Issue 15 | 19 February 2021

Elected Members Update

for Fife’s MPs, MSPs and   
local Councillors

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This weekly 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 regularly visit and refer your constituents for the latest news and updates from NHS Fife on our website: [www.nhsfife.org](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).

# Coronavirus

## **We ask that Elected Members do not contact our staff directly with any queries around the national vaccination programme. Instead, please consult the Scottish Government’s** [**vaccination programme webpage**](https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination/)**, the national vaccination information phone number on 0800 030 8013, or our own webpage for** [**local updates**](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-projects/coronavirus-information/nhs-fife-covid-19-vaccination-programme/)**. We endeavour to cover as much as possible in these updates, however if you believe that there is something that has not been addressed in this or previous editions, or is not available publicly from other sources, your email should be directed to the NHS Fife Chief Executive Office for response and co-ordination at fife.chiefexecutive@nhs.scot.**

## Local vaccination update

Considerable progress continues to be made in vaccinating local people against COVID-19, with more than a quarter of adults in Fife having now received their first dose. Our community clinics are largely operating well following problems with the national booking system, and the exceptionally heavy snowfall that affected the whole of Fife last week. Despite these challenges, some 92,000 people in Fife have now received their first dose vaccination, with 12 community clinics now in operation, and a 13th based in Oakley opening this weekend.

While we are encouraged by the recent progress that has been made, with around 10.5% of adults in Fife vaccinated against COVID-19 last week alone compared to around 8.5% nationally, we are tightly monitoring our vaccination rates and supply to ensure that we continue to meet national targets, and vaccinate our eligible population as quickly as possible.

Elsewhere, we continue to advance efforts to vaccinate the housebound population and long-stay inpatients; a robust process is also in place to vaccinate in-patients who are to be discharged into care homes to ensure this vulnerable group is protected.

**Latest target dates:**

* **Mid-February 2021** - those aged 70+ and the clinically extremely vulnerable.
* **5th March 2021** – those aged 65+
* **Once those aged 65+ vaccinated** - those at high risk aged 16-64 and unpaid carers.

(Information correct at time of issue but may change. Please visit our [vaccination pages](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-projects/coronavirus-information/vaccination-programme/) for the latest information.)

To help us continue to manage these vaccinations, the key message to the public remains to wait until they receive a letter inviting them for their vaccine. We will be in touch with them as soon as we possibly can, and they should not contact vaccination venues directly in the meantime.

## Priority vaccination groups

NHS Fife is following the JCVI advice on the order of priority for the coronavirus vaccination:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Priority Cohort** | **Vaccination Status** |
| Cohort 1: Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers | Complete for over 95% and scheduling of second dose underway |
| Cohort 2: All those age 80+ and frontline health and social care workers | Complete for over 95% and scheduling of second dose underway |
| Cohort 3: Those aged 75+ | In progress |
| Cohort 4: Those aged 70+ and those who are clinically extremely vulnerable | In progress |
| Cohort 5: 65+ | In progress |
| Cohort 6: Those aged 16-64 with underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality. Unpaid carers, including all adult carers and young carers aged 16 to 18 | Reviewing data. Letters to be sent Thursday 18th February, with appointments commencing on Tuesday 23rd February |
| Cohort 7: Those aged 60+ | TBC |
| Cohort 8: Those aged 55+ | TBC |
| Cohort 9: Those aged 50+ | TBC |

Cohort 6 is the by far the largest and most complex group to co-ordinate to date. For this reason, a national decision has been taken to split the cohort data for scheduling into four sub-groups. The first people invited from this cohort will be those considered most at risk that we can identify using a modified version of the annual cohort for flu (aged 18-64). These citizens will begin to receive their appointment letters over the coming days with vaccination beginning next week. As is the case with other Boards across the country, NHS Fife continues to work with the national team to properly identify and appoint this cohort, including carers, and further information will follow about this in the coming weeks.

## Appointment letters not being received

Nationally, we are aware there are a small number of people in eligible groups who are yet to receive their COVID-19 vaccination appointment letter. This has happened for a variety of reasons, including the date they were added to a group, recent temporary residency, or a lost letter. Appointment letters in Fife are issued using the National Scheduling Tool and a system has been put in place to ensure that people within these groups are not missed. Anyone who is currently eligible for vaccination but has not received a letter, or who has lost their letter, can arrange an appointment by providing some details [here](https://invitations.vacs.nhs.scot/). In addition, anyone who phones the National Helpline on 0800 030 8013 will now have an operator complete this form on their behalf. It will likely take a few days for the national team to review the forms and issue letters. We are aware that this has been a subject of a large volume of correspondence from Elected members and we would appreciate if you could pass this information on to your constituents rather than getting in touch with us about individual cases. It would be a huge help to the team.

