Issue 47 | 8th October 2021

Elected Members Update

for local MPs, MSPs and
Councillors

**This regular 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. 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)**.**

**Headlines**

**Continued pressure in Emergency Department**

Our Emergency Department at the Victoria Hospital continues to experience very high numbers of people presenting for medical care.

Since records began, only 10 times have 250 or more people attended our Emergency Department in a day – this happened three times in August alone.

These unprecedented and sustained presentations, when combined with growing numbers of patients with complex needs, the significant challenges posed by Covid-19 demand, and Covid’s effect on our environment and staff, means that our Emergency Department and staff are under considerable strain at present. Like elsewhere in our hospitals, staff are working incredibly hard to continue to provide patients with the best possible standard of care and we are extremely grateful for their efforts.

We would appreciate if Elected Members took the time to share a variation on our messaging around [‘right care, right place’](https://www.facebook.com/nhsfife/posts/10159468279712246) to ensure those who do not have life threatening emergencies seek more appropriate care elsewhere or call 111. Further information about the redesign of urgent care services can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/services/right/).

**Unison staffing survey**

Earlier this year, the Public Service Union, Unison, sent out a survey to its members working in NHS Fife around staffing levels. We are working closely with the Unison Fife Branch, along with the staff-side chairs of the Local Partnership Forums and Employee Director, to consider the results of this survey and how we can support the ongoing wellbeing of both staff and patients.

We recognise the unprecedented pressure that our hospitals and the staff within them are under and every day we take numerous decisions to mitigate this pressure as best we can. Crucially, safety is at the heart of everything that we do, and we have robust and regular procedures in place to ensure that services remain safe for staff and patients. Part of this commitment to ongoing safety has meant the necessary redeployment of some staff to areas that are under particular pressure – this has been a challenging time for many of them and we appreciate and value their understanding and commitment to helping alleviate the reliance on colleagues in other areas. Whilst this has not been ideal, this is part of our ongoing commitment to safety – strategically ensuring that the areas with greatest need can access the greatest resource, whilst minimising any detriment.

We have also put a significant resource into keeping our staff informed and as up to date as possible throughout this pandemic, understanding the importance of not just informing of change – but explaining why it is taking place. Part of this approach has involved regular communication (video, email, and written updates) from senior management, as well as introducing the new StaffLink staff app, which has been adopted by staff due to its accessibility and ability to access information off-site.

We look forward to a continued dialogue with Unison, the Employee Director and staff-side chairs of Local Partnership Forums in the coming weeks and months as we move forward together during this challenging time.

**Booster vaccines underway**

NHS Fife continues to provide Covid-19 vaccine booster opportunities to all frontline health and social care workers, residents in care homes for older people and all those aged 70 and over. These groups are being offered both the flu and Covid-19 booster vaccines after the JCVI advised they could be given alongside one another. Adults aged 70 years and over and those 16 years and over who are on the highest risk list will be contacted in the coming weeks - either by letter or their GP Practice.

In addition, NHS Fife has also commenced the roll out of third Covid-19 vaccines to those aged 16 and over who are on the highest risk list (previously known as the shielding list). Other eligible groups - including all those aged 16 to 49 years with certain underlying health conditions, adult carers, unpaid and young carers, adult household contacts of immunosuppressed individuals and all adults over 50 - will be able to book an appointment online from late October. After a period of online booking, appointment letters will be sent to anyone in these groups who has not self-booked.

Frontline health and social care workers can book an appointment for a booster jab online via NHS Inform. The online portal can be used by all health and social care workers to book a flu vaccine. COVID-19 vaccine boosters have also started being administered in care homes.

**12–15-year-old Covid-19 vaccination continues**

Over 1,300 local 12–15-year-olds have already been vaccinated against Covid-19, following the issue of the first raft of appointment letters last week.

