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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.

**suggests this may be as high as one third of the adult population with 50% of those**

Launch of the High Risk Pain Medicines (HRPM) 3 year patient

**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**

**Ongoing pressure on services**

Our hospitals are extremely busy due to a combination of significantly increased demand for inpatient care as well as rising staff absence caused by Covid. Whilst we have continued to deliver urgent surgical procedures and most of our non-urgent surgical programme, the increase in pressure over recent days has required us to temporarily postpone some elective procedures.

**Hospital visiting restricted to one visitor per patient**

Hospital visiting has returned to one visitor per patient after a sharp rise in Covid cases across Fife. Essential visiting continues to be applied in areas where patients are being treated whilst positive – this includes where a patient is receiving end of life care, or to support someone with a mental health issue, learning disability, autism, or dementia where not being present would likely cause the patient to become distressed. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2022/06/hospital-visiting-restrictions-tightened).

**Cancer treatment statistics**

The most recent statistics from Public Health Scotland show that NHS Fife met the 31-day performance target for those requiring treatment for cancer, with 98.4% of patients beginning treatment within the timescale against a target of 95%. The 62-day performance target has proven more challenging, due to issues affecting a small number of key specialities. Despite this, 78.4% of patients still began treatment within 62 days of initial referral, with the median wait around 44 days from referral to commencing treatment.

Importantly, patients requiring treatment for the most urgent and aggressive forms of cancer usually commence this within a matter of a few days.

Fife is also a pilot site for the new Early Cancer Diagnostic Centres, which aim to improve clinical pathways for patients with possible cancers and offer earlier access to diagnostic testing. More than 600 patients have already been referred to the Early Cancer Diagnostic Centre since its launch in June 2021.

**Increased reports of staff being abused**

The vast majority of people who interact with healthcare workers in Fife show great kindness and respect, however, we are seeing a growing number of cases where our staff are suffering abuse or intimidation. The staff working in hospitals and across communities are doing all they can to provide the best care and treatment possible, despite the massive pressures on healthcare services since the start of the pandemic. No staff member should have to experience abuse while doing their job and we apply a zero-tolerance when this is the case.

**Staff contacting the media**

Over the last couple of months there have been a small number of instances where NHS Fife staff have approached local media outlets to express the concern that they feel that they are prevented from raising anxieties related to their workplace.

We recognise that staff working across all our healthcare services have been working in a challenging and often pressurised environment for a considerable period of time, and their continued welfare is hugely important to us. We do not take their incredible dedication for granted, and in addition to our ongoing efforts to increase the size of our workforce, we continue to make as much support available as we possibly can, as we have done since the start of the pandemic.

We are also clear that there are established processes in place across NHS Fife to enable staff to raise any concerns they have without fear of repercussion, and anonymously, should they wish. NHS Fife also has a [Whistleblowing Champion on our Board](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=10159394334697246&id=398905387245) to help promote the culture of whistleblowing across the organisation, and our staff are actively encouraged to highlight any concerns they may have. Where any concerns are raised, these are listened to and experiences are captured, investigated, and addressed. Various well-established mechanisms are in place to make raising concerns as accessible as possible, including conversations with supervisors or managers, recording potential issues on our safety and risk management software, Datix, and contacting our Whistleblowing Champion. An Organisational Learning Group has also been established in NHS Fife, which allows us to further evaluate any feedback or concerns from staff at an organisational level and take any necessary steps to effectively address any issues. Furthermore, NHS Fife works closely alongside trades union colleagues to gather feedback from members about healthcare services and act jointly to address any issues highlighted.

**Lochgelly and Kincardine Health Centres**

Improvement work is ongoing to develop new purpose-built Community Health and Wellbeing Centres in Lochgelly and Kincardine, replacing the current Health Centres. The new facilities will bring together a range of health and wellbeing services – from GP practices and social care to community and voluntary services – improving the experience of patients and service users.

The Outline Businesses Cases for both centres were presented to the Scottish Capital Investment Group on 29th June and further information on the project is available in our latest [newsletter](https://sway.office.com/Nd3TDfIkXulBFQNp?ref=Link).

**Termination of pregnancy support**

Following the high-profile decision to overturn abortion rights in the United States, NHS Fife has been asked by media outlets to clarify local access arrangements. In Fife, a termination can be carried out up to 19 weeks and six days into pregnancy. The numbers of those seeking termination of pregnancy beyond this point is very low, however, should this be required, it can be arranged through the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, with all expenses including travel and accommodation covered by NHS Fife.

**Launch of High-Risk Pain Medicines Programme**

Chronic or persistent pain affects at least one in five people, although recent evidence suggests this may be as high as one third of the adult population with 50% of those affected having their function and quality of life significantly impacted. Prescribing of High-Risk Pain Medicines (HRPM) such as opioids, gabapentinoids and benzodiazepines across NHS Fife is consistently above the Scottish average and so the development of a new strategy to address the prescribing of these medicines has been identified as a corporate objective by NHS Fife. A High-Risk Pain Medicines (HRPM) Patient Safety Programme was approved in August last year and work will be ongoing throughout 2022.

**Covid**

*Covid infection rates are rapidly rising across Scotland. The Office for National Statistics’ most recent estimate has 1-in-18 people currently infected in Scotland.*

**Care home visitors reminded to follow latest guidance**

Visitors to care homes are being reminded to follow the latest guidance to help reduce the numbers of vulnerable residents contracting Covid. Visitors are being encouraged to test for the virus before visiting elderly loved ones. Home Covid test kits remain free-of-charge for those visiting care homes and hospitals, and information on how to order test kits is available [here](https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/order-lateral-flow-kits/eligibility-scotland). Visitors are also being reminded not to attend if they have any cold or flu-like symptoms, regardless of how mild, and even if they test negative for Covid. Advice for people visiting care homes has changed and general information is available [here](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/care/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-visiting-loved-ones-in-an-adult-care-home). Friends and family are encouraged to check any additional protections with individual Care Homes before they visit.

**Drop-in vaccination clinics and appointments**

A mixture of child 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). Being fully vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself from becoming seriously unwell with covid. 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.

**Testing**

Most people no longer need to take a covid test and should follow guidance on staying at home if unwell. The community asymptomatic testing service concluded at the end of April. 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**

**Significant donation from former Covid patient**

Three NHS Fife departments are set to benefit from a generous donation to the Fife Health Charity, following an impressive fundraising effort by former patient, Niall Williams. The Intensive Care Unit and the Physiotherapy Department in the Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy, along with the Sir George Sharp Unit in Cameron Hospital, Leven, which specialises in neurological rehabilitation, will share £25,444 to support staff and patients. A fit and active person with no underlying health issues, Niall caught Covid-19 in March 2020 when he was 48 years old. Hospitalised at the end of the same month due to the impact of the virus, the Explorer Scout leader spent 95 days in ICU at Victoria Hospital. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2022/06/former-covid-patient-raises-over-25-000-for-the-fife-health-charity/).

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 the communications team.