Issue 14 | 12 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 endeavor 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

This week, which has brought widely reported logistical challenges due to a combination of technical issues and wintry conditions, marked a significant increase in vaccination activity, with all full-time COVID-19 vaccination clinics opening. You will likely be aware of the widespread media coverage surrounding some of the issues that we experienced at a number of our clinics on Monday, however we are confident that we have taken the appropriate measures to improve the running of these clinics for the remainder of this week and beyond – there is more information on this later in the update. Despite these challenges, and the direction to accelerate delivery of the programme at relatively short notice, we have administered over 20,000 vaccines so far this week, which is a considerable effort from our hard-working teams. This is a significant milestone and coincides with the planned scale up of the programme, in line with Scottish Government direction, and the roll out to further cohorts. We continue to be indebted to our incredible staff who are working tirelessly - day and night - to deliver this unprecedented programme of vaccination and help protect our most vulnerable against COVID-19.

With the 20,000 vaccines administered this week, this brings the total number of people vaccinated in Fife since the roll out of the programme in early December to over 65,000. As of 12th February, 21% of the eligible population of Fife have received their first dose of vaccination.

Elsewhere, we have now met the Scottish Government’s target on vaccinating those over the age of 80 by the beginning of February and we continue to advance efforts to vaccinate the housebound population and long-stay inpatients; a robust process is in place to vaccinate in-patients who are to be discharged into care homes to ensure this vulnerable group is protected.

**Latest target dates:**

* **Early February 2021** - care home residents and staff, and those over the age of 80.
* **Mid-February 2021** - those aged 65+ and the clinically extremely vulnerable.
* **From Mid-February** - those at high risk aged 16-64 and unpaid carers.

(Information correct at time of issue but may change. Please visit our [vaccination programme 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:

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| --- | --- |
| **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 of 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. | Reviewing data |
| Cohort 7: Those aged 60+ | TBC |
| Cohort 8: Those aged 55+ | TBC |
| Cohort 9: Those aged 50+ | TBC |

## Over-booked appointments for clinics

Working with colleagues in the national vaccination programme team and NHS National Services Scotland, we are clear that the issues we experienced on Monday were caused by significantly greater numbers of people being allocated appointments through the National Scheduling Tool (there is more information on this tool later in the update) than we had capacity to manage. Unfortunately, this resulted in some people experiencing unacceptable queues for their appointments, and at some locations this was outside in the wintry weather. NHS National Services Scotland has issued us with a full apology and those individuals who understandably could not wait in these queues are in the process of being rebooked into clinics as soon as we can safely do so. We took the decision not to cancel the overbooked appointments scheduled for Tuesday until Thursday, and instead we increased staffing at our venues and expanded clinics on these days to prevent significant queueing. Some appointments for Thursday through to Monday are being rescheduled and those affected should already have received their updated appointment. The result of the errors with the National Schedule Tool means that instead of having 37,000 COVID-19 vaccination appointments in Fife this week, we will likely need to offer around 41,000 – this is an estimated increase of almost 11% at short notice and a notable logistical challenge. Further information, including a message from our Chief Executive, Carol Potter, can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2021/02/update-on-the-overbooking-of-covid-19-vaccination-appointments/).

## Follow-up issues at Randolph Wemyss Memorial Hospital

As the National Scheduling Tool relies on sending appointment letters, and National Services Scotland do not have phone numbers for everyone booked in, it is a significant challenge to send timely communication to those whose appointments are impacted at short notice, which was brought into focus on Monday with the overbooking of clinics across Fife. As a result of this, we had to keep the overbooked appointments and honour them both on Tuesday and Wednesday. To mitigate against this, we increased vaccination capacity in each venue where possible. At Randolph Wemyss, this included increasing the number of vaccination stations by two. Unfortunately, due to adverse weather, we were unable to staff the clinic on Wednesday as we had hoped, to meet the much-increased demand. This resulted in queues and an escalation was made by the staff at the clinic in the evening, at which point a quick decision was made to ensure patient safety. To prevent this recurring we have taken several actions:

* We have put in ‘live monitoring’ and feedback regarding clinic queues, and how this is operating. If any clinic is running >1 hour behind, this triggers escalation.
* Review of ‘pinch points’ through the day to ensure staffing is optimal. The National Scheduling Tool has still caused ‘peaks’ at clinics, as overbooked appointments were not able to be rescheduled evenly.
* Prioritisation of staffing for Randolph Wemyss Memorial Hospital.
* Reminders regarding escalation process for charge nurses in clinics, to ensure timelier resolution of issues.