NHS Fife’s preferred model for vaccination is via appointments arranged through the national scheduling system as opposed to drop-ins. Appointments will be in the evenings after 3.30pm or weekends to avoid disruption to education and we intend to deliver all vaccinations over a two-week period. Any person unable to attend will have access to a further appointment or a drop-in clinic convenient to them.

In addition to location and time details, appointment letters will also include an information leaflet to inform and support consent from the young person attending for their appointment. Staff in clinics will be happy to discuss any queries or concerns at the time of appointment. Further information on the vaccination of 12–15-year-olds can be accessed [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/12to15/).

**Vaccination letter clarification of phone numbers**

Earlier this week around 1,500 letters were issued to people in Fife inviting them to attend for a flu vaccination appointment. Contained within the letter there were two telephone numbers provided for those seeking to rearrange their immunisation; unfortunately, one of these had an incorrect area dialling code. This issue was identified quickly, and a replacement letter was issued to all of those affected less than 24 hours later. This replacement letter noted the incorrect dialling code and included details of the correct number to call should it be necessary to rearrange.

## **Availability of drop-in vaccination clinics**

NHS Fife continues to provide drop-in clinics at venues across Fife for anyone requiring their first or second dose of Covid-19 vaccine. This format is anticipated to continue over the coming months, but availability of drop-in may be determined by other vaccination activity, appointment volume, and the allocation of immunisation staff. The latest confirmed clinics can be found [here](http://www.nhsfife.org/dropinclinics).

**Children’s’ flu vaccination**

Over 9,000 flu vaccinations have so far been administered to children and teaching staff across Fife. Those eligible under the age of 16 started receiving nasal vaccines on the 6th of September. Over 2,000 flu vaccinations have also been administered to immunosuppressed and clinically extremely vulnerable people aged 16 and over, adults in care homes, and frontline health and social care workers since these groups became eligible last week. These groups are being offered the opportunity to have their booster Covid-19 vaccination at the same time as their flu vaccine if it has been six months or more since their last dose.

Appointment letters are currently being issued to those aged 80 and over, who are being appointed to their local medical practice or a nearby community venue, with vaccinations beginning next week. Those who are housebound and unable to travel to a clinic will instead be visited at home by our vaccination team. Those aged 70 and over will be the next to receive appointment letters, with vaccination dates scheduled from w/c 25th October.

**Maternity vaccination arrangements**

All women attending a hospital antenatal clinic appointment from this week (at both the Queen Margaret and Victoria hospitals) are being offered the flu vaccine. Any women with no upcoming hospital appointments will be sent an invitation to attend on a specified date. Women from north-east Fife will be facilitated in clinics running at Adamson or St Andrew's Community Hospitals, unless they wish to attend the Victoria Hospital. There are no drop-in sessions.

**Managed retraction of some services**

All non-urgent surgical procedures and some outpatient appointments remain postponed to help reduce the pressures on our services and protect urgent care and cancer treatment. This retraction of some services has been both managed and phased to prioritise safety and ensure redeployed staff are given appropriate time to both prepare for and undertake any transitions.

We want to ensure that as few people as possible are required to wait for their procedure, and despite the well-documented strain on our services, we continue to carry on with as much of our non-urgent surgical programme as we can perform safely - with those in greatest clinical need prioritised to be seen most quickly.

**Cancer waiting times**

Public Health Scotland recently published its [Cancer Waiting Times in NHS Scotland](https://publichealthscotland.scot/media/9358/2021-09-28-cwt-report.pdf) report, which looked at how boards across the country are responding to demand for cancer services within the context of the 62 and 31 day targets.

NHS Fife understands the importance of early intervention in improving outcomes for patients with cancer and we are working to minimise the time it takes to detect, diagnose, and treat cancers as soon as possible. The 62-day performance target has proven particularly challenging over recent months due to issues affecting a small number of specialities; however, the vast majority of patients continue to begin their treatment within 62 days of an initial referral; patients requiring urgent treatment for the most aggressive forms of cancer generally commence their care within a matter of days. Importantly, we continue to meet the 31-day performance target, with 99% of patients commencing treatment within 31 days of the decision the treat.