## Postcode issue in Dalgety Bay

We were made aware of an issue impacting the Dalgety Bay area, where people had reported that they had not received appointment letters when they should have. This was due to an error with national data relating to postcodes. The issue has now been rectified and those affected are receiving vaccination appointments for Saturday onwards.

## Vaccine supply

In line with available vaccine, the number of vaccinations possible across Scotland has reduced until supply increases again. Locally, vaccinations have continued, albeit at a reduced pace and we have been careful not to make appointments beyond our confirmed supply of vaccine – as such, there no local concerns about availability. Owing to the reduction in vaccine supply we currently estimate being able to provide 22,000 first dose appointments this week, and approximately 15,000 next week.

## Ongoing monitoring following issues with overbooking

Following the issues caused by the over-booking of appointments last week, our vaccination programme has now put in place live monitoring and feedback regarding our clinic queues, and how these are operating. If any clinic is running more than one hour behind, this triggers escalation. A review of pinch points through the day to ensure staffing is optimal also takes place.

## Recruitment of further vaccinators and nursing leaders

A total of 108 vaccinators have now been risk assessed for progressing through training, with a further 36 in the pipeline; a number of these vaccinators were deployed this week. Interviews for another 88 staff from our social media recruitment campaign and NES portal applications will take place shortly.

Following issues experienced at Randolph Wemyss Memorial Hospital on the 10th of February, a review of nursing leadership was undertaken by our Director of Nursing. Additional leadership posts have been advertised and will be appointed imminently: this will ensure there is a senior charge nurse/team lead responsible for north-east Fife, central Fife and west Fife, alongside leaders for Education and Training, and Governance.

## National scheduling tool

NHS Fife, along with other NHS Boards within Scotland, are utilising a National Scheduling Tool to allocate appointments for our community vaccination centres. Appointments are allocated following guidelines by the JCVI as well as Scottish and UK Governments regarding vaccination cohorts. Once individuals have received their letter inviting them to be vaccinated, should they need to reschedule their allocated appointment they should contact the National Helpline: 0800 030 8013 which is open 8am-8pm, seven days a week. Those aged 80 and over who have not received an appointment letter should contact their GP Practice.

## Community clinics

By this weekend, all our community vaccination clinics will have opened to members of the public. Vaccination at clinics is by appointment only. Appointments are provided from 9AM to 7.30PM on weekdays, and from 10AM to 4.30PM at weekends. Further information, including how to reach the locations and details of our Equality Impact Assessment, can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-projects/coronavirus-information/vaccination-programme/).

## Follow-up appointments for second dose

Letters confirming second appointment dates will be sent following attendance at the clinic and well in advance of the second appointment date. The trigger for generation of the second appointment is the attendance at the clinic. Appointments are arranged by the national scheduling team and are not made locally. The over 80s group follow a different process due to their vaccinations taking place in GP Practices.

## Unpaid carers

Unpaid carers aged 16 to 65 will be prioritised for the COVID-19 vaccine alongside those with underlying health conditions, which put them at risk of the virus. Carers aged 65 and above will be able to access the vaccine earlier under the JCVI initial priority groupings. Timescales for carers and others to receive the vaccine will become clearer as we know more about vaccine supply and appointment scheduling. The Scottish Government will seek to write out to as many carers as possible to inform them of their eligibility for the vaccine, but we recognise this will not reach everyone who needs it so this will be supplemented by wider public messaging and other forms of communication. Unpaid carers also include those who are in receipt of a carer’s allowance, or those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill.

## Clarification on frontline staff eligibility

NHS Fife is closely following guidelines by the JCVI, as well as the Scottish and UK Governments, regarding vaccination cohorts. Guidance on frontline staff eligibility has been defined by the JCVI and includes the [following groups.](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-projects/coronavirus-information/vaccination-programme/#frontlineworkers)

## Military support

The military continues to provide two teams of ten vaccinators to support our clinics, in line with our community clinic plans. The military vaccinators are based in two venues – East End Park, Dunfermline, and Templehall Community Centre, Kirkcaldy - and are available to NHS Fife for a further week.

