

**Issue 11|24 July 2020**

## **Introduction**

**As part of efforts to keep you informed, NHS Fife is issuing updates dedicated to our response to the coronavirus pandemic. This briefing is circulated to NHS Fife Board members and Fife’s MPs, MSPs and local Councillors. Following this edition, future updates will be made available on a monthly basis.**

##### This update includes information on matters including planning and resilience, operational updates, along with signposting to the latest media updates issued by NHS Fife to ensure clear, consistent and timely sharing of information. Updates are also issued on our new public facing Coronavirus micro site ([*http://coronavirus.nhsfife.org*](http://coronavirus.nhsfife.org)) which provides a hub of information and advice as well as our established, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages.

## **Hot Topics**

**Reintroduction of services**

NHS Fife has published a remobilisation plan, which outlines how both hospital and community-based healthcare services in Fife will be safely and incrementally resumed in the coming months. This is available in full at: <https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/mobilisation>

In line with all other boards in Scotland, NHS Fife had to postpone all non-urgent operations as part of our response to managing the Covid-19 pandemic. Throughout lockdown we have continued to carry out emergency, urgent and cancer operations. As we continue to see the easing of lockdown restrictions, we are now working to safely reinstate elective procedures and have been working proactively over recent months to ensure that we can maximise the capacity we have available once these services are resumed. Restart plans are already in place for a number of key specialities, with plans to be agreed for all remaining services in the coming weeks. Waiting lists are reviewed regularly by our clinical teams to ensure that as routine elective surgery restarts the most clinically urgent cases are prioritised. Patient safety remains our number one priority and we are currently putting additional infection and prevention measures in place to ensure the safety of staff and patients during any planned procedures. The team at NHS Fife have been working tirelessly throughout this pandemic and will continue to do so to ensure we deliver the safest and best possible care to the communities we serve across Fife. Later this month we will be submitting a further update of our remobilisation plans to Scottish Government, covering the period to 31 March 2021. This will include our approach to managing services during the winter period, whilst maintaining flexibility and capacity to deal with Covid 19.

**Face coverings in hospitals**

The Scottish Government has issued guidance that requires members of the public to wear face coverings when visiting adult hospitals.  These are the same coverings that are required to be worn on public transport. A face covering does not have to be a surgical or other medical grade mask but must be a facial covering of the mouth and nose. Face coverings worn over the mouth and nose may include a scarf, face mask, protective visor, or any other type of appropriate covering. It will not be acceptable to pull a shirt, blouse, jumper or coat up to try and cover the nose and mouth. If a person chooses to wear a face visor it must cover the nose and mouth completely. In clinical areas, surgical masks will require to be worn and will be provided. A useful Q&A on face coverings can be found on our Facebook page [here](https://www.facebook.com/nhsfife/photos/a.10150168443112246/10158575329587246/?type=3&av=398905387245&eav=AfaJ9U6iWv01sazm7JvbcnLd39PafPPfkdFYIWvMSZZtPFlYrcFj19mD_nWj0kF5k_w&theater&notif_t=page_post_reaction&notif_id=1595407678063717).

**Visiting restrictions eased**

Hospitals are now able to receive visitors again. Hospital visiting was suspended in Fife on 26 March as part of a series of measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading in healthcare sites. With the numbers of people contracting COVID-19 now greatly reduced from the peak in March and April, these restrictions are now being gradually relaxed. The latest guidance can be accessed [here](https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/changes-to-services/).

**Test and Protect – helping to reduce the spread of COVID-19**

We continue to urge people in Fife with symptoms of coronavirus to access testing as part of efforts to reduce the spread of the virus. The Scottish Government ‘Test and Protect’ programme, enables anyone in Scotland who developed symptoms of coronavirus to be tested. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste. Those with symptoms must get tested as soon as possible and this can be requested using the UK Government Citizens’ Portal at: <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test>  or by calling 0800 028 2816. Contact tracing is an established method of reducing transmission of communicable disease and NHS Fife’s Public Health Team is well-versed in carrying out the process. Public Health Scotland’s weekly COVID-19 Statistical Report, published each Wednesday at noon, now includes Board level data and is available to view [here](https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/).

