Issue 12 | 29 January 2021

Local update

for Fife’s MPs, MSPs and   
local Councillors

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# Introduction

This update is part of our on-going commitment to keep you informed of the latest developments at NHS Fife that may be of interest to you and your constituents, this includes information on our on-going response to the COVID-19 pandemic, remobilisation of our services, service changes and operational updates, along with signposting to the latest media updates issued by NHS Fife. Updates, which we aim to provide weekly, are also issued on our refreshed website [www.nhsfife.org](http://www.nhsfife.org) which provides a hub of information and guidance as well as our established Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages.

# Coronavirus

**Decisions about how vaccines are given, and at what intervals are made by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).  This is an independent UK-wide committee comprised of expert medical staff.  The UK and devolved nations governments act on decisions and advice from this independent committee.**

## *NHS Fife is engaged in the most significant and extensive programme of mass vaccination in our lifetimes. The logistics of this programme are unprecedented and there are many moving parts that will likely evolve, change and require alteration as we move forward. As such, detailed information around elements of vaccine distribution and availability (who will get it, when they will get it, and where they will get it) may not currently be available and will likely be addressed in forthcoming updates. We appreciate your patience during these challenging times and please be assured that everyone in our health and social care sector is focused on getting life back to normal as early as possible and facilitating the most effective, efficient roll out of this vaccine.*

## **We ask that Elected Members do not contact members of our staff directly with any queries around vaccination. Instead, please consult the Scottish Government’s** [**vaccination programme webpage**](https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination/)**, the national vaccination information phone number on 0800 030 8013, or our own webpage for** [**local updates**](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-projects/coronavirus-information/nhs-fife-covid-19-vaccination-programme/)**.**

## Local vaccination update

At our [Board meeting](https://www.nhsfife.org/media/34511/board270121.pdf) earlier this week, we announced that we are on course to meet the Scottish Government directives on COVID-19 vaccinations for frontline health and social care workers, care home staff and residents, as well as local people aged 80 and over. Since the start of the vaccination programme in December, more than 13,000 health and social care staff have been vaccinated and we are on course to complete the first-round doses for frontline workers by the 5th of February 2021. This comes after it was announced earlier this month that first doses had been completed in Fife’s care homes. Fife residents aged 80 and over are the latest priority group to begin vaccination, with GP practices on course to complete first-round vaccinations by early February. People aged 75-79 will be in the next priority group to begin vaccination and will be asked to attend one of the newly established community clinics rather than their GP practice. The vaccination of those aged 75-79 will be phased over several weeks, with appointment letters beginning to arrive for some this week, ahead of the first clinics opening next week. The scheduling of vaccinations has been a significant undertaking but thanks to diligent planning, coupled with the dedication of vaccinators in our hospitals and medical practices, we remain on course to vaccinate priority groups on time.

In line with other Scottish Health Boards, NHS Fife has received a directive from the Scottish Government that the following cohorts must be vaccinated by the following dates:

* **5th February 2021** - *care home residents and staff, and those over the age of 80.*
* **From February 2021** - *those aged 75-80 and 70-75.*
* **From March 2021** - *those aged 65-70, those at high risk aged 16-64\*​*

*(Information correct at time of issue but may change. Please visit our* [*vaccination programme pages*](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-projects/coronavirus-information/vaccination-programme/) *for the latest information.)*

To help us continue to manage these vaccinations, the key message to the public at this time is to wait until they receive a letter inviting them for their vaccine. We will be in touch with them as soon as we possibly can, and they should not contact vaccination venues directly in the meantime.

## Vaccine supply

## Supply of the AstraZeneca Oxford vaccine has continued to be delivered directly to GP practices and all practices throughout Fife should now have enough doses to vaccinate their population over the age of 80 in full. Orders have been placed to supply our community clinics, which are referenced in more detail below, with vaccination appointments for those aged 75-79 being scheduled from Monday 1st February. A robust booking system is in place to ensure that the number of vaccine appointments reflect the amount of vaccine available. In any situations where clinics have surplus vaccine, a system is also in place to offer this surplus to other priority groups, whilst at the same time ensuring the JCVI guidance is followed.

## National scheduling system

The approach to scheduling of patients is critical to the success of the overall vaccination programme. The direction from Scottish Government has been to engage with a national scheduling system, which will appoint people (and reschedule, where required) through a national team and call centre. Our local programme team has regularly engaged with this process, assisting in the design where possible. Significant and robust assurance work to confirm the approach meets the equitability requirements of the people of Fife, and that the cohort data is accurate, has been undertaken. The use of the system was signed off locally on 21st January and letters started to arrive with local people from Monday 25th January, advising them of appointments from 1st February onwards. People will be free to reschedule to a different venue and date/ time via the national centre. Any more complex issues will be passed back to the local scheduling team for resolution.

