Issue 8 | 16 December 2020

Local update

for Fife’s MPs, MSPs and
local Councillors

[Introduction 1](#_Toc58929306)

[Coronavirus 2](#_Toc58929307)

[Flu vaccination 4](#_Toc58929308)

[Service updates 5](#_Toc58929309)

[In the media 6](#_Toc58929310)

[Keep in touch 8](#_Toc58929311)

# 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 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. The next update will be published on the week commencing the 4th of January 2021.

# Coronavirus

## Vaccination underway

Last week, we began vaccinating frontline health and social care staff against COVID-19. More than 1,000 NHS Fife staff have now received their first dose of the Pfizer/Biotech vaccination at dedicated hubs in the Victoria and Queen Margaret Hospitals, with follow up booster appointments scheduled within 28 days.

Priority access to the vaccine is being given to those at greatest risk of exposure to the virus and is in accordance with national guidance published by the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations (JCVI). Both nationally and locally, the guiding principle for deciding on prioritisation is protecting those at most risk. In practice, this means that health and social care staff being invited for their first dose vaccination in December are all clinical and support staff working in areas with highly vulnerable inpatient groups and those who work with patients on the COVID positive patient pathway.

Further roll out of the vaccine to staff at lesser risk of exposure to the virus will be phased and dependent on supply and we are keeping our workforce up to date with developments via regular vaccine updates. These updates contain information and guidance on the significant logistical operation that is taking place behind the scenes to protect them and, in turn, the patients that they care for.

## Care home vaccination starting this week

Care home vaccination has now begun, taking the vaccine direct to homes to help protect residents and staff against COVID-19. This week more than 20 care homes will participate in the vaccination programme and by early January 2021, subject to further stringent approvals, other vaccines, such as those being developed by AstraZeneca and Moderna, should be available for other priority groups across the Kingdom.

## Care home festive visiting arrangements

Christmas and New Year are an important time for many residents and their loved ones. Balancing the serious risks posed by the virus to care home residents with the ability to see friends and family throughout any holiday period remains challenging. However, recognising the beneficial effects of participating in festive events and ensuring that visiting can take place is crucial to the wellbeing of residents and their families and friends. The UK-wide relaxation of restrictions between 23rd and 27th December does not apply to visiting people in care homes or residents. The safest way to spend Christmas and protect care home residents, if people want to visit someone in a care home, would be to stay within your own household and not form a bubble with any other household. Visiting to adult care homes throughout the Christmas and New Year period remains linked to the local level of restrictions:

* essential visits continue
* indoor visits with one designated person for up to four hours once a week
* garden visits with 6 max people from no more than 2 different households 60 minutes once a week
* window visits

## Care home staff test results

The testing of care home staff for COVID-19 is arranged and coordinated by the UK Government. Whilst NHS Fife receives the results of such tests, we are not in a position to expedite the progress of these tests. NHS Fife is responsible for re-testing care home staff to check for false positives and endeavors to return any results within 48 hours.

## Fife in Level 3 of COVID-19 framework

Fife remains in Level 3 of the Scottish Government’s COVID-19 Framework. This means a number of local restrictions have been put in place to help reduce the transmission of coronavirus, most notably around hospitality, exercise and travel. National information around Level 3 restrictions can be found [here](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels/pages/protection-level-3/).

## COVID-19 cases at the University of St Andrews

NHS Fife has been publishing regular updates around the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases associated with the University of St Andrews on our [website](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/coronavirus-updates/2020/). The format of these updates incorporates a cumulative number of cases since the beginning of the academic semester on September 1st. NHS Fife is working closely with partner agencies and the university to prevent further infection and this group meets weekly as part of ongoing measures to mitigate onward spread of the virus. Through this group, we intend to review the way that information is published ahead of the start of the new academic semester.

## Contact tracing over the festive period

Contact tracing in Fife will continue over the festive period and will operate from 10AM until 6PM on public holidays. Testing arrangements will continue to be coordinated via the national portal and appointments for testing will be made in advance of attending a test centre. We would encourage elected members to continue to use their social media platforms to promote the importance of arranging a test as soon as a person develops any of the established symptoms of COVID-19.