**Care home support**

There has been a considerable multi-agency effort since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic to put a network of support in place for local care homes and assist in the prevention and management of any local outbreaks. A Care Home Oversight Group was established made up of representatives from NHS Fife’s Public Health, the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership, Primary Care, Scottish Care and the Care Inspectorate, and this continues to operate. This group has overseen the provision of any additional resources - such as staffing or personal protective equipment (PPE) - while facilitating rapid testing and specialist guidance as required. District Nursing teams continue to visit residential care homes as part of their clinical duties and assess whether any additional resources are required, whilst also supporting homes with infection prevention and control measures. NHS Fife’s specialist team has been undertaking the testing of residents and staff across many of Fife’s care homes over recent months. Where a resident has displayed symptoms, a sample has been taken the same day or next day after the suspected case is reported, and results are usually available within 24 hours.  Where there are confirmed COVID-19 cases in either staff or residents, enhanced testing is carried out - meaning that the testing of all care home staff and residents is initiated regardless of whether they are symptomatic or not. The UK Government testing portal, which was launched last month, enables local care homes to request weekly COVID-19 testing for staff. NHS Fife is allocated testing slots using this portal and has sufficient capacity to provide weekly testing for all care home staff in Fife.

## **Updates**

**Remobilisation messages on social media**

As the NHS continues to emerge from lockdown, our health and care services are continuing to remobilise. In the initial stages of the coronavirus pandemic the guidance was to use local pharmacies, GP practices, local minor injuries units or NHS 24 to get advice and help when people required medical care. The guidance is now changing, and we would appreciate your help in sharing [this message](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=364293157872155). The new ‘Should You Go to A&E’ campaign began on the 15th of July and communicates the latest guidance to make sure everyone is getting the right care from the right place. This campaign is the first in a series of communications planned for the coming months to explain how health and social care services are remobilising following COVID-19.

**Visiting restrictions eased in maternity services**

Following the Scottish Government’s announcement around the relaxation of certain maternity service restrictions, NHS Fife has updated guidance on maternity appointments and birth. The updated guidance took effect on 13 July with the main changes being:

* Pregnant women may identify one designated visitor to accompany them to their scans and antenatal appointments.
* Pregnant women may identify one birth partner and one additional designated visitor, if requested, to accompany them when in labour.
* Pregnant women may identify one designated visitor (as well as their birth partner) to visit them on the post-natal ward.

For further information around the update, click [here](https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/changes-to-services/).

**Clinicians in Fife play important role in breakthrough COVID-19 treatment**

Clinicians in Fife have played an important role in the development of a new breakthrough treatment for patients with COVID-19. NHS Fife has been a research site in the RECOVERY Trial, a UK-wide research project looking at a number of potential treatment options for patients with the virus. The most significant breakthrough in the project so far has been the discovery that the use of a particular steroid, dexamethasone, can reduce deaths by as much as one-third in patients requiring intensive care and one-fifth in patients requiring oxygen. As a result of this clinical trial, the use of dexamethasone has now become the standard treatment the care of patients with moderate and severe COVID-19. The Principal Investigator for the trial in Fife is Dr Devesh Dhasmana, a Consultant in Respiratory Medicine, who is working alongside NHS Fife’s Research and Development Department to co-ordinate the project locally. The RECOVERY project is one of a number of clinical trials NHS Fife’s Research and Development Department is supporting to improve the treatment of COVID-19 and a host of other conditions. Last year alone, NHS Fife’s Research and Development programme was involved in over 250 different studies, ranging from international multi-centre drug trials to short term student projects.

**New videos highlighting changes to health services in light of COVID-19**

NHS Fife is in the process of releasing a series of new videos on social media, aimed raising awareness of the changes to healthcare services brought about by COVID-19. The videos look to educate the public about what to expect when they come into a hospital setting and how this may look different from what they have previously experienced. So far we have published videos on changes to [dental](https://youtu.be/RLAazIcjlqc) and [outpatient](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXrXbLMrdiE&t=3s) services, which can be viewed by clicking the links, and we plan to release further videos focussing on other services including General Practice, the children’s ward, and pharmacy.

**A reminder that children are not permitted to attend maternity/neonatal**

As part of ongoing measures to help reduce the potential spread of COVID-19, we have used our social media channels to remind families that children under the age of 16 are not permitted as visitors to our maternity and neo natal units. Many children do not display symptoms of the virus and we are taking steps to minimise the risk for patients and staff wherever possible. Please take a moment to share [this message](https://www.facebook.com/nhsfife/photos/a.10150168443112246/10158572565092246/?type=3&theater) with your followers.

