Issue 56 | 10th December 2021

Elected Members Update

for local MPs, MSPs and
Councillors

**This regular 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 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 -**[**Twitter**](http://www.twitter.com/nhsfife)**,**[**Facebook**](http://www.facebook.com/nhsfife)**,**[**Instagram**](http://www.instagram.com/nhsfife)**.**

**Covid & flu vaccination overview**

Earlier today, the First Minister outlined the scale of the challenge that the highly transmissible new Omicron variant presents as case numbers grow exponentially and threaten our NHS. In addition to measures such as new Covid household isolation guidance, advice to defer work Christmas parties until next year, and the continued encouragement of regular lateral flow testing before going out, Health Boards have also received instruction from the Scottish Government to further accelerate our vaccination programmes. The main requirements include:

* Increasing capacity for booked vaccination appointments with immediate effect
* Maintaining an accessible and agile drop-in vaccination model for those aged 40+ and other priority groups
* Making arrangements ahead of the extension of online booking eligibility to those aged 30-39 on Tuesday 14th December
* Making arrangements ahead of the extension of online booking eligibility to those aged 18-29 on Monday 20th December
* Preparing for booster vaccinations being imminently offered to those who are severely immunosuppressed and previously had a third primary dose twelve weeks ago

Work has already begun on implementing these updates in the most effective way and further details about the local campaign will be made available to the public in the coming days. Elsewhere, we have been pleased that over 90% of the local 50+ population have now taken up the option of the booster, whilst letters encouraging appointment booking for those aged 40+ started going out this week. Vaccination of our local housebound population is also due to completed by the end of next week (more information in the section below), and we are using social media to target 16–17-year-olds who received their first dose but have so far not taken up the option of a second, despite being eligible.

**Vaccination of housebound patients to be completed next week**

We anticipate that our community nursing teams will complete the programme to vaccinate the local housebound population next week. Housebound patients who have not yet been contacted with the offer of an appointment should contact their local GP practice to ensure that they are known to their local community nursing team.

**Drop-in child flu clinics**

We are providing a series of drop-in flu vaccination clinics for children aged 2-5, as well as secondary school pupils who missed their vaccination at school. The vaccine is offered as a pain free nasal spray. The clinics, which begin tomorrow and run across next week, can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2021/12/drop-in-flu-vaccination-sessions-for-children-aged-2-5-and-secondary-school-pupils/).

**Booster drop-in clinics**

All confirmed drop-in clinics, including opening times and criteria, are listed [**here**](http://www.nhsfife.org/dropinclinics).

**Further information**

[This table](https://www.nhsfife.org/media/36300/nhs-fife-covid-19-vaccination-summary.pdf) provides the latest information on who is being vaccinated, when and where this will be, and how they will be invited. Flu vaccination is being offered at the same appointment as a booster – where appropriate. Further information about the joint Covid booster and flu vaccination programme can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-and-projects/coronavirus-information/covid-19-vaccination-programme-in-fife/covid-19-booster-and-flu-vaccination-programme/). The current number of confirmed cases, people in hospital and intensive care in Fife can be viewed [here](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-data-for-scotland/).

**Other news**

**Christmas party guidance from Public Health Scotland**

Following the [announcement from Public Health Scotland](https://publichealthscotland.scot/news/2021/december/public-health-scotland-urges-public-to-defer-christmas-parties/) which encouraged people to consider deferring Christmas parties, NHS Fife has reflected this position in messaging to our own staff. In an email from our chief executive, Carol Potter, we have outlined that absence caused by the new, more transmissible, Omicron variant is already having an impact on the staffing of some services and reinforced the importance of minimising risk over the festive period by regular testing, maintaining high standards of hand hygiene, symptom vigilance, and considering whether parties can be deferred until next year.

