Issue 59 | 30th 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 overview**

As is reflected across the country, Fife has experienced a significant but anticipated upsurge in the number of positive Covid tests being returned. This can be most starkly detailed in that the number of positive tests returned on Christmas Day was over 600 and almost double those of the weekend before Christmas. Whilst these cases may not be translating into the number of hospital admissions that were experienced in previous waves or strains, they place further emphasis on the need to expedite first, second and booster dose vaccination for those who are eligible.

With high numbers of positive tests being returned, our contact tracing teams have a significantly increased workload to investigate and manage. As such, not only may it take slightly longer than usual to risk assess and establish close contacts of those who have been infected, it has also been decided nationally that contact tracing across Scotland will now prioritise more at-risk groups and settings. Our teams will be focussing on support for outbreaks, for care homes and sites considered ‘complex settings’ during these very high levels of community transmission.

Elsewhere, we continue to encourage people to take up the offer of vaccination at every opportunity and ensure as many as possible – whether via scheduled appointment or drop-in clinic - are vaccinated by the New Year.

Almost 2,000 people attended for drop-in vaccination in the week leading up to Christmas, which was in addition to the near 20,000 people who attended scheduled appointments. Between the 27th of December and New Year’s Eve, we will also be offering a further 15,000 scheduled appointments in addition to continued drop-ins (including priority access to boosters for those with severe immunosuppression), which will be extended to 12-15 year olds requiring a second dose vaccination 12 weeks after their first.

Ultimately, down to the hard work of everyone involved in this programme, we anticipate that around 80% of those eligible for vaccination will have been provided with the relevant protection by the New Year.

Please consider continuing to urge 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.

**Vaccination of pregnant women as at-risk group**

The JCVI recently advised that pregnant women should now be considered 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 are adopting 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.

**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**

**Mental health service development**

Ensuring there is access to the right level of care and treatment for mental health problems, which meets the needs of our communities, has been and continues to be a priority in Fife. Following the review of Fife’s Mental Health Strategy, the focus of care is changing. Working with our partners and with individuals at the centre of decisions, more care and services will be delivered closer to home and with an increased level of choice based on what is important to the individual. As well as delivering services differently there is also a need to improve our adult mental health in-patient facilities ensuring that environments meet the needs of patients to enable therapeutic intervention and support speedier recovery. Over the coming weeks and months, NHS Fife and the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership will be engaging with people who use and have used mental health in-patient services in the past, their families and staff, about what is important to them and how we can improve on our current facilities. Several workshops will also be held with service users, their families, staff and other interested parties in February 2022. Feedback from these discussions will help to develop options for consideration with the wider public.

**Community mental health volunteers**

NHS Fife is looking for recruit volunteers to join its Community Mental Health Team Development Group. The role of the volunteer will be to engage in discussions and bring a lived experience perspective to the work of the group, which includes looking at service provision to ensure accommodation is fit for purpose and ensuring any developments are in line with national guidance. More information can be found [here](http://www.nhsfife.org/get-involved/communityempowerment/).

**Autism assessment**

Previously, Elected Members have asked for updates around waiting times for autism assessment. Last week, the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership issued the below update

*“The Fife Health and Social Care Partnership and NHS Fife are currently taking a range of actions to reduce both the number and length of time children and young people are waiting for an assessment of autism. Significant investment has been put in place to develop a new Neurodevelopmental Pathway and the additional key appointments necessary to implement this. These new roles will enable us to significantly increase our monthly assessment capacity from 32 to 164. Furthermore, an external provider is being commissioned to provide additional assessment capacity and reduce waiting times whilst we appoint to these newly created posts. We are committed to ensuring that both young people awaiting assessment, and their parents or carers, are supported through the assessment process. In partnership with Fife Council, we have recently commissioned Autism Network Scotland to provide 1:1 advice and support for families. This new service will launch in early January and will be provided by phone or video conference initially due to the impact of COVID-19. We are also continuing to provide post-diagnostic support for families, such as our six-week Parent Awareness Programme for Autism Spectrum (PAPAS) programme. Similarly, as part of the initial roll-out of the Fife Neurodevelopmental Pathway, we have also begun the targeted implementation of training for colleagues in education and wider Children’s services to ensure that children and young people with autism spectrum disorder in Fife are well-supported in these settings.*

**Managed retraction of non-urgent services**

With the ongoing spread of the omicron Covid variant likely to contribute additional pressure to healthcare services already under strain, we are taking vital steps to retract non-urgent services to protect emergency and cancer care in the coming weeks. Healthcare services in Fife remain under considerable strain due to a sustained and significant rise in the number of patients requiring care for both Covid-related and non-Covid related conditions. Despite these pressures, throughout 2021 NHS Fife has continued with much of its outpatient and non-urgent surgical programme to reduce the number of patients waiting for treatment. Omicron, however, has quickly become the dominant variant in Scotland with case numbers rising rapidly and likely to continue to do so for several weeks. With this sudden increase in cases very likely to lead to a sharp rise in hospitalisations and potentially impact on the availability of our own workforce, NHS Fife is moving quickly to mitigate the impact of this new variant on already stretched services and help safeguard urgent care and cancer services. We are taking the following steps:

* Postponing all non-urgent surgical procedures – emergency procedures, trauma and cancer procedures will continue.
* Postponing non-urgent outpatient appointments – patients affected will be contacted directly to advise of the postponement. Those who are not contacted should attend their appointment as arranged.
* Visiting restrictions to continue – limited to one individual. More detail on existing visiting arrangements are available [here](http://www.nhsfife.org/visiting.).

Further information on the managed retraction of non-urgent services is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2021/12/protecting-healthcare-services-in-response-to-omicron-variant/).

**Popular Santa joining NHS Fife**

NHS Fife has recruited retired nurse, David Smyth, who until recently was the resident Santa at the popular grotto within Dobbies Garden Centre in Dunfermline. David retired earlier this year after a 35-year NHS career as a paediatric nurse, which included achieving a MSc Advanced Clinical Practitioner degree, but will join our immunisation team next month. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2021/12/from-health-service-to-elf-service-and-back-again/).

**Home Energy Scotland financial support**

Home Energy Scotland is providing free impartial guidance around how people can save on their heating bills and access support worth up to £5,000 to make their home warmer. Funding can be used to make improvements such as home insulation, draught proofing, or even a new heating system. Over 24,000 households in Scotland have benefitted so More information for constituents is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/douglas/).

**Pharmacy opening times over the festive period**

NHS Inform provides an interactive [pharmacy opening times](https://www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory/pharmacies/?hb=s08000018&locpt=56.2082078%2c-3.1495175&q=&sortby=_distance&sortdir=Asc) table which allows searching by area, to find out which pharmacies are open in real time.

**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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