Issue 3 | October 2020

Local update

for Fife’s MPs, MSPs and
local Councillors

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# 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.

# Coronavirus (coronavirus.nhsfife.org)

## Statements on specific coronavirus cases

We are aware that there continues to be significant media coverage of growing number of coronavirus cases across Fife. Any 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 coronavirus micro site [here](https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/changes-to-services/).

## People in Fife urged to ‘Stick With It’

Our new social media campaign, Stick With It’ is urging Fifers to follow the national control measures in place to reduce the numbers of those contracting the virus. In light of a sharp increase in the number of positive cases, the campaign uses frontline members of staff to empathise with the difficulties that following the guidance can bring – and encourage people to stick with them to protect themselves and others from the virus. The content, which is also being promoted by colleagues at Fife Council, will be drip fed across our [social media platforms](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=335301607572450) over the coming weeks.

## Messages from Director of Public Health

Our Director of Public Health, Dona Milne, has recorded a series of video messages reinforcing the importance of following control measures and explaining how important they are in reducing the rate of virus infection. The videos include various topics such as [what self-isolation means](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2561720324119362) in practice, and [how contact tracing works](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=471367070409741).

## 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/>

## Enhanced COVID-19 dashboard

A number of enhancements have been made to Public Health Scotland’s COVID-19 dashboard, which went live earlier this afternoon. The enhanced dashboard is available on the [PHS website](https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/our-areas-of-work/sharing-our-data-and-intelligence/coronavirus-covid-19-data-and-guidance/) and it will continue to be refreshed at 2PM every day, including weekends. The key developments being made to the dashboard include a simpler daily update page which will now include a daily update on the number of tests carried out and on new hospital and ICU admissions. It will also show more clearly the seven day positive case rates at Local Authority level. The other key development is to the interactive map which will still show seven day positive case rates at a local authority level, and will now provide a more granular level of data for each area.

# Flu Vaccination

## Measures in place to improve flu vaccination appointment systems

There has been widespread reporting of the challenges our flu vaccination programme has faced over the last couple of weeks and the difficulties that people have faced trying to book an appointment. We recognise that the systems we initially implemented to manage the booking of flu vaccination appointments were not adequate enough to deal with the unprecedented demand for vaccination in a very short period of time. We have now put in place a number of measures to increase the capacity we have available to arrange flu vaccine appointments. This includes increased call handlers and more phone lines. While this has allowed us to begin tackling the backlog of calls and correspondence, we appreciate that some people continue to experience difficulties making an appointment and we have [apologised unreservedly](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/news-and-updates/2020/10/update-on-nhs-fife-seasonal-flue-vaccination-programme-appointments-for-the-over-65s/) for anxiety that this is causing.  Our call handlers are working extremely hard in difficult circumstances and, while we appreciate the frustration of those trying to get through, we are asking that callers continue to be polite and courteous to those arranging their appointment.

In order that we can maximise the number of appointments we can make, it is vital at this point in time that only those who have already received a letter inviting them to arrange their flu vaccine, predominantly those over 65, should contact the flu vaccination line.  Unfortunately, we have experienced significant call volumes from people who have not yet been contacted to arrange their appointment.  Through local and social media, we are also reminding people between the ages of 18-64 with eligible health conditions that they will receive their letter in the coming weeks and should only call once they have received this.  Similarly, we are asking people who have already made contact by text or email not to call the phone line to check whether these have been received, or resend their request be email or text as in these cases the dedicated flu vaccination team are actively contacting patients to arrange these appointments.

We are also aware that questions have been asked as to why patients can no longer make their appointments via their local GP practice.  Due to changes across NHS Scotland, individual Health Boards are now responsible for the delivery of the vaccination programme rather than individual practices.  In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about changes to the way the flu vaccination needs to be delivered and moving to larger venues is essential to ensure that the appropriate physical distancing and infection prevention measures can be put in place. The flu campaign has been started much earlier this year than in previous years and it runs right through to December 2020.  While we have had to adapt the way we deliver vaccination, there continues to be a sufficient number of appointments available to ensure those who are eligible and want the flu vaccination will get it.  We would also reassure you that we continue to have sufficient supplies of vaccine despite the exceptional demand.