## Assessment of larger vaccination venues

As we move towards vaccinating cohorts with significantly larger numbers of people within them, NHS Fife will shortly begin to review our current vaccination venues. A key aspect of this assessment will be to consider national direction that has encouraged health boards to look at utilising a smaller number of larger capacity venues for subsequent cohorts. Further details will be announced in the coming weeks.

## Enquiries to our COVID-19 Project Management Office

Our COVID-19 Project Management Office (PMO) fielded hundreds of messages last week relating to individual enquires, requests for information, complaints and messages from Elected Members. Whilst it has endeavoured to respond and provide solutions to these messages, the PMO’s main emphasis is providing oversight to ensure our vaccination programme runs as smoothly and effectively as possible. We would like to re-emphasise the route of enquiry at the top of this update, which states that if there is something that has not been addressed in this or previous editions of the Elected Members Update, or is not available publicly from other sources, your email should be directed to the NHS Fife Chief Executive Office for response and co-ordination at fife.chiefexecutive@nhs.scot.

## Staff and partners continuing to go over and above

We never stop being amazed by the professionalism and dedication of our staff – and this has certainly been the case over the last fortnight. Their flexibility and support in staffing clinics with vaccinators and support staff has been invaluable and they have all worked extremely hard, showing extraordinary levels of commitment and professionalism.  We are also grateful to colleagues from a range of organisations including the Scottish Ambulance Service and GP Practices who made staff and resources available to support our clinics. A local coach company also made vehicles available to move people from the Templehall site for vaccination at the Victoria Hospital to relieve some pressure on Tuesday and Wednesday. This support was provided in a safe manner and was invaluable.

## Vaccine progress data

Public Health Scotland is publishing weekly statistical data on vaccinations in Scotland. The report will include data on; the numbers of people who have had their first and the numbers of people who have their second dose of the vaccine. The data for the numbers of people who have had the first dose of the vaccine will be broken down by; age group, NHS Board, sex, and eligibility criteria (whether the person receiving the vaccine was a Healthcare worker, a member of staff in a care home, a resident in a care home, social care worker). This data will be updated every week and will be published within the Statistical report on a Wednesday at noon, [here](https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/). Daily uptake at a national level is published daily by the Scottish Government. We would encourage elected members and media to use these resources as the main source for the latest data on COVID-19 vaccination figures. The Scottish Government’s COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment Plan can be found [here](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine-deployment-plan-2021/).

## Statements on specific coronavirus cases (including care homes)

There continues to be significant media coverage of coronavirus cases across Fife. 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 website](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns/coronavirus-information/). Please note that we will only release statements related to care home outbreaks after residents and relatives have been informed and if it is in the public interest to do so.

## Rescheduling of HPV vaccinations

Last week, we had to postpone some of our HPV vaccination clinics after an error in the National Scheduling Tool meant our vaccinating teams were required to support additional appointments within the COVID-19 programme. We have acted quickly to reschedule these HPV clinics, which will now take place between the 22nd and the 25th of February. We are currently in the process of contacting all of those affected to offer a new appointment.

## Community testing sites

The new drop-in Community Testing site at the Maxwell Centre, Cowdenbeath, provides testing for members of the public in the Cowdenbeath, Lochgelly and Lumphinnans area who have no symptoms associated with COVID-19 but who could still be infectious and spreading the virus without knowing it. The centre was due to open on 10th February, but due to challenging weather conditions, opened on the 11th of February. A further site at the Glebe Centre, Kirkcaldy, is set to open early next week. NHS Fife and Fife Council will roll out further sites across Fife in the coming weeks, along with additional mobile testing units. The community testing programme in Fife will take a targeted approach, focussing on communities where there is a testing need or sustained transmission, using the most up to date data. Almost 1 in 3 people don’t have any COVID-19 symptoms but are still infectious and potentially able to pass the virus on to loved ones, friends and the wider community. Community testing helps to identify if someone is positive and supports them to self-isolate to stop the spread of the virus. Dedicated confidential support will be available on-site, providing advice on accessing different financial support alongside practical measures, such as food packages for those who need to self-isolate.

## Local COVID-19 data

You can find the latest COVID-19 statistical report [here](https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/). The number of confirmed cases, people in hospital and ICU in Fife [here](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 [here](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats). We have also produced a handy info graphic that we publish every week on the Know Fife website summarising the above data – this can be accessed [here](https://know.fife.scot/).

## 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 across Fife in a timely manner.

# Other updates

## Helping people get the right care, in the right place

The Scottish Government has redesigned the way that urgent healthcare services are accessed across Scotland, supporting the public to access the right care, in the right place, at the right time, and keeping people and the NHS safe this winter. Under the arrangements, people with non-life-threatening conditions, who would usually attend A&E, are asked to call NHS 24 first, during the day or at night. Further information about the redesign of urgent care services is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/services/right/).