## Vaccination sites

We have confirmed the network venues – including the recently added Oakley Community Centre - that will host community COVID-19 vaccination clinics over the coming months. Since autumn, we have been assessing a wide range of potential venues for their suitability to host clinics. This involved working closely with Fife Council, Police Scotland and military colleagues to consider accessibility, the safe and appropriate storage of vaccine supplies, clinical waste disposal and whether safe physical distancing requirements could be met. The clinics will open on a phased basis, with the first site offering appointments on Monday (1st February 2021). Vaccination at the clinics will be by appointment only, with patients sent letters by order of their priority group as laid out in the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) guidance. Further information, along with details of our Equality Impact Assessment, can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-projects/coronavirus-information/vaccination-programme/).

## Patients urged not to contact vaccination venues

It is important that people do not contact the health board, their local GP practice, or any of the larger community clinics directly for a vaccination appointment – they will be contacted in due course and in line with JCVI guidance. For general information about the coronavirus vaccine and its delivery, people can phone 0800 030 8013 (available 8.00am to 8.00pm, seven days a week) although will not be possible to book or change vaccine appointments via this helpline.

## Vaccination appointment letters

Vaccination appointment are being sent to everyone in the 70-79 age group over the coming weeks and we would encourage all people within this age group to keep an eye on their post and take up the offer of the vaccine when it is received. Some patients, depending on their specific needs, may receive a phone call invitation from NHS Fife in place of a letter as part of the appointment process.

## Recruitment of vaccinators

We continue to make significant progress in our drive to recruit vaccinating staff. Interviews for almost 200 vaccinating staff took place this week, the vast majority of whom were shortlisted following a successful social media drive and subsequent shortlisting process. A rapid process is also in place for dentists, GPs, pharmacists and other professions to work as vaccinators in the programme, including those who have recently retired or are willing to work some extra sessions.

## Vaccinations for those who are housebound

Patients who are unable to attend our community vaccination clinics, such as those who are housebound, will instead be offered person-centred alternatives including, where appropriate, vaccination in their own homes and further details will be made available in due course.

## Vaccinations for private practitioners

At this time, in line with the JCVI priorities guidance, we are inviting all frontline health and social care staff – including care at home staff - to book an appointment for vaccination. The Scottish Government has reached out to these independent staff groups with a letter providing information how staff can book an appointment. However, if they have not received the letter please advise the healthcare provider to contact the vaccination programme directly.

## Vaccinations for long term hospital stays and over 80s in hospital

Vaccination of long stay inpatients will commence next week, in line with JCVI prioritisation. A plan for vaccinating those over the age of 80 before they are discharged from hospital is also being worked on as a matter of priority.

## Queries around vaccination appointments for over 80s

Those over the age of 80 with any queries around their scheduled COVID-19 vaccination appointment should contact their local GP practice. For wider enquiries they should contact the national helpline on 0800 030 8013 or visit NHS Inform.

## Vaccine progress data

Public Health Scotland is publishing weekly statistical data on vaccinations in Scotland. The report will include data on; the numbers of people who have had their first and the numbers of people who have their second dose of the vaccine. The data for the numbers of people who have had the first dose of the vaccine will be broken down by; age group, NHS Board, sex, and eligibility criteria (whether the person receiving the vaccine was a Healthcare worker, a member of staff in a care home, a resident in a care home, social care worker). This data will be updated every week and will be published within the Statistical report on a Wednesday at noon, [here](https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/). Daily uptake at a national level is published daily by the Scottish Government. We would encourage elected members and media to use these resources as the main source for the latest data on COVID-19 vaccination figures. The Scottish Government’s COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment Plan can be found [here](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine-deployment-plan-2021/).

## Statements on specific coronavirus cases (including care homes)

There continues to be significant media coverage of coronavirus cases across Fife. Statements relating to specific incidents, information on how best to reduce the chances of contracting the virus, and what you should do if someone develops symptoms, can be found on [our website](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns/coronavirus-information/). Please note that we will only release statements related to care home outbreaks after residents and relatives have been informed and if it is in the public interest to do so.

## Asymptomatic testing site

Based in the Maxwell Centre, Cowdenbeath, the site will provide testing for members of the public in the Cowdenbeath, Lochgelly and Lumphinnans area who have no symptoms associated with COVID-19 but who could still be infectious and spreading the virus without knowing it. It is just one of five pop-up sites which NHS Fife and Fife Council are rolling out in different areas across Fife in the coming weeks, along with additional mobile testing units. The community testing programme in Fife will take a targeted approach, focussing on communities where there is a testing need or sustained transmission, using the most up to date data. Almost 1 in 3 people don’t have any COVID-19 symptoms but are still infectious and potentially able to pass the virus on to loved ones, friends and the wider community. Community testing helps to identify if someone is positive and supports them to self-isolate to stop the spread of the virus. Dedicated confidential support will be available on-site, providing advice on accessing different financial support alongside practical measures, such as food packages for those who need to self-isolate.