Earlier this year Fife was chosen as one of the pilot sites for the introduction of the new Early Cancer Diagnostic Centres, which we expect will help us improve clinical pathways for patients with possible cancers, ensure patients have earlier access to diagnostic testing and is enable greater numbers of patients to be diagnosed at an earlier stage in the disease.

**Recruitment**

Whilst recruitment continues to prove a significant challenge to health boards across Scotland, significant work is underway across NHS Fife to support both the recruitment and retention of staff across all disciplines.

We continue to make progress across key areas, such as nursing, where we have recently appointed 151 newly qualified nurses as well as securing the return of 15 registered nurses who had recently left the profession. Particular recruitment challenges remain for highly specialised roles such as consultants, biomedical scientists, and both physio and occupational therapists, where many health boards are competing for the same positions.

Generally, NHS Fife has made steady progress in growing its workforce over the last 18 months, with an almost 10% increase in full-time equivalent posts from 7,272 in March 2020 to 7,834 in September 2021. To build on this and to help accelerate our recruitment activity, we have also introduced several new initiatives including targeted recruitment campaigns for traditionally harder to recruit to posts, partnerships with universities and colleges, and staff development and progression schemes.

**Complaints**

In light of some misleading headlines relating to our complaints process, we would like to take the opportunity to clarify arrangements. Our complaints process has not been suspended, as has been reported. We remain committed to delivering a quality complaints service and we will continue to accept and acknowledge all feedback and complaints, sharing these with the relevant clinical services. Due to well documented pressures across the organisation at present, it is likely that in some cases it may take us longer than the national timescales to appropriately review and investigate matters, and where we anticipate any delays, we will ensure complainants are kept informed at every stage. We are clear that we will endeavour to respond to all complaints and feedback as soon as possible and have ensured we have kept the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) updated on our approach.

**Autism assessments**

Waiting lists for clinical assessment for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) of children and young people has grown significantly since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of restrictions combined with ongoing referral (averaging 42 per month) has resulted in a challenging waiting list.  The average number of children waiting for assessment in each health board area in Scotland is currently around 1500.  Fife is below the average figure, however, there are currently 1076 children and young people awaiting an assessment for autism.

ASD is a complex developmental disorder which affects communication, social interaction, and behaviour. Assessment and diagnosis are based on developmental information and observation of the child’s behavioural presentation. Other potential causes for a child’s presentation must be considered and rejected prior to ASD being diagnosed. Autism assessments initially ceased in line with early directions around non-critical services. As soon as possible, a ‘test of change’ was implemented with 53 children using the online video platform, Near Me, to continue assessments remotely and provide diagnostic outcomes if possible.

Fife’s ASD diagnostic pathway is based on SIGN guidance with either a community-based assessment, Autism Assessment Pathway ( AAP)  or more specialist assessment model for children and young people with significant complexities delivered via Fife Autistic Spectrum Team (FAST) . Children and young people are referred on to the FAST Team where there are complex issues and behaviours or where it has been difficult to provide a clear diagnosis at the initial stages at AAP.

The children and young people waiting for FAST assessment are generally in receipt of some form of targeted support, through a variety of sources including CAMHS, community paediatrics, third sector, children and families’ social work and education.

A plan to mitigate the delays and eradicate the waiting list has been developed and this, alongside the implementation of the Neurodevelopmental Pathway, published by the Scottish Government, will help address the issue and backlog of assessments, and enable sustainable, timely access to assessment within one calendar year.  Alongside the above, a range of supports with third sector colleagues, enhanced with input from psychology services, have been established and made available online for all families. These include:

Autism Network Scotland: provision of up to three x 1:1 support consultations and advice line for families awaiting assessment. This is a six-week online anxiety management programme

Access Therapies Fife:

Supporting and Understanding Developmental Differences is a psychoeducation programme written specifically for online delivery to parents with a child waiting for assessment but presenting with behavioural difficulties.