## 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. We are aware that some people have been given incorrect advice from the helpline and told to phone their GP practice and we have escalated these issues to NHS National Services Scotland, to investigate. COVID-19 vaccination appointment letters have now been issued to those aged 65-80 and those who are clinically extremely vulnerable. If any individuals who fall into this age bracket and have not received a letter, or lost their letter, they should be asked to call the COVID-19 Vaccination Helpline on 0800 030 8013. Those aged 80 and over should contact their GP Practice. NHS Fife’s COVID-19 vaccination team, working with the national scheduling team, investigate each enquiry around individuals who have not received a letter. To aid this process we are in the process of setting up a system to collate such enquiries and speed-up the verification process to ensure a timely response to those individuals.

## Community clinics

All our community vaccination clinics have now opened to members of the public, except for Oakley Centre, which opens next Saturday (20th February). Vaccination at clinics is by appointment only. Appointments will be 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 is providing two teams of ten vaccinators to support our clinics from this weekend, in line with our plans for the roll out of the community clinics and arranged via a MACA to Scottish Government last week. The military vaccinators will be based in two venues – East End Park, Dunfermline, and Templehall Community Centre, Kirkcaldy and will be available to NHS Fife for the next two weeks.

## 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.

## Election day arrangements

We have received assurance from all of the relevant venues that vaccination work can continue during the upcoming election day and that polling stations will be re-sited to avoid any interruption.

## What to do when you attend your vaccination clinic video

The NHS Fife Communications team, with the support of vaccination staff at the Templehall Community Vaccination clinic, have prepared a [short video](https://youtu.be/UJ_Dm5R0l7A) to help the public prepare for attending their appointment and to provide reassurance around safety measures in place at our clinics.

## Patients urged not to contact vaccination venues

It is important that people do not contact the health board, their local GP practice, or any of the larger community clinics directly for a vaccination appointment – they will be contacted in due course and in line with JCVI guidance. For general information about the coronavirus vaccine and its delivery, people can phone 0800 030 8013 (available 8.00am to 8.00pm, seven days a week) although will not be possible to book or change vaccine appointments via this helpline.

## 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/).

## PHS data on the proportion of people vaccinated

NHS Fife issued a [statement](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/press-releases/2021-february/statement-on-public-health-scotland-vaccination-data/) following publication of Public Health Scotland data on the proportion of people vaccinated by Health Board area. The Public Health Scotland data was based on figures from 07 February 2021 and does not reflect the significant progress made in the COVID-19 vaccination programme this week following the planned opening of all, bar one, of our community clinics.

## 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

To enable our vaccination teams to staff expand the community clinics following Monday’s issues with the National Scheduling Tool, it has been necessary to postpone the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme for the remainder of this week. All HPV appointments have been cancelled and those effected are being contacted and reappointed. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2021/02/temporary-postponement-of-the-human-papillomavirus-hpv-vaccination-programme/).

## 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 at the end of 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/)**.**

# In the media

## Letters being wrongly sent to people

We recently become aware that an error with the National Scheduling Tool resulted in letters wrongly being sent to a number of local people inviting them to attend for COVID-19 vaccination. Those people who have received the letter in error do not need to attend their appointment and we are in the process of contacting the affected patients to advise them of this. Locally, the programme is moving at significant pace and the issuing of these letters should not impact on the delivery of the programme in any way.

## Inaccurate social media reports suggesting hypothermia collapse

We are aware of inaccurate reports circulating on social media suggesting that a patient who attended for their COVID-19 vaccine appointment at our community clinic in Lochgelly, had collapsed with hypothermia. We are limited in the information we can provide for reasons of patient confidentiality; however, we can confirm that an individual attending the clinic yesterday felt faint at the entrance to the venue, they did not collapse and were attended to on site by our clinical staff. The patient was not treated for hypothermia and did not require any further treatment.

## COVID-19 vaccination scam circulating

We're aware that some people are continuing to receive fraudulent emails, calls and text messages offering the COVID-19 vaccination. Criminals are using COVID-19 to target the public by tricking them to hand over cash or financial details. They are sending convincing looking text messages letting people know they are eligible for the vaccine or phoning people directly pretending to be from the NHS, or local pharmacy. The NHS will never ask for payment, bank details, arrive unannounced at a home to administer the vaccine, or ask someone to prove their identity by sending copies of personal documents.

## 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 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 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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