## Local COVID-19 data

You can find the latest COVID-19 statistical report [here](https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/). 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 [here](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats). We have also produced a handy info graphic that we publish every week on the Know Fife website summarising the above data – this can be accessed [here](https://know.fife.scot/).

# Other updates

## Flu vaccination

We have received an update from Scotland’s Chief Medical Officer that has advised us to prioritise the delivery of vaccination against COVID-19 over seasonal flu. National flu surveillance indicates that overall levels of seasonal flu remain very low and, therefore, the risks associated with flu are considerably lower than in previous years. Equally, given we have prioritised the flu vaccine to those in the highest clinical risk, even with this low level of prevalence, those in greatest need have already received protection. COVID-19 remains far more prevalent than seasonal flu and the new variant poses a further risk to public health, given its increased transmissibility. Given there is sufficient flu vaccine stock available, we will continue to continue vaccinate the most at-risk groups not yet provided with protection (including pregnant women) on an opportunistic basis. For the most up to date information on the campaign please visit [NHS Inform.](http://www.nhsinform.scot/flu)

## Helping people get the right care, in the right place

The Scottish Government has redesigned the way that urgent healthcare services are accessed across Scotland, supporting the public to access the right care, in the right place, at the right time, and keeping people and the NHS safe this winter. Under the arrangements, people with non-life-threatening conditions, who would usually attend A&E, are asked to call NHS 24 first, during the day or at night. NHS 24 will assess people by telephone and refer them to the right care by the right healthcare professional as close to home as possible. This could include self-care, a GP practice or primary care, Pharmacy, Minor Injuries or referral into a flow and navigation hub within their NHS board for a clinical assessment.  Following this assessment, if the patient still needs to attend A&E the flow and navigation hub will schedule an appointment. Emergency 999 calls will continue to be transferred to the Scottish Ambulance Service as normal. Further information about the redesign of urgent care services is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/services/right/) and complements a national awareness raising campaign, which started this week.

## Screening programmes continuing during lockdown

We are using social media to remind people that national screening programmes are still running during the national lockdown. Travelling for a screening appointment is an essential journey. Further information on screening can be found [here](https://bit.ly/3pZ0J4L).

## Hospital visiting restrictions

**Visiting is limited to essential visits only. Further information on arrangements, including guidance on essential visiting criteria and FAQS on services we frequently receive enquiries around, such as maternity and children’s, can be found** [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/services/patients-carers-and-visitors/visiting-arrangements-during-covid-19-pandemic/)**.**

# In the media

## Long COVID patient management

A percentage of patients who are infected with COVID-19 are known to suffer prolonged symptoms or effects as a result of the infection. These may include a wide range of physical symptoms as well as psychological difficulties. We have established a multi-disciplinary response oversight group to assess the unmet needs of these patients and ensure that appropriate services, resources and staff training are in place to meet them. The group includes medical and nursing staff from hospital-based services, primary care and community, allied health professionals and clinical psychologists. The aim is to develop an integrated service response that supports comprehensive assessment and co-ordination of care. The oversight group will draw on the recently produced SIGN guidelines "Managing the long-term effects of COVID-19" and the recommendations of the Dr Nadine Cossette report, ‘Meeting the mental health needs of patients hospitalised due to COVID-19.

## £500 COVID-19 payment

Last year, the First Minister announced a £500 one off payment for all health and care staff as a thank you for helping Scotland cope with COVID-19. The Scottish Government, Employers and Staff Side have since worked in partnership through the Scottish Terms and Conditions Committee to agree the fairest way of allocating this payment to NHS Scotland staff. The one-off pro-rata non-consolidated £500 will be payable to all directly employed NHS staff, as well as bank workers and locums paid through NHS Payrolls who have had at least one month’s continuous service in the NHS Scotland between 17 March and 30 November 2020. For both substantive staff and bank workers, the payment will be based on average hours over the qualifying period, or over the time in service during the qualifying period, capped at a maximum of £500. Staff working full time during the whole qualifying period will therefore automatically receive the £500 and part time staff who worked excess hours or on the bank will also have this reflected, subject to the £500 cap. The payment will also be made to staff on COVID Special Leave or who are shielding, on sick leave for other reasons or on maternity leave. Staff will receive their bonus payment in February salaries. However, if the lump sum payment will have an adverse effect on benefits, paid by the Department of Work and Pensions, staff can opt to receive their payment in equal instalments over a three month period February to April.

