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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. Members are politely asked not to approach services or individual members of staff directly for responses.

**Main updates**

**Ongoing pressure on services**

Our hospitals remain extremely busy. The demand for inpatient beds remains very high, and this coupled with the ongoing difficulties in ensuring the timely discharge of patients to social care services, is restricting of the flow of patients through the hospital system.

Emergency Department presentations, including those referred to us by NHS 24, continue to be beyond what we would ordinarily expect at this time of year, with more than 250 people regularly presenting in a single day and attendances up almost 10% on 2019 (pre pandemic).

**Recruitment**

The recruitment and retention of staff continues to prove one of the most significant challenges facing health and social care in Fife, and across Scotland. Despite this challenging landscape, NHS Fife remains active across a variety of clinical and support service recruitment initiatives. Recent successes have included 150 new nursing graduates joining us in September, and the ongoing development of new assistant practitioner roles, which provides a new role for existing staff to take up or develop into, as well as recruiting into Fife. Assistant practitioner roles will uplift existing staff to Band 4 status and help to alleviate some of the pressures on our nursing workforce.

**General Practice**

There remains a local and national shortage of GPs, which is impacting some of our practices more than others. NHS Fife is currently responsible for the running of five GP practices – Linburn Road (Dunfermline), Links (Burntisland), Kinghorn, Valleyfield, and Methilhaven. In addition to supporting practice staff to provide patients with good quality local healthcare in the short-term, we are exploring a range of activities and initiatives aimed at helping them achieve longer term sustainability. We acknowledge the considerable challenges being experienced by some practices in sourcing appropriate medical cover, leading to some people having difficulty arranging suitable appointments. Alongside our colleagues in the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership, we are working closely with practice teams to maximise medical and multi-disciplinary cover and improve access to both face-to-face and remote consultations.

**Temporary changes to breast screening in North-east Fife**

Temporary changes are being made to the breast screening programme in Scotland to help increase capacity and reduce the backlog brought about by Covid. The programme aims to invite eligible women aged between 50 and 70 to attend a screening appointment every three years. Due to the six-month pause at the start of the pandemic, there is now a backlog across all breast screening centres in Scotland. In North-east Fife, women in more rural parts who would usually be invited to an appointment in Anstruther will instead be offered appointments at one of two screening vans located in St Andrews. This change will allow the programme to increase the number of appointments available for women in the area and will allow them to be seen more quickly. Once the St Andrews sessions are complete, the programme team will assess options for a mobile breast screening van to be sited in the Anstruther area for a short time for those who were unable to travel to St Andrews. Details will be confirmed in due course.

**Fife Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

Last week, the first cycle of general focus groups started online, with between 6-8 people on average attending the facilitated 90-minute sessions. This initial series of focus groups were based around Fife's seven localities. For our seldom heard groups, we will be running a mix of online and in person focus groups, as well as individual interviews. This programme of work will commence next week.

**Rheumatology app launched**

Our rheumatology service has launched a new app to provide patients with support in managing their long-term conditions. The app – which can be downloaded from Apple’s App store or Google Play – gives patients a digital hub for information about the service, as well as providing access to local and national self-management resources. The rheumatology service supports patients with chronic inflammatory conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, axial spondylarthritis, and lupus, which can affect people at any age. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2022/09/new-rheumatology-app-launched/).

**Covid**

**Covid vaccination**

Everybody aged 5 and over (on 31st of August 2022) is eligible for two doses of the Covid-19 vaccine. The number of additional doses they may be eligible for depends on their age and if they have any additional risk factors.

Those eligible for vaccination will generally be invited via appointment letter – a helpful information table around scheduling can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/media/37610/fvcv-eligibility-table-v30-15-aug-2022.pdf).

Constituents aged 50 to 64 with no additional risk factors should wait to be contacted about their winter vaccination appointment. If a constituent is unsure whether they should receive an appointment letter, they can check whether they are eligible or book an appointment [here](nhsinform.scot/wintervaccines).

**Drop-in clinics**

Due to the current logistical requirements of the winter vaccination programme, drop-in clinics for people aged 12+ have been paused. For those requiring vaccination (whether aged 5-11 or 12+) the latest arrangements can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2022/09/vaccination-drop-in-update/).

**Waits at vaccination venues**

We are aware that some people were required to queue for lengthy periods outside our vaccination clinics in Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline last weekend, which led to some waits of around an hour for flu or Covid jabs. Tens of thousands of vaccinations are scheduled in clinics over the next six weeks to ensure those most vulnerable are protected against ahead of winter. Our vaccination clinics remained open during the Public Holiday on Monday 19 September, however, this resulted in congestion later in the week when people requested to reschedule their appointment due to the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. Once it was clear that long waits were taking place, staff were quickly redeployed from other clinics to increase capacity and help reduce waiting times. We would take this opportunity to remind people that they should not attend clinics anticipating opportunistic vaccination and that all vaccinations are currently scheduled appointments.

**Pause in asymptomatic staff testing for healthcare workers**

Following clinical advice on a UK four-nation basis, healthcare worker testing has been paused. Vaccination and treatment effectiveness and the roll out of the autumn booster vaccination programme has reduced the risk of severe harm from the transmission of Covid. The asymptomatic testing pause includes: NHS Scotland staff, Primary Care contractors, visiting professionals to care homes, students on a clinical placements.

**General testing**

Most people no longer need to take a covid test and should follow guidance on staying at home if unwell. 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/).

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.