## Schools and nurseries updates

We continue to report positive coronavirus cases directly associated with schools and nurseries on our social media pages and on our [website](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/coronavirus-updates/). We are committed to ensuring local people are kept informed of positive cases in our schools and nurseries and, to assist this, we have been publishing regular updates on confirmed cases locally. This update does not replace the Group Call messages issued by Fife Council directly to parents/carers/staff at affected schools or nurseries and our Test and Protect team continues to perform a vital role in contacting those who we believe to be close contacts of confirmed cases, We will continue to issue further updates and statements in relation to specific schools and nurseries if additional Public Health guidance or advice is required.

## 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/).

## 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 [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/).

## Continuing to promote the FACTS

NHS Fife is continuing to use the platforms available to us to promote the Scottish Government’s FACTS campaign. The initiative, which has been refreshed for December, reinforces the important role that everyone has in stopping the spread of COVID-19. For the latest design assets and to help us to promote the national guidance, please download the most up to date graphics and posts [here](https://www.nhsinform.scot/media/4253/20-21-coronavirus-new-facts-stakeholder-toolkit-final-2-dec-2020.pdf).

## Social media campaign reinforcing guidance on car sharing

Car sharing continues to be one of the main ways that coronavirus is spreading in Fife. As such, we have been using social media to reinforce what to do to stay safe when journeying by car. Guidance states that a vehicle should only be shared with those from a person’s own or extended household. However, where there is no alternative but to travel with people from out with a household, this should be limited to essential journeys only - such as a hospital appointment. Our [social media campaign](https://www.facebook.com/nhsfife/photos/a.10150168443112246/10158961937282246/) uses eye-catching graphics to reinforce the following guidance:

* Keep to small groups of people
* Keep your distance and take care entering and exiting the vehicle
* Sit as far apart as possible in the vehicle, avoiding face-to-face
* Maintain good ventilation by keeping the car windows open#
* Wear a face covering, unless you are exempt
* Clean your hands before and after your journey
* If the vehicle is your responsibility, clean the door handles and other areas that people touch
* Try and share with the same people each time.

# Flu Vaccination

***Over 116,500 vaccines delivered so far***

Over three quarters of over 65s now vaccinated

We continue to make significant progress in vaccinating the over 65 age group against the flu. Just under 60,000 vaccines have been delivered to this group so far, which we are pleased to note is around three quarters of those who are eligible. Whilst we continue to provide vaccination opportunities for this group, we have also now began to extend provision of the vaccine to 60-64 year olds, who have been sent letters encouraging them to make appointments. We would appreciate the support of elected members in encouraging those eligible for vaccination to make an appointment as soon as possible, particularly those under the age of 65 that have a condition that classifies them as ‘at risk’.

Sample post:

*With COVID-19 around, it’s more important than ever to get the flu vaccine.*

*If you're under 65 or in an at-risk group and have received a letter inviting you to arrange your jab then call NHS Fife on 01383 674111 or email fife.vaccinesinfife@nhs.scot*

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Walk-in clinics for children up to Primary 7

We continue to provide children's walk-in flu vaccination clinics, which are available to children from the age of two up to Primary 7. The targeted clinics take place in a number of targeted areas, including major population hubs such as Leven, Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline and Glenrothes. You can attend one of the below clinics. The clinics are for children who have not yet been vaccinated and no appointment is necessary. Almost 22,000 primary school aged children have so far been vaccinated against flu.

Community clinics for over 65s and at-risk groups

As part of efforts to make the flu vaccine as accessible as possible to those who need it most, we continue to host vaccination clinics across the region. These clinics, which are promoted by local GP practices for their practice population only, are available to those who have received a letter advising them of their eligibility for the vaccine – appointments are not required but those attending must bring their eligibility letter with them. The clinics are staffed by our Immunisation Team and adhere to strict infection control procedures.