## Screening programmes continuing during lockdown

We are using social media to remind people that national screening programmes are still running during the national lockdown. Travelling for a screening appointment is an essential journey. Further information on screening can be found [here](https://bit.ly/3pZ0J4L).

## Hospital visiting restrictions

Visiting is limited to essential visits only. Further information on arrangements, including guidance on essential visiting criteria and FAQS on services we frequently receive enquiries around, such as maternity and children’s, can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/services/patients-carers-and-visitors/visiting-arrangements-during-covid-19-pandemic/)**.**

## New mindfulness resources for staff

A series of four half hour videos have been developed for the use of health and social care staff, which are available to access at any time. The videos have been funded by the Endowment Fund as part of the Well@Work Going Beyond Gold project. The videos can be used in full, as a mini course to help introduce staff to a range of mindfulness practices. But they are also designed to stand alone, so if one title particularly appeals to staff, they can just try that one. Staff can use them as often as they like, whenever it suits them best – at home or at work – to take that well-earned break and to boost wellbeing.

# In the media

## Concerns about use of coaches

## We were asked to comment after it was announced that buses would be used to transport some patients from the vaccination clinic at Templehall in Kirkcaldy to the Victoria Hospital. We responded by saying that we had utilised two coaches to take a small number of patients for the two-mile journey on 09 and 10 February 2021. This was done to limit the cancellation of vaccination appointments following an error with the National Scheduling Tool. We added that strict infection prevention measures were in place for these journeys, including the use of face masks, hand sanitiser on entrance and exit, regular cleaning of all touch surfaces between journeys and nightly fogging of the vehicles. A maximum of eight patients were allowed on each coach at any one time to ensure that physical distancing could be maintained throughout. Patients were also offered the option of rescheduling their appointment if they did not wish to travel by coach. Of the 1500 patients who presented for vaccination at Templehall Community Centre on 09 and 10 February, only around 50 were required to be taken to the Victoria Hospital for vaccination.

## Postponed appointments at East End Park on Sat 13 Feb

We were asked to provide to provide comment on a reported high number of postponed appointments at a COVID-19 clinic in Dunfermline on Saturday the 13th of February. The clinic at East End Park was well-attended, despite the wintry weather conditions that affected Fife that week.  Around 430 people attended the clinic of around 550 appointments that were booked. The safety of those attending clinics is always our priority and we asked that those with appointments only attend if it was safe for them to do so. Those who could not attend as a result of the weather conditions were reappointed automatically.

## Recruitment of whistleblowing champion

We are looking for a non-executive whistleblowing champion to join our Board. The successful candidate will be expected to play a central role in guiding the strategies which address the health priorities and healthcare needs of our local population. More information is available [here](https://applications.appointed-for-scotland.org/pages/job_search_view.aspx?jobId=3893&JobIndex=2&categoryList=&minsal=0&maxsal=150000&workingPatternList=&keywords=&PageIndex=1&Number=5&fbclid=IwAR01ypuLa7PE7J4XupN2_buceepIlk96FsIfmXS-8qZO03U5aNXBls5It_0).

## 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. As such, and in order to help you share our messages with the public in as vibrant a way as possible, we have created a [dedicated campaigns area](https://www.nhsfife.org/campaignresources/) on our website where you will be able to download graphics, videos and any other resources to complement your posts.

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| Keep in touchElected members enquiries NHS Fife is committed to responding to elected member enquires in a timely manner. However, we need to manage enquiries to ensure that our urgent frontline delivery is not disrupted. To help you and to help us we are asking that all emails for updates and information or to address constituents' enquiries are directed to our central email address. All emails 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)  The Chief Executives’ Office will formally acknowledge receipt of all correspondence and coordinate a response from services to ensure that all enquiries are responded to in good time. 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 the NHS Fife Website, NHS Inform and the Scottish Government website and only come to us if the request relates specifically to Fife and not covered by local or national updates or guidance. To aid the sharing of information and updates with Fife's elected representatives we will now be issuing or Elected Members briefing on a weekly rather than fortnightly basis. This will be emailed directly to you and available to access online at: [www.nhsfife.org/emu](http://www.nhsfife.org/emu)  This update will also collate and address any common or shared requests for information from Elected members, received via the Chief Executive's Office, rather than us having to address each individual enquiry. 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/). 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). |

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