Issue 61 | 20th January 2022

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 vaccination**

**Vaccination overview**

Our vaccination Programme continues to administer thousands of vaccinations each week, despite the demand slowing as we moved beyond the New Year. This week’s statistics show that more than 83% of eligible people in Fife aged 18 and over have now received their third or booster dose of the vaccine, compared to just over 80% nationally.

We continue to look at ways of engaging with the 12–15-year-old age group, where vaccine uptake for second doses has not been as high as we would like it to be. Last weekend, when many of this age group were appointed to be vaccinated at centres throughout Fife, there was a high number who did not attend, and we are working with partner organisations to develop targeted messaging and campaign materials to try and help address this.

Elsewhere, the Chief Medical Officer has issued further guidance around:

* Booster vaccination of 16–17-year-olds (advised and no sooner than three months after completion of primary course)
* Booster vaccination for at-risk 12–15-year-olds (advised and no sooner than three months after completion of primary course)
* Primary vaccination of at-risk 5–11-year-olds (advised and an interval of eight weeks between doses recommended).
* Third primary doses for children aged 5-11 who are severely immunosuppressed (advised and should be offered around eight weeks after primary course, mindful of any current or planned immunosuppressive therapies).

We will now build this instruction into our scheduling, of which more information around timings and deployment will be available in later editions. The full letter from the CMO can be found [here](https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO(2022)03.pdf).

**Deferral of fertility treatments for unvaccinated patients**

Following clinical concerns around the risk of severe illness from Covid amongst unvaccinated pregnant women, the Chief Medical Officer has recommended a [temporary deferral of fertility treatment](https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO(2022)01.pdf) for patients who are unvaccinated against the virus. Currently, NHS Fife offers an infertility nurse service, which provides some initial treatments, and IVF is undertaken in Dundee, Edinburgh, or Glasgow.

The JCVI recently amended guidance to classify pregnant women a clinical risk group and, therefore, a priority target group within the vaccination programme. Nationally, uptake of the vaccine amongst pregnant women is below that of the general female population in the same age groups. To help increase vaccinations we have adopted a policy of ‘making every contact count’, where healthcare workers are strongly encouraged to recommend vaccination in pregnancy and outline the risks of remaining unvaccinated, whilst also promoting the benefits of vaccination via regular social media posts.

**Getting vaccinated**

We continue to encourage anyone eligible for a first, second or booster dose to book their vaccination appointment via 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 by calling 0800 030 8013. Alternatively, the latest [drop-in clinics](https://www.nhsfife.org/dropinclinics/) are updated regularly on our website.

**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/).

**Test & Protect**

**Changes to self-isolating, close contacts and testing rules**

The most recent guidance around isolation periods, rules for close contacts and testing can be found in summarised form [here](https://www.gov.scot/news/self-isolation-and-testing-changes/).

**Priority PCR testing for those with symptoms**

Symptomatic essential workers and those considered most clinically vulnerable are being prioritised for PCR testing. Anyone with the symptoms of Covid 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, they should call 119.

**Community testing**

Community testing sites operate across Fife, 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).

**Other news**

**Covid patients in hospital**

We have been asked to respond to several media enquiries this month relating to the number of patients with Covid in our hospitals. At the time of responding to our latest enquiry, there were 82 patients with Covid in our hospitals. The number of people with Covid in our hospitals has been increasing since the start of this year, which reflective of the increased circulation of the virus that we are seeing in our communities; this adds yet more pressure to services that have already been stretched by the usual increased demand we see across winter. Some patients, notably those that are unvaccinated, do require critical care input and are admitted to the Intensive Care Unit. Fortunately, given the success of the vaccination programme, the numbers of patients in our Intensive Care Unit are much lower than those seen in January 2021.

**High risk patients offered new Covid treatment**

A new unit at the Victoria Hospital has become one of first centres in the UK to offer ground-breaking new treatments to high-risk patients in the early stages of Covid infection. The Covid-19 Outpatient Assessment (COPA) unit, which opened last month within Ward 51, offers rapid treatment to those at the very highest risk of the effects of the virus. These include transplant recipients and those with conditions such as Down's syndrome, sickle cell disease, cancers, severe kidney and liver disease, HIV/AIDS, and people with compromised immune systems. The new treatments involve high-risk patients being given an infusion of a treatment called a monoclonal antibody, or alternatively an oral antiviral treatment called molnupiravir. These treatments support the immune system and reduce the chances of worsening infection, to try to avert more serious illness. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2022/january/high-risk-covid-patients-in-fife-amongst-first-in-uk-to-be-offered-ground-breaking-treatments-to-reduce-effects-of-the-virus/).

**Hospital visiting during Covid**

Visiting arrangements at our hospitals remain under regular review and can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/visiting/). At present, visiting in our community hospitals is restricted to essential visiting only, whilst the Victoria Hospital facilitates one visitor per patient per day except for Ward 10, which is essential visiting only. A short video with associate director of nursing, Nicola Robertson, can also be viewed on the web page.

**Cervical cancer prevention week**

To mark Cervical Cancer Prevention Week (17 – 23 January 2022), healthcare professionals in Fife are reinforcing that the cervical screening test now offered is much more effective than it has been in the past. The test provides screening for HPV, which is the main cause of cervical cancer, to help ensure any cell changes are identified and treated earlier. Those who are found to have HPV will be invited for screening every year, so any cell changes can be closely monitored, and referred for further investigation and treatment if needed. Those whose test sample shows no signs of HPV will be invited for their screening appointment in five years, as evidence shows the chance of developing cervical cancer during this time is very low. More information can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2022/01/importance-of-hpv-testing-highlighted-during-cervical-cancer-prevention-week/).

## 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 meetings  NHS 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 March  Friday 17th June  Friday 23rd September  Friday 16th December 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](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 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 update Public 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 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 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 publications The 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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