Issue 57 | 16th 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**

The covid vaccination programme continues to evolve and accelerate at considerable pace and this week, following instruction from Scottish Government relating to curbing the spread of the Omicron variant, all adults aged 18+ can now book their booster vaccination appointment by logging on to the [online booking portal](https://vacs.nhs.scot/csp) (people who need to recover their username can do so [here](https://vacs.nhs.scot/csp?id=recover_username)) or calling 0800 030 8013.

Across Fife, we are adopting an ‘appointment first’ approach, where possible, and encouraging people to book their appointments online in the first instance to help us manage demand and vaccine supply in a more structured manner. Where this is not possible, drop-in options are being provided, however drop-ins for boosters are currently being advertised as for those aged 40+ only, which is a directive that has recently been provided to health boards across Scotland by Scottish Government.

To help meet the First Minister’s ambition of vaccinating everyone who is eligible for a booster vaccination by the end of December this year, NHS Fife has had to increase appointment capacity by around 60,000 and plan to vaccinate almost twice as many people each day as we are currently doing. This is a significant logistical undertaking which has involved reassessing and reconfiguring the setup in our existing vaccination venues, as well as embarking on a drive to recruit additional vaccinators to supplement our existing teams. To help us meet this additional requirement, the Scottish Government has advised that health boards:

* Prioritise boosters over primary courses for 12–15-year-olds in line with JCVI guidance
* De-prioritise the flu programme – pausing the co-administration of both Covid and flu; pausing deployment of flu teams to secondary schools; for those who were routinely offered the flu vaccine prior to the pandemic, including pregnant women and high-risk groups including health and social care workers, these people will continue to be vaccinated through community pharmacies, midwives, GP practices and opportunistically through domiciliary and/or care home settings as appropriate
* Suspend the requirement for 15-minute observations for some vaccinations, in line with a recommendation from the Chief Medical Officer.

Significant work is ongoing to ensure that our vaccination programme is agile enough to respond to any issues that may emerge over the next few weeks and we are indebted to our flexible, hardworking staff, who continue to rise to the many challenges that the pandemic continues to bring.

**Queues at drop-in vaccination centres**

Following the extension of booster eligibility to those over the age of 30 earlier this week, our drop-in clinics have experienced high volumes of attendance. This has resulted in waits at some venues, and all vaccine supply being taken advantage of at others. As has been specified above, we are adopting an ‘appointment first’ approach, which will help us manage not only attendance and supply, but also the expectations of the public. We would ask that Elected Members consider [sharing social media posts](https://www.facebook.com/nhsfife/photos/a.10150168443112246/10159786818217246/) relating to online booking to help us promote this approach.

**Outbreak of omicron linked to event at Fairmont Hotel in St Andrews**

Following an outbreak of Covid at an event at the Fairmont Hotel in St Andrews, we put out an appeal to anyone who was at the venue on the evening of Saturday the 4th of December to be vigilant of symptoms and, if they manifest, isolate immediately and arrange for a test as soon as possible. Fife’s Health Protection Team has been working closely with colleagues in Fife Council’s environmental health service and the management of the hotel to reduce the risk for further spread of the virus. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2021/12/cluster-of-covid-19-cases-linked-to-evening-event-at-hotel-in-st-andrews/).

**Booster doses for those who have received vaccinations in another country**

To support flexibility and help anyone who is eligible for their booster, those who may be experiencing difficulties booking their booster can visit one of our drop-in clinics. This includes people who have received their initial vaccination or vaccinations in another country. These people should bring evidence of any initial vaccinations to the drop-in clinic and make sure that they are aware of the recommended timing between doses before travelling. Full information on eligibility and criteria can be found on the NHS Inform website.

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

Our community nursing team is on schedule to complete the programme to vaccinate the local housebound population by the end of this week. However, we are mindful that there will be a very small number of people have not been vaccinated yet, whether this is through them recently having Covid, being unwell, or their initial vaccines not being recorded on the relevant system. Patients who have not yet been contacted should contact their local GP practice to ensure that they are known to their local community nursing team.

**Covid status app update**

The Scottish Covid Status app has now been updated to include booster certification, PCR results, and information relating to recovery from Covid.Users will need to update to the new version of the app. Some people will have their phone set to automatically update but others will have to update it manually in their App Store.

**Drop-in child flu clinics**

We are providing a series of drop-in flu vaccination clinics for children aged 2-5. The vaccine is offered as a pain free nasal spray. The clinics 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**

**Nursing vacancies**

Throughout the pandemic response NHS Fife has been recruiting extensively for nursing and support staff. This work is continuing with many of our vacant posts being newly created role, rather than simply backfilling existing positions. Considerable pressures remain on our nursing staffing at present and recruitment is undoubtedly challenging, due to there being a limited supply of suitably qualified or experienced staff, coupled with the need for an expanded nursing workforce due to the pandemic and its subsequent vaccination programme. Several programmes are ongoing to help increase our qualified nursing workforce. As well as recruiting in Scotland, we are also recruiting across the UK and internationally, with around 40 highly experienced nurses from various parts of the world due to begin working in Fife in the Spring. Resources are also going into targeting qualified former military personnel to work on our wards and in our communities. Importantly, we are not simply recruiting qualified nurses, we are also expanding the wider team that supports our frontline clinicians, such as our administrative and clinical support staff. Indeed, more than 90 people were interviewed for such vacancies last month and we are currently expanding our nurse bank to widen the pool of non-qualified clinical support available to us.

**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.

**Health and wellbeing survey closes Sunday**

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. Paper copies of the survey are also available at all Fife Council libraries, NHS Fife receptions and our main vaccination venues. The online survey closes on Sunday 19th December/

**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.

**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. The meetings for 2022 are:Friday 18th MarchFriday 17th JuneFriday 23rd SeptemberFriday 16th DecemberElected 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/). |
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