## RECOVERY Trial landmark reached

Our Research and Development Team, led by Principal Investigator, Dr Devesh Dhasmana and Lead Research Nurse Karen Gray, have now recruited over 100 patients to the NHS Fife RECOVERY Trial. RECOVERY is the largest trial of COVID-19 treatments in the world, with over 28,000 participants to date. The trial has already answered some important questions, most notably identifying the benefit of dexamethasone for patients requiring oxygen or ventilation. It is currently examining the potential benefits of aspirin, colchicine, convalescent plasma, monoclonal antibodies and tocilizumab. All these drugs have been promising in preliminary studies and it is hoped that we will find out whether any of these can benefit our patients with COVID-19. The trial is very much a collaborative effort involving numerous ward staff and departments across the Health Board, including Pharmacy, Pathology Labs, Blood Bank, and all the wards caring for COVID-19 patients.

## COVID-19 vaccination scam circulating

We're aware that some people are receiving fraudulent emails, calls and text messages offering the COVID-19 vaccination. Criminals are using COVID-19 as a way to target the public by tricking them to hand over cash or financial details. They are sending convincing looking text messages letting people know they are eligible for the vaccine or phoning people directly pretending to be from the NHS, or local pharmacy. The NHS will never ask for payment, bank details, arrive unannounced at a home to administer the vaccine, or ask someone to prove their identity by sending copies of personal documents.

## Fife Health Charity launch

The Fife Health Board Endowment fund has been given a makeover and rebranded as the Fife Health Charity. The Endowment Fund was founded more than 70 years ago and has supported countless initiatives for the benefit of local patients and healthcare workers. All donations made to hospitals in Fife are held by the Fife Health Charity, with more than 350 different funds for the various wards and departments across the Kingdom. The Charity funds additional items which would not ordinarily be purchased using core NHS budgets. A Board of Trustees is responsible for the governance of the Charity and makes awards on all applications for funding over £10,000. Last year, the Charity awarded over £1 million to support local initiatives. In order to assist the Charity to modernise, healthcare staff in Fife were tasked with selecting a new name. A new logo was also chosen which illustrates the symbolic wrapping round of arms, which was thought to be a fitting symbol of the support the Charity provides. The work of the Fife Health Charity has gained particular prominence over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic due to the sharp rise in donations to the charity, including a single donation of £500,000 from an anonymous donor which has helped support a variety of initiatives over recent months.

## Show you care, prepare

This winter, NHS Fife is linking in with the Scottish Government’s national campaign to encourage people and their loved ones to stay healthy as the temperature drops - ‘Show you care, prepare’. The campaign, which is aimed at alleviating some of the pressures faced by our NHS during a period where there is traditionally significant challenges for our services, raises awareness of some of the simple steps that people can take to make sure they are as prepared as possible in the event of ill health. Reminders to check prescriptions are ordered and in plenty of time, to use your local pharmacy for advice about winter health and medicines, and that there are a wide range of health advice and support available online all form part of the campaign. More information can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-projects/show-you-care-prepare/).

## Community Councillor updates

As part of our efforts to widen our channels of communication, our weekly brief is now being circulated to local Community Councils.

## 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. As such, and in order to help you share our messages with the public in as vibrant a way as possible, we have created a [dedicated campaigns area](https://www.nhsfife.org/campaignresources/) on our website where you will be able to download graphics, videos and any other resources to complement your posts.

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| Keep in touchElected members enquiries NHS Fife is committed to responding to elected member enquires in a timely manner. However, we need to manage enquiries to ensure that our urgent frontline delivery is not disrupted. To help you and to help us we are asking that all emails for updates and information or to address constituents' enquiries are directed to our central email address. All emails should be directed to the NHS Fife Chief Executive Office for response and co-ordination at: [fife.chiefexecutive@nhs.scot](mailto:fife.chiefexecutive@nhs.scot)  The Chief Executives’ Office will formally acknowledge receipt of all correspondence and coordinate a response from services to ensure that all enquiries are responded to in good time. 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 the NHS Fife Website, NHS Inform and the Scottish Government website and only come to us if the request relates specifically to Fife and not covered by local or national updates or guidance.  To aid the sharing of information and updates with Fife's elected representatives we will now be issuing or Elected Members briefing on a weekly rather than fortnightly basis. This will be emailed directly to you and available to access online at:  [**www.nhsfife.org/emu**](http://www.nhsfife.org/emu)  This update will also collate and address any common or shared requests for information from Elected members, received via the Chief Executive's Office, rather than us having to address each individual enquiry. 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/). Board papers accessible online Board papers from previous meetings can be accessed online [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). |

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