**Whole system pressures**

A report from NHS Fife chief executive, Carol Potter, outlining in detail the significant ongoing challenges across our health and care system can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2021/12/drop-in-flu-vaccination-sessions-for-children-aged-2-5-and-secondary-https%3A/www.nhsfife.org/media/36362/nhs-fife-boardbook-30-november-2021.pdf-pupils/), beginning on page 18. This paper was presented to the NHS Fife Board at a meeting on Tuesday 30th November and sets out several challenges and actions relating to subjects including workforce, resourcing, staff wellbeing, and acute performance. It also outlines our operational escalation framework, which has been designed to be enacted in times of particular pressure.

**Delayed discharge**

We continue to work closely with the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership to address the ongoing challenge of delayed discharge. The current demand for Care at Home packages is unlike anything that has previously been experienced, and the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership has had to both expand the service and increase capacity – extensive recruitment is ongoing to support this. Relative to other areas in Scotland, Fife continues to be one of the better performing areas and Care at Home capacity is monitored on a daily basis to ensure that those well enough to leave hospital can do so quickly with a package of care built around their needs.

**New ARHAI guidance**

Updated guidance has been provided to Health Boards to reduce the risk of winter viruses spreading in healthcare sites and protect frontline healthcare services. Antimicrobial resistance and healthcare associated infection (ARHAI) guidance helps reduce the opportunity for the transmission of infections and viruses on healthcare sites. The new guidance changes the way patients with respiratory symptoms move through the hospital system, as well as some of the personal protective equipment that healthcare staff are required to wear when seeing these patients. The way patients are screened before attending an appointment has also changed. Ahead of their appointment, patients will now be contacted by phone to determine whether they have any symptoms indicative of a respiratory virus. Patients who are experiencing symptoms may still be seen with additional infection control measures in place or may be offered either an appointment by video link or a new face-to-face appointment once their symptoms subside.

**Diabetes pilot**

We are working as part of the East of Scotland Type 2 Diabetes Programme Board to pilot a public awareness campaign around Type 2 diabetes, its associated risk factors, and the support that is available locally to minimise that risk. The campaign, which is being delivered by the Leith Agency, will target high risks groups across Fife, with particular focus on the Dunfermline and Cowdenbeath areas, including those who are overweight, over 40 years old, male, and who live in areas of deprivation. The campaign aims to encourage positive, active changes and will run between January and March next year. It uses the creative concept ‘walking away from Type 2 diabetes’ which features local imagery of people walking away from some of the modern-day habits that contribute to the condition – such as bad diet and a sedentary lifestyle.

**Valleyfield Medical Practice**

There have been ongoing issues around the recruitment of medical staff at Valleyfield Medical Practice for some time, however, these challenges have become more acute in recent months. While Health Boards in Scotland are not ordinarily responsible for the operating of individual medical practices, or indeed the recruitment of individual GPs, the acute shortage of medical cover at Valleyfield Medical Practice led to NHS Fife taking over running of the practice in July 2019. As has been well-documented, there continues to be a UK-wide shortage in general practitioners, and this makes recruiting to vacant posts incredibly challenging. Despite this, we are working to find sustainable model for Valleyfield that will involve a wider multidisciplinary team made up of a range of healthcare professionals, including GPs. While this work progresses, several immediate interventions have had to be made to the appointment system to ensure those requiring urgent clinical assessment could continue to be seen. The move to same-day appointments is only intended to be an interim measure to help support and maintain practice services and will be kept under regular review. Despite the considerable pressures of late, patients who have urgently needed to be seen have continued to be able to do so.

**Cases of winter vomiting bug**

We have seen an increase in norovirus cases across Fife and we are reaching out to local people to offer advice on how to reduce their chances of catching the bug, and what they should do if they are unlucky enough to fall ill with it. Norovirus can affect people of any age group and spreads rapidly, but usually clears up by itself in a few days and without the need for medication. Although more common in the winter months, people can catch the bug at any time of year. Because it’s highly contagious, anyone experiencing symptoms should avoid going to hospital, attending their GP, or visiting a care home so they don’t pass the virus on to others. Those needing healthcare advice should instead call their GP practice or the NHS 24 111 service.