## **Local Covid-19 vaccination overview**

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| **Age Group** | **Total % received 1st dose** | **Total % received 2nd dose** |
| 80 + | 100% | 100% |
| 75-79 | 100% | 100% |
| 70-74 | 99.2% | 98% |
| 65-69 | 99.5% | 98.2% |
| 60-64 | 100% | 98.5% |
| 55-59 | 98.7% | 96.6% |
| 50-54 | 95.2% | 92.6% |
| 40-49 | 90% | 84.8% |
| 30-39 | 86.8% | 77.2% |
| 18-29 | 74% | 60.8% |
| 16-17 | 70.2% | 9.3% |
| 12-15 | 17.3% | 0% |

*Figures correct on 6 October 2021*

**Drop-in vaccination clinics**

All confirmed clinics, including opening times and criteria, are listed [**here**](http://www.nhsfife.org/dropinclinics).

**Vaccine uptake data**

Public Health Scotland publishes [daily statistical data](https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/) on vaccinations in Scotland. The report includes data on; total vaccination – daily count and cumulative total, vaccination by age group, sex, and cohort (including percentage of population to receive first dose), and vaccination by location (health board and local authority area). The [weekly statistical report](https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/17-february-2021/dashboard/) issued by Public Health Scotland includes national-level data on uptake rates by ethnicity and by level of deprivation. 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/).

**Test & Protect**

**Community Testing**

Testing sites are available across Fife for members of the public with and without symptoms. Anyone with symptoms of Covid-19 or who has been advised to take a test should book a test via [www.nhsinform.scot](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Chamiltoncr%5CDesktop%5Cwww.nhsinform.scot). If support is needed with the booking process, call 119. More information and current locations can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-and-projects/coronavirus-information/coronavirus-testing-in-fife/testing-for-those-without-symptoms/).

**Universal lateral flow testing kits**

Covid-19 rapid home testing kits are now available to anyone in Scotland who does not have symptoms, with members of the public encouraged to test themselves twice weekly. These free kits can be ordered and delivered through the post by calling 119 or [ordering online](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested/pages/no-covid-symptoms/). They are also available from any of Fife’s 85 pharmacies or can be picked up through our community testing programmes. Further information on testing in Fife can be found [here](http://www.nhsfife.org/testing).

**Other news**

**Traffic light system restored on Hayfield Road**

Following a temporary road closure in the grounds of the Victoria Hospital to allow for drainage works, the traffic light system at the Hayfield Road crossroads has now been reinstated. Pedestrian access to the pavement remains unavailable for a further two weeks. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2021/09/advice-update-on-pedestrian-pathway-at-traffic-light-junction-onhayfield-road/).

## 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.

## 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.

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| Keep in touchWe endeavor to cover as much as possible in these updates, however if you believe that there is something that has not been addressed in this or previous editions, or is not available publicly from other sources, please let us know.Elected member meetingsNHS Fife facilitates regular informal group meetings with our elected representatives on a quarterly basis, via TEAMS. These meetings are open to all Fife’s MP’s and MSP’s to ensure parity and consistency of feedback. The dates for the remainder of 2021 are:**Friday 12 November** at 11.00 am and **Friday 10 December** at 9.30 amElected 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 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 an Elected Members Update (EMU) on a weekly basis. This will be emailed directly to you and available to access online at: [www.nhsfife.org/emu](http://www.nhsfife.org/emu)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/).Covid-19 statisticsVaccine progress data updatePublic Health Scotland publishes [daily statistical data](https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/) on vaccinations in Scotland. The report includes data on; total vaccination – daily count and cumulative total, vaccination by age group, sex, and cohort (including percentage of population to receive first dose), and vaccination by location (health board and local authority area). The [weekly statistical report](https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/17-february-2021/dashboard/) issued by Public Health Scotland includes national-level data on uptake rates by ethnicity and by level of deprivation. 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/).General Covid-19 dataYou 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/).  |

Issued by NHS Fife Communications, all information correct at time of publishing.