Issue 74 |22nd April 2022

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)**.**

**Covid vaccination**

**Local vaccination overview**

Vaccination of people over the age of 75 has continued again this week, as well as visiting the homes of those who are classified as housebound and unable to attend a community clinic. A mixture of both dedicated children’s drop-in clinics and regular drop-in clinics are being held this weekend. More information on mobile clinics and drop-in sessions can be found [here](http://www.nhsfife.org/dropin).

We continue to encourage anyone eligible for a first, second or booster dose to book their vaccination 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. Alternatively, the latest [drop-in clinics](https://www.nhsfife.org/dropinclinics/) are updated regularly on our website.

**Immunosuppressed adults letter error**

NHS Scotland’s national vaccination team is in the process of contacting around 1,800 people in Fife who have received the wrong version of a Covid vaccination invitation letter. The error was the result of an administration mistake, impacting letters to immunosuppressed adults, aged 18-59. As a person with a weakened immune system, these individuals should have been sent a letter and leaflet, explaining the reason for being offered a Spring Covid booster. The mail merge error resulted in people being sent the Autumn /Winter version of the invitation rather than the new Spring invitation, however the vaccination appointment date, time and venue issued in the invitation letter is still correct and individuals are encouraged to attend their allocated vaccination appointment this weekend. Further information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2022/04/immunosuppressed-adults-covid-vaccination-letter-error/).

**Test & Protect**

**Scottish Government Test and Protect Transition Plan**

Scottish Government have published the transition plan for Test and Protect. The plan outlines the transition from population-wide testing to a more targeted approach. The plan also includes a helpful appendix which sets out associated timescales. It is available to view [here](https://www.gov.scot/publications/test-protect-transition-plan/).

**Changes to Asymptomatic Testing**

In line with the Test and Protect transition plan most people without symptoms no longer must test, unless they are:

* a fully vaccinated close contact of a confirmed case
* visiting a care home or hospital
* a positive case who is self-isolating and is eligible to end self-isolation early (take an LFD test from day six as advised in guidance for ending self-isolation early
* An unpaid carer
* Eligible for coronavirus treatments

Individuals in these identified groups should take an LFD test and will be able to order a home testing kit online by visiting <www.nhsinform.scot> or calling 119. LFD testing is no longer available from Community Testing sites.

**Symptomatic Testing**

Anyone who is symptomatic should continue to get tested until the end of April. PCR testing is available from UK Government sites, Community Testing sites and to order online. Further information can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test).

**Testing and Contact Tracing Workforce**

Throughout the pandemic our Testing and Contact Tracing workforce have played a crucial role in helping to protect the population of Fife. As we work through the changes the Test and Protect transition plan brings, we will continue to provide support for this workforce, in line with our policies and procedures.

**Other news**

**Hospital pressures – record attendance at ED**

As has been well documented, our hospitals and wider healthcare services are coming under extreme and sustained pressure.

On Easter Monday our Emergency Department at the Victoria Hospital received its highest attendance on record – almost 300 people being triaged, assessed, and in many cases admitted – putting significant strain on not only the ED service, but also its staff and the wider hospital system through knock on effects. Whilst the extraordinary flexibility and dedication of our staff meant that we managed to cope with the demand on the day, this trajectory of rising demand, paired with Covid and non-Covid related staff absence, is increasingly challenging and is putting our whole hospital system – acute and community – under real pressure.

Of course, increased attendance also has an impact on the amount of time that those who do not require urgent care wait for treatment or guidance. Our Emergency Department prioritises those who are most acutely unwell and to help make the most of both our patients and clinicians time, we continue to reinforce the importance of dialling NHS 24 on 111 rather than attending the ED by default. To help with this messaging we have [published a video](https://www.facebook.com/nhsfife/videos/1032589800798871/) reinforcing this message featuring one of our ED consultants.

**Confirmed cases of cryptosporidium**

We are aware of a small number of confirmed cases of cryptosporidium in Lothian and Fife. Cryptosporidium is an infectious illness which can cause diarrhoea, abdominal pain, nausea, and vomiting, among other symptoms. NHS Fife, along with partner agencies, is investigating the source. People with cryptosporidium do not usually require medical treatment. However, those who have severe symptoms are advised to contact their GP or NHS 24 on 111.

**Continued use of face coverings on healthcare sites**

With more restrictions being lifted this week, we have been using social media to remind people that they are still required to wear fluid resistant face coverings when visiting our healthcare sites. This includes Covid vaccination venues. Both patients and visitors should be mindful that unless they have an exemption, they will likely be asked to wear a fluid resistant mask upon entry, which can be supplied at site entrances where necessary.

**Distance Aware Scheme**

NHS Fife is supporting the ‘Distance Aware Scheme’, which offers everyone who would feel more comfortable when they have more room, the chance to wear an easily recognisable symbol to show others they need space and care. The polite prompt is designed to support those who are worried about being in public places, for whatever reason, and help them feel more confident when going about their daily life. Free lanyards and badges featuring the Distance Aware shield are available from libraries across the country, with badges also free to pick up in ASDA stores or online from participating charities, free or for a small donation. More information is available [here](http://www.gov.scot/distanceaware).

**Continued reports of staff being abused**

We have been disappointed to hear continued reports of staff across healthcare services being subjected to verbal and physical abuse. Our staff are working incredibly hard in challenging circumstances to provide people in Fife with safe, high-quality care.Whilst the overwhelming majority of people show staff the respect they deserve, a small but vocal minority have not, and we have been disappointed to receive reports that this continues to be the case. To help promote the message that any form of abuse is unacceptable, we have [published a video](https://www.facebook.com/nhsfife/videos/760234121590007/) on our social media pages, urging people to show respect during difficult times.

**New GP webpages**

Whilst GP Practices in Fife remain open and continue to schedule face-to-face appointments, we appreciate that there continues to frustration around access at some practices. The rate of in-person consultations is now broadly in line with what it was pre-pandemic, but a mixture of staff absence, backlogged appointments, recruitment and retention challenges, and the impact of ongoing infection prevention and control protections within healthcare sites, has contributed to an unprecedented demand for care. Our [new GP webpages](http://www.nhsfife.org/gp) have been created as an overarching resource to support patients by providing a variety of information , including which practices are running a reduced service, context around new working practices, alternative avenues for healthcare support, and how to register with a doctor. Whilst we recognise that the experiences of patients waiting for an appointment or a response can be frustrating, our GPs are doing everything in their power to provide patients with access to the highest standards of care when they are required.

**Hospital visiting**

The current hospital visiting arrangements in Fife are that patients can receive at least one visitor per day. This position remains under regular review and the latest provisions can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/visiting/).

We have used our social media platforms to remind those who are visiting patients in our hospitals to ensure they are up to date with the latest arrangements for that ward by [calling in advance.](https://fife.link/97e8)

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:

******