Enhanced advice and flu guidance online

We have enhanced our [online information](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns/seasonal-flu-vaccination-programme/#faqs) to assist those eligible for a flu vaccination. This includes a detailed FAQ section to address many of the questions that our call handlers have been answering. This section is updated on a regular basis and we hope that it will also assist our elected members in addressing any questions that your constituents may ask.

# Service updates

## Remobilisation update

Despite the ongoing and unprecedented operational challenges posed by COVID-19, NHS Fife continues to carry out a number of important procedures and surgeries. Urgent cancer care has continued throughout, whilst other surgeries, including many day surgeries, orthopaedic procedures and prostate operations have also been remobilised in recent months. Significant logistical planning is also ongoing, including conversations with national governing bodies, to ensure we can further remobilise some of those services that were suspended earlier this year, as safely and as quickly as possible.

## Ward 16, Queen Margaret Hospital

## Ward 16 at Queen Margaret Hospital, which provides inpatient palliative care, remains temporarily closed at this time. There is currently no clinical inpatient demand for the service due to the ready provision and re-emphasis of palliative care at home support, and the environmental restrictions put in place to reduce any onward transmission of COVID-19. The short-term closure of the of ward remains under review.

## 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/).

## Hospital visiting restrictions

Following an increase in coronavirus transmission rates across Fife, the difficult decision was taken to restrict hospital visiting. **Visiting is limited to essential visits only and will be reviewed regularly. 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

## 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/).

## Fife nurse first to be vaccinated against COVID-19

Senior Nurse Marie Paterson was vaccinated by colleague Candice Ross at the Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy. Both nurses are due to play an important role in the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Fife. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/news-and-updates/2020/12/covid-19-vaccinator-becomes-first-in-fife-to-receive-the-new-covid-19-jab/).

## Janette Owens appointed new Director of Nursing

Janette Owens has been announced as NHS Fife’s new Director Nursing of Nursing. Janette has previously served as NHS Fife’s Associate Director of Nursing and has more than 35 years' experience in variety of roles across NHS Scotland. She joined NHS Fife in 2002 as Deputy Director of Nursing in Acute Services. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/news-and-updates/2020/12/nhs-fife-appoints-janette-owens-as-new-director-of-nursing/).

## New prostate procedure pioneered

Queen Margaret Hospital in Dunfermline has become the first site in Scotland to offer a pioneering new Rezum treatment. The procedure takes around 10-20 minutes to complete and because it is less invasive, patients can be treated as day-cases and can return home the very same day. The introduction of the Rezum procedure is the latest urological innovation pioneered in the Kingdom and follows on from the successful implementation of the Urolift procedure in 2018. NHS Fife was also the first Health Board in Scotland to perform Urolift, which is an alternative treatment for the condition and uses Implants to retract enlarged prostate tissue. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/news-and-updates/2020/12/nhs-fife-pioneers-new-prostate-procedure/).

## Specialist pregnancy service wins national award

A specialist NHS Fife pregnancy service has won a top national award for its work supporting vulnerable pregnant women, unborn babies, and their families. The Vulnerable in Pregnancy Team won the Midwife Award at the Scottish Health Awards, which were held virtually last Wednesday (9th December). The eight strong team consists of specialist midwives, nurses and nursery nurses, and is based at the Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy. The team were celebrated for the exemplary work they have been doing throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, where they have continued to provide safe, face-to-face personalised care for women and families with vulnerabilities including child protection issues, learning needs, social care challenges linked to deprivation, and gender-based violence. Further information can be found here. The award was presented to the team by comedian, Fred Macaulay, and is the latest celebration of midwifery services after the North-East Fife Community Midwife Team won the Scotland Maternity and Midwifery Team Award at the Scottish Maternity and Midwifery Festival last month.

## Sharing health messages over Christmas and New Year

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.

*NHS Fife would like to wish all elected members a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.*

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| Keep in touchElected members enquiries 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.chiefexecutive@nhs.scotThe 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. These assets and further information can be found [here](https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/accessible-informationtranslation/).Board papers accessible onlineBoard 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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