A video on norovirus featuring an interview with our Director of Public Health, Dr Joy Tomlinson, can be viewed [here](https://youtu.be/gDLNSsemypk).

**Health and wellbeing conversation**

We are asking local people to [join a conversation](https://tinyurl.com/NHSFifeCommunityConversation2) about health and wellbeing by taking part in a new survey and would encourage our elected members to promote this opportunity via your own contacts and communications channels. The pandemic has brought the most significant health challenge in the history of the NHS and we believe the time is right for us to think differently and make change, for the better. As we develop plans for the future, it is important to us that we capture the thoughts, views, and attitudes of Fife’s residents. We want to start a conversation with individuals, community groups, partners, and stakeholders, on how we can support their future health and wellbeing, learn lessons from the pandemic, and recognise the impact of Covid-19 on specific groups of people. Paper copies of the survey are also available at all Fife Council libraries, NHS Fife receptions and our main vaccination venues.

**Arranging visits to NHS Fife**

All Elected Members are reminded that all requests to visit any NHS Fife service or facility should be made through the Chief Executive’s Office via fife.chiefexecutive@nhs.scot. Members of staff or specific departments should not be contacted directly.

**Hospital visiting**

Hospital visiting arrangements continue to be reviewed on a weekly basis and remain at one visitor, [with some exceptions](https://www.nhsfife.org/services/patients-carers-and-visitors/current-visiting-arrangements/). We have also used social media to reinforce the importance of adhering to infection control measures [when visiting](https://www.facebook.com/nhsfife/photos/a.10150168443112246/10159774368057246).

**Test & Protect**

**Symptomatic cases**

Anyone with the symptoms of COVID-19 or who has been advised to take a test should book a PCR test [here](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test). If support is needed with the booking process, call 119.

**Community testing and local campaign**

1 in 3 people with COVID-19 don’t have symptoms but can still pass the virus on. Vaccination provides very good levels of protection; however, it is still possible to catch the virus. By testing regularly, members of the public can help to protect those around them. A local campaign has been developed highlighting the role of community testing and encouraging members of the public to test regularly. The supporting toolkit is available to download [here](http://www.nhsfife.org/campaignresources/).

Community testing sites operate across Fife, operating seven days a week. Members of the public can drop-in at any time during opening hours, no booking is necessary. LFD home testing kits are also available to pick up from testing sites across Fife, participating community pharmacies and can be ordered for home delivery. Further information on community testing and LFD home testing kits is available [here](http://www.nhsfife.org/communitytesting).

## 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.

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| **Keep in touch**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, please let us know.Elected member meetingsNHS Fife facilitates regular informal group meetings with our elected representatives on a quarterly basis, via TEAMS. These meetings are open to all Fife’s MP’s and MSP’s to ensure parity and consistency of feedback.Elected 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 an Elected Members Update (EMU) on a weekly basis. This will be emailed directly to you and available to access online at: [www.nhsfife.org/emu](http://www.nhsfife.org/emu)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/).Covid-19 statisticsVaccine progress data updatePublic Health Scotland publishes [daily statistical data](https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/) on vaccinations in Scotland. The report includes data on; total vaccination – daily count and cumulative total, vaccination by age group, sex, and cohort (including percentage of population to receive first dose), and vaccination by location (health board and local authority area). The [weekly statistical report](https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/17-february-2021/dashboard/) issued by Public Health Scotland includes national-level data on uptake rates by ethnicity and by level of deprivation. 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/).General Covid-19 dataYou 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 can be found [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/). General statistical publicationsThe latest local health and social care performance statistics, including emergency department, cancer, and delayed discharge, are published [here](https://publichealthscotland.scot/publications/). |

Issued by NHS Fife Communications, all information correct at time of publishing.