**Normal services for sexual health still to resume**

Due to a high number of enquiries, we have used our social media channels to advise that normal services for Sexual Health Fife have not yet resumed. Appointments are currently only offered on an individual basis following consultation with a clinician over the telephone. Patients can call 01592 647979 between 8.30am - 4pm Monday to Friday and a Doctor or Nurse will call them back within 48hrs for clinical assessment. All drop-in clinics are also yet to resume.

**Free condom service extended**

Sexual Health Fife has extended its ‘Free Condoms Fife’ service to include a postal service. This is a free and confidential service. If people live in Fife and are over the age of 16, Sexual Health Fife can send condoms direct by post to their home. The pack contains 12 condoms and water-based lubricant and will arrive within 10 days in a plain, unmarked envelope. Those requesting condoms should contact [fife-uhb.condomdistribution@nhs.net](mailto:fife-uhb.condomdistribution@nhs.net) with their personal details and advising if they have a latex allergy. Used correctly and consistently condoms help prevent HIV, sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies.

## **Visiting & Service Update**

**Changes to services/visiting**

The latest information around changes to services, access and visiting can be found on our micro site: <https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/changes-to-services/>

## **Public Health Update**

**Covid-19 local data**

You can find the number of confirmed cases, people in hospital and ICU in Fife at: <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 at: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats>

We have produced a handy info graphic that we publish every week on the Know Fife website summarising the above data: <https://know.fife.scot/>

## **General Information**

**Stay in touch**

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-uhb.chiefexecutive@nhs.net**](mailto:fife-uhb.chiefexecutive@nhs.net)

The 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. Along with nationally allocated assets, we have published a suite of COVID-19 resources in a number of formats, including:

* British Sign Language
* Easy Read translation
* Foreign language leaflets
* SMS text service for those who may be deaf, hard of hearing, or are unable to speak in the phone due to impairment.

These assets and further information can be found [here](https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/accessible-informationtranslation/).

**Donations and offers of support**

An updated section of the NHS Fife Coronavirus micro site has been launched to outline the process for members of the general public and organisations wanting to assist NHS Fife’s response to the Coronavirus pandemic in relation to donations and offers of help - including supplying PPE. For more information, visit: [**https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/donations-and-offers-of-help/**](https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/donations-and-offers-of-help/)

**Board papers accessible online**

Board 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).

**Helping us to spread messages on social media**

We appreciate the support of elected representatives in helping us ensure as many people as possible are aware of key messages and guidance around COVID-19 and its impact on our services. As such, please feel free to use any of the national or locally produced assets that we use on our social media channels.

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| **National Guidance**  **Health Protection Scotland Guidance**  Available at:  [www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19](http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19) |
| **Information and Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings**  <https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2973/documents/1_COVID-19-Guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings.pdf> |
| **Information and guidance for social or community care residential settings**  [www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-information-and-guidance-for-social-or-community-care-residential-settings/](http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-information-and-guidance-for-social-or-community-care-residential-settings/) |
| **Ready Scotland Information**  <https://www.readyscotland.org/coronavirus/> |
| **NHS Inform**  [www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19) |
| **NHS Inform Covid-19 translated materials**  NHS Inform has created a toolkit of accessible versions and translated Coronavirus information.  [Download the Coronavirus (COVID-19) communication toolkit (ZIP, 20 MB)](https://www.nhsinform.scot/media/3011/coronavirus-communication-toolkit-18032020.zip)  [Download translated versions of our COVID-19 posters (ZIP, 22MB)](https://www.nhsinform.scot/media/3021/coronavirus-covid-19-posters_-7_-languages19032020.zip) |
| **Free Helpline for those who do not have symptoms**  A free helpline has been set up for those who do not have symptoms but are looking for general health advice Tel: 0800 028 2816. |
| **Helpline for small businesses**  A helpline providing businesses across Scotland with advice and guidance on COVID-19 is open Monday to Friday, between 8.30am to 5.30pm.  Tel: 0300 303 0660. |

*Issued by NHS Fife Communications*