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Special Elected Members Update   
for local MPs, MSPs and Councillors

This 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 patie

**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](mailto:fife.chiefexecutive@nhs.scot). Members are politely asked not to approach services or individual members of staff directly for responses.

**Special update on Christmas and New Year Pressures**

There are significant and unrelenting pressures across the whole of the health and care system in Fife at present. Over the last week our hard-working staff contended with record Emergency Department (ED) attendances.

Our hospitals remain extremely busy and the demand for inpatient beds is significant, and well above pre-pandemic capacity. We are also seeing a high number of patients requiring critical care. On this basis we have had to create additional capacity across the system.

However, this coupled with the ongoing difficulties in ensuring the timely discharge of patients to social care services, is impacting of the flow of patients through the hospital system.

We fear that this is only the tip of the iceberg of the growing pressures that the NHS is facing this winter, including the threat of a ‘*twindemic*’ of Covid and flu.

Our staff are working incredibly hard in hugely difficult circumstances, both to provide patients with good quality care and ensure they can be seen as quickly as possible.

The length of time it is taking for patients in our Emergency Department to be assessed, treated and either discharged or admitted to hospital is reflective of these unprecedented pressures.

It remains the case that those who are most unwell are prioritised to be assessed on arrival at the ED – regrettably, that means patients whose condition is less serious are currently likely to wait longer.

NHS Fife is urging the public to use NHS24 111 or visit NHS Inform to help reduce the current demand on our Emergency Department.

Many of those individuals attending the ED are avoidable and could be better treated elsewhere including via our minor injuries’ units or at a community pharmacy.

By calling NHS 24 on 111 first, rather than heading to the ED can help direct people to the most appropriate Treatment option and help reduce waiting times.

People should still call 999 and go to the Emergency Department when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk.

Please help by sharing our messages

We appreciate the support of elected members in sharing our health messages and would be grateful if you could share our social media posts and the following advice through your own channels and with your constituents. By supporting us you can help to ensure that we can reach as many people as possible across Fife in a timely manner. Thank you.

**Significant increase in presentations following national Strep A concerns**

Group A strep is a common bacterium which causes mild infections that are usually easily treated, but on rare occasions can become more serious.

In addition to various winter illnesses circulating at present, the national media coverage of children who have sadly passed away from group A strep related infections appears to have contributed to a significant increase in attendance at our A&E, pharmacies, and local GP surgeries over the last fortnight.

Indeed, over the weekend our A&E had a notable upsurge in children under the age of 10 presenting with illness, rather than injury (90%).

We have been using social media and our website to help keep concerned parents informed about winter illness, what to do when a child is ill, and when to seek medical advice. One of the local assets that has been made available is a [video featuring consultant paediatrician, Dr John Morrice](https://youtu.be/_kL5sgLqtXc). We have also created [dedicated web pages](https://www.nhsfife.org/winterailments/?fbclid=IwAR3w6r09VSI6DKlUKtJltqOHqXN4r848uD73m91EparE2__M3K88JHFkXck&fbclid=IwAR3w6r09VSI6DKlUKtJltqOHqXN4r848uD73m91EparE2__M3K88JHFkXck) to complement the national information provided by [NHS Inform.](http://www.nhsinform.scot/strepA)

**Visitors reminded to wear masks in hospitals**

We’ve issued a reminder to hospital visitors around the importance of wearing a fluid resistant mask when visiting loved ones in hospital unless they are exempt. Mask help protect our most vulnerable patients from Covid and, recently, the virus has been brought into areas where visitors have frequently refused to wear a mask. This leads to ward closures and restrictions on visiting. If you are asked to wear a mask by our staff, please do so. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2022/12/help-us-protect-our-vulnerable-patients-and-hard-working-staff-this-christmas/).

**New staying safe and winter wellbeing resources**

NHS Fife has launched new winter advice webpages, which bring together lots of useful information and advice on preparing for winter and how to look after yourself, your family, and friends. The pages can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-and-projects/winter-advice/). We have also been working with colleagues at Fife Council, the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership, and the voluntary sector to create a ‘Staying Safe and Keeping Well’ booklet. The booklet aims to help address a range of concerns– from finance to issues about health and wellbeing. The online version of the booklet can be accessed [here](file:///C:\Users\hamiltoncr\Desktop\ELECTED%20MEMBERS%20BRIEF\2022\www.nhsfife.org\media\37959\).

**NHS 24 mobile App**

People across Scotland who are unwell can now find out more about their symptoms, when to self-care, and what to do if their condition worsens and they need medical help via a new, easy to use mobile app from NHS 24. The NHS 24 Online app is available to download for free on the Google Play Store for Android devices and the App Store for Apple devices. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2022/12/download-the-nhs24-app-for-quick-healthcare-advice/).

**Vaccination**

**Covid and Flu vaccination**

The [online vaccination portal](https://www.nhsinform.scot/wintervaccines) remains open for those who are eligible to book their appointment. They can also book an appointment by calling 0800 030 8013.

Drop-in sessions are also being provided across Fife, where appointments are not required. The latest information on these sessions can be found [here](http://www.nhsfife.org/dropin). The latest information on local vaccination more generally can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/services/all-services/immunisation/covid-19-vaccination-programme-and-advice/covid-19-vaccination-programme/).

All Information correct at time of publishing. Issued by the communications team.