# Service updates

## Changes to National Pregnancy Screening Programme

NHS Scotland is making changes to the National Pregnancy Screening Programme for women and their families with a booking appointment. The changes mean that women can now be screened for the likelihood that their child has Down’s syndrome, Edwards’ syndrome, and Patau’s syndrome. Women have previously been offered screening for Down's syndrome in pregnancy but this new first line screening test - through a single blood test - can give the likelihood of their child having one of three separate syndromes. Women have the option to choose whether they have these tests or not and will receive a lower chance or a higher chance result for the syndromes consented for. Those who receive a higher-chance result from screening will be given a choice of having either no further tests or a second line test called Non invasive prenatal testing (NIPT).

## Pharmacy opening times over the public holiday

We have published a list of local pharmacy opening times on Monday the 5th of October. The list can be accessed [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/services/services-and-departments/pharmacy/community-pharmacy/public-holiday-pharmacy-opening-hours-october-2020/?fbclid=IwAR1apoI08VmhSC_fzkCoydnCMC4HF8GocfUOfAbUXZ2iBlIlUNO0U9s8fJs).

## Visiting arrangements unchanged

We have received a number of enquiries around changes to visiting arrangements. There are currently no changes to visiting arrangements at our hospitals. Visiting remains open to one named visitor per patient, who has been agreed in advance with a ward. If you have any questions around visiting please speak to staff on the ward who can talk you through the process.

The following measures also remain in place:

* Visitors must wear a face covering whilst in any communal areas of the hospital.
* Those visiting clinical areas, such as wards, will be asked to remove their face covering when entering and will instead be issued with a surgical face mask, which must be worn in its place. When leaving these areas, the surgical face mask must be removed and the face covering worn again.
* Visitors must not attend if they have any possible symptoms of the virus, such as a new, continuous cough, a high temperature, a sore throat, or a loss of taste or smell.
* Strict social-distancing and hygiene measures will be in place to limit the risk of the virus spreading within our hospitals. These include visitors being prevented from bringing presents such as flowers, food parcels or balloons into the hospital.

## Thrombectomy patients to benefit from specialist nurse training

Thrombectomy is an acute stroke treatment which can improve recovery for stroke survivors in Scotland. Over the next few months, NHS Fife will be working closely with Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland‘s National Thrombectomy Educator on specialist STAT+ training. This training will ensure our nurses have the necessary specialist skills and knowledge to effectively care for thrombectomy patients.

# In the media

## Warning about growing number of coronavirus cases in Fife

## We took the opportunity to use local and social media to [remind people](https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/changes-to-services/news-updates/2020/fifers-asked-to-stick-with-coronavirus-measures-after-sharp-rise-in-positive-cases/) of the importance of sticking with the national COVID-19 control measures, following a sharp rise in COVID-19 cases. There has been a rapid increase in the number of clusters in recent weeks, including those associated with educational settings, workplaces and individual households. The Test and Protect programme in Fife is playing a crucial role in reducing the spread of COVID-19 by quickly and effectively tracing the contacts of those who are confirmed as carrying the virus, and instructing them to isolate for 14 days to prevent onward transmission. Contact tracing is a tried and tested method of reducing the spread of communicable viruses such as COVID-19 and has been used successfully over recent weeks in order to reduce transmission of the virus.

## Carol Potter appointed Chief Executive

NHS Fife was delighted to [announce the appointment](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/news-and-updates/2020/nhs-fife-appoints-new-chief-executive/) of Carol Potter as our Chief Executive. Carol was previously Director of Finance and Deputy Chief Executive, and served as Interim Chief Executive from January 2020. She has more than 25 years experience in variety of roles across NHS Scotland.

## Inspirational scout leader warns of COVID-19 dangers

A man who spent six months battling COVID-19 in Fife hospitals issued a stark warning to people who are not taking the virus seriously. Niall Williams, from Dalgety Bay, spoke with STV News the day before he was discharged from Cameron Hospital. He used the interview as a platform to reemphasise the importance of following public health guidance and get across his message that he is living proof that COVID-19 doesn’t discriminate/ Excerpts from Niall’s interview can be found [here](https://news.stv.tv/video/going-home-after-six-months-in-hospital-with-coronavirus?top).

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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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