tiny organisms which develop naturally in lochs, ponds, reservoirs, rivers and in the sea. They are a common seasonal occurrence and waters which have been affected by agricultural, domestic or industrial discharges are most at risk of developing the algae.In still waters, the algae can multiply during the summer to such an extent that they discolour the water making it appear green, blue-green or greenish brown. Shoreline mats of blue-green algae may appear and are usually coloured brown to black. Sometimes a scum may form on the surface of the water. This scum can appear in different places at different times, but is most commonly found near the shoreline. People and animals can be affected as a result of direct contact with water affected by blue-green algae and NHS Fife is advising the public, especially dog owners, to be alert to the blooms as temperatures rise. Those who accidentally swallow affected water can suffer from complaints such as skin rashes, eye irritation, vomiting, diarrhoea, or pains in muscles and joints. These symptoms are usually mild, but in some cases, can be severe. The risk posed by blue-green algae to small animals like dogs is significant over the summer months as they tend to drink more water in the heat and may eat shoreline algal crusts. Where applicable, dog owners should prevent their pets from coming into contact with water which could be affected. Fish caught in waters affected by blue-green algae should not be eaten and should not be fed to pets.

**Importance of digital services to reduce health inequalities**

There has been a significant work carried out over recent years to support those in our most deprived areas and NHS Fife has been working with our local authority partners and the third sector to address the social and economic determinants of health. Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that a number of services have been delivered remotely to ensure that local people could continue to access vital healthcare support and advice. We recognise the opportunities that this type of technology can offer moving forward; however, we are clear that this has to be part of a flexible approach including face to face community-based services. The relationships between healthcare professionals and those in greatest need are crucial if we are to support people to engage with health and social care services, and take the steps necessary to improve their chances of living longer, healthier lives. Ultimately, we want to make health and social care services in Fife as accessible as possible in order that we can support those who find it most difficult to use our services, as these are often the most likely to experience the greatest levels of ill health.

**Alcohol, drug and tobacco support during lockdown**

We are encouraging people across Fife to take stock of the amount of alcohol, tobacco and/or drugs that they are using during lockdown. We are aware that some people have been using these substances as mechanisms to cope with the stresses of isolation, uncertainty and other factors connected to the imposed restrictions. We have been using social media to make people aware that there is support available, and signposting to resources that could help them or their families throughout what is a challenging period.

**Breastfeeding support awareness**

We are reminding families that breastfeeding support is continuing – both locally and nationally. Across Fife, there are breastfeeding support workers helping women to navigate their breastfeeding journey. There is also a national helpline – Parent Club – which can be reached on 0300 100 0212 to provide guidance and information.

**Fife school nurse service helpline introduced**

NHS Fife – working with the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership – has introduced an accessible, confidential, and virtual space for secondary school aged pupils to discuss their health and wellbeing. Health Zone provides one to one support, signposting and onward referrals for young people and can be reached Monday to Friday between 11AM and 1PM on 01592 729 393.

**Volunteers Week 2020**

Last week, NHS Fife coordinated in a range of online activities aimed at celebrating the important role our volunteers play. In the main, the restrictions put in place due to COVID-19 have meant that volunteering has had to be suspended. However, we greatly value the important role our volunteers play and wanted to make sure that they continued to receive recognition during this difficult time.

**Dementia Awareness Week 2020**

The social restrictions brought about by COVID-19 have made living with dementia even more challenging. Whilst dementia awareness week activities were more limited than usual this year, we wanted to make sure that families and carers had the resources they need to ensure their loved ones remain connected during lockdown – staying connected is a vital facet of living well with dementia. Our week-long social media campaign focussed on technology and signposted to resources, apps and initiatives where people with dementia are harnessing tech to stay connected.

**Carers Week 2020**

This week, we took to social media to celebrate the crucial role that carers play - not only in supporting the healthcare and social work system, but throughout our whole society. Our Chief Executive, Carol Potter, recorded a video message thanking carers for the incredible and selfless work that they do and encouraging people to take a moment to appreciate their contribution throughout this pandemic.

## **Visiting & Service Update**

**Changes to services/visiting**

The latest information around changes to services, access and visiting can be found in a new area of our new micro site: <https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/changes-to-services/>

## **Public Health Update**

**Covid-19 local data**

You can find the number of confirmed cases, people in hospital and ICU in Fife here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-data-for-scotland/>

Local information around deaths is published weekly by National Records Scotland at 12 noon on a Wednesday; this includes a breakdown by setting, and is sourced from all death registrations. This data can be found at: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats>

We have produced a handy info graphic that we publish every week on the Know Fife website summarising the above data: <https://know.fife.scot/>

## **General Information**

**Stay in touch**

##### NHS Fife tries at all times to be open and transparent with elected members. However, we need to manage enquiries to ensure that urgent work is not disrupted. To help you and to help us we are asking that all emails are directed in the first instance to a central email address. To ensure accurate and timely responses all political enquiries - letters and emails - should be directed to the NHS Fife Chief Executive Office for response and co-ordination. Enquiries should be emailed to a dedicated email address: **fife-uhb.chiefexecutive@nhs.net**

The Chief Executives’ Office will formally acknowledge receipt of all letters and emails and coordinate a response from services to ensure that all enquiries are responded to in a timely manner. Elected members are politely asked not to approach services directly for responses and instead direct all enquiries to the Chief Executive’s Office. Also, during this busy period can we ask that you make use of the excellent public information available on NHS Inform and the Scottish Government website and only come to us if the request relates specifically to Fife.

**Accessible information and translation**

NHS Fife continues to provide interpreting and translation services for patients despite there being no face to face interpretation at this time. Along with nationally allocated assets, we have published a suite of COVID-19 resources in a number of formats, including:

* British Sign Language
* Easy Read translation
* Foreign language leaflets
* SMS text service for those who may be deaf, hard of hearing, or are unable to speak in the phone due to impairment.

These assets and further information can be found [here](https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/accessible-informationtranslation/).

**Donations and offers of support**

An updated section of the NHS Fife Coronavirus micro site has been launched to outline the process for members of the general public and organisations wanting to assist NHS Fife’s response to the Coronavirus pandemic in relation to donations and offers of help - including supplying PPE. For more information, visit: [**https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/donations-and-offers-of-help/**](https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/donations-and-offers-of-help/)

**Board papers accessible online**

Board papers from previous meetings can be accessed online. The latest papers from the meeting of the NHS Fife Board on the 27th of May 2020 can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/nhs/index.cfm?fuseaction=publication.pop&pubid=51243B5B-C0A2-BDFB-E486CA098F01F08A). Papers from previous meetings are also available, and can be accessed [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/nhs/index.cfm?fuseaction=nhs.pagegroup&p2sid=E44DBB1B-5056-8C6F-C013BB57547CE2B1&themeid=E44C37C3-5056-8C6F-C003CD63C15D8FF0&GroupOrg=270004AD-BB72-8519-4F4524B7837B36DD).

**Helping us to spread messages on social media**

We appreciate the support of elected representatives in helping us ensure as many people as possible are aware of key messages and guidance around COVID-19 and its impact on our services. As such, please feel free to use any of the national or locally produced assets that we use on our social media channels.

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| **National Guidance** **Health Protection Scotland Guidance**Available at:  [www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19](http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19) |
| **Information and Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings**<https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2973/documents/1_COVID-19-Guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings.pdf>  |
| **Information and guidance for social or community care residential settings** [www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-information-and-guidance-for-social-or-community-care-residential-settings/](http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-information-and-guidance-for-social-or-community-care-residential-settings/) |
| **Ready Scotland Information**<https://www.readyscotland.org/coronavirus/> |
| **NHS Inform**[www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19)   |
| **NHS Inform Covid-19 translated materials**NHS Inform has created a toolkit of accessible versions and translated Coronavirus information.  [Download the Coronavirus (COVID-19) communication toolkit (ZIP, 20 MB)](https://www.nhsinform.scot/media/3011/coronavirus-communication-toolkit-18032020.zip)[Download translated versions of our COVID-19 posters (ZIP, 22MB)](https://www.nhsinform.scot/media/3021/coronavirus-covid-19-posters_-7_-languages19032020.zip) |
| **Free Helpline for those who do not have symptoms**A free helpline has been set up for those who do not have symptoms but are looking for general health advice Tel: 0800 028 2816. |
| **Helpline for small businesses**A helpline providing businesses across Scotland with advice and guidance on COVID-19 is open Monday to Friday, between 8.30am to 5.30pm.Tel: 0300 303 0660. |

*Issued by NHS Fife Communications*