Issue 52 | 12th November 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**

Over 625,000 doses of Covid vaccine have now been administered across Fife, with over 80,000 people having received their full course and a booster vaccine.

Guidance from the JCVI in relation to second dose intervals for the 16–17-year-old age group is expected within the next week or so, whilst guidance for the 12–15-year-old age group is expected early in 2022.

Conversations are continuing - both locally and nationally - in relation to an imminent acceleration of the vaccination programme, following the ongoing receipt of data around vaccine efficacy over time.

[This table](https://www.nhsfife.org/media/36137/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. These appointments are currently invite-only, and not accessible to the public via drop-in clinics unless specified. 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/).

Across Fife, the number of confirmed Covid cases remains high – with notable transmission taking place indoors - and this number is expected to rise further over the winter months. 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/).

**Queuing at Kingsgate vaccination venue**

We are aware that there were times last week where people had to queue for Covid vaccination at our drop-in clinic at DW Sports in the Kingsgate, Dunfermline; this was due to a considerable rise in the demand for drop-in appointments. During busy periods our vaccination staff were asked to be aware of anyone who should be prioritised in the queues, as well as offering chairs to those that needed to sit. While our clinics have continued to be busy this week, implemented various measures – including reconfigured drop-in provision - to prevent a repeat of the type of queuing experienced previously.

**Drop-in vaccination clinics**

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

**Child flu vaccination appointments**

We continue to use social media as a platform to encourage parents to schedule flu vaccination for their children who are aged between 2 and 5 years old. Clinics are being provided across Fife, including in the evening from this week. For those who have yet to schedule an appointment they can do so by calling 01383 565 456 between 8AM and 5PM.

**Other news**

**GP appointments**

NHS Fife recognises that patients in some GP practice areas are having difficulty accessing appointments, particularly ones that are face-to-face. This is due to a combination of factors including increased demand, continued infection control requirements, and well-established workforce challenges in General Practice. Medical practices across the country continue to operate within national guidance to limit the numbers of patients attending at any given time and reduce the risk of vulnerable patients catching Covid. Whilst GPs are independent contractors, work is ongoing to provide practices with the support they need to maximise capacity and minimise the time patients wait to be seen by a healthcare professional.

More than 10,000 face-to-face appointments are provided each week in Fife and this continues to increase. Technology-supported appointments such as video-calling, which many patients prefer due to the flexibility it provides, will very likely form part of a blended approach to consultations moving forward, allowing practices to see greater numbers of patients and enable longer sessions for those with more complex conditions.

Where constituents are experiencing challenges accessing an appointment, it may be useful to consider some of the alternatives that are available. Many issues that would have traditionally required a GP can now be assessed and treated in local community pharmacies. Through the [Pharmacy First](https://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/nhs-pharmacy-first-scotland.) initiative, patients can be seen for a range of conditions.

**Clarification on distancing in GP Practices**

Physical distancing of two-metres remains in place at health care settings across Scotland, despite other restrictions being lifted in other settings in August 2021. Hospitals, GP surgeries and dentists are among the locations which continue to observe the two-metre distancing requirement to help control the spread of the virus. The measure is continually reviewed as the NHS remobilises safely from the pandemic.

**Changes to appointment system at High Valleyfield GP Practice**

There will shortly be some temporary changes to the appointment system at Valleyfield Medical Practice to prioritise appointments based on clinical need and urgency. These are necessary to address amends to GP cover within the practice over the coming weeks. More information can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2021/11/temporary-changes-to-appointment-system-at-valleyfield-medical-practice/).

**Ongoing pressure across services**

NHS Fife continues to experience significant and sustained pressures across our services. Our Emergency Department is a service that is under particular pressure and is regularly receiving around 10% more people requiring care than it did pre-Covid; in September 2021 we recorded a 30% increase on twelve months previous (6300 patients across the month).

This upturn in the number of presentations is in addition to an increase in the complexity and severity of illness, as well as the challenges posed by Covid and delayed discharge. We continue to engage in numerous activities to mitigate the impact of these challenges, including regular liaison with leaders in our acute services, the ongoing development or refinement of specialist pathways, and ongoing media and press activity.

**New national guidance for Emergency Departments**

The Scottish Government has published guidance for emergency department teams to ensure people are being seen by the right person in the right place for their healthcare need. The guidance has been developed in response to a request from NHS Boards to support hospitals to safely refer people to the most appropriate place for treatment if they do not need emergency care. With the level of people self-referring to hospital emergency departments returning to pre-Covid levels, hospitals are seeing more patients whose needs can be better met closer to home by local pharmacies or GP practices. The new guidance can be accessed [here](https://bit.ly/EDguidance).

**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/).

**Staffing challenges**

Current recruitment and retention challenges in Scotland’s NHS and General Practice are both well documented and across services. NHS Fife is engaged in several large-scale recruitment initiatives, including targeted social media and ex special forces campaigns, as well as the progression of a programme of international recruitment.

In addition, the establishment of our workforce hub has allowed us to respond to areas of specific need and re-assign members of staff from across the organisation to services that are under particular pressure.

**Covid status app**

Constituents can download their Covid status app [here](https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-status), which gives record of vaccination. If they are experiencing issues with vaccination status they should telephone the national vaccination status helpline on 0808 196 8565.

**SAMH drop-in clinics being provided across Fife**

The Scottish Association for Mental health (SAMH) is providing a series of regular mental health drop-in sessions across Fife (Leven, Kirkcaldy, Burntisland, and Dunfermline). The sessions, which run from 12noon-8PM, are led by trained peer practitioners with their own lived experiences of mental health issues and recovery. No referral is required to attend the drop-ins. More information is available [here](https://www.facebook.com/nhsfife/posts/10159717659052246).

**Test & Protect**

**Community Testing**

Testing sites are available across Fife for members of the public with and without symptoms. Anyone with symptoms of Covid-19 or who has been advised to take a test should book a test via [www.nhsinform.scot](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Chamiltoncr%5CDesktop%5Cwww.nhsinform.scot). If support is needed with the booking process, call 119. More information and current locations can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-and-projects/coronavirus-information/coronavirus-testing-in-fife/testing-for-those-without-symptoms/).

**Universal lateral flow testing kits**

Covid-19 rapid home testing kits are now available to anyone in Scotland who does not have symptoms, with members of the public encouraged to test themselves twice weekly. These free kits can be ordered and delivered through the post by calling 119 or [ordering online](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested/pages/no-covid-symptoms/). They are also available from any of Fife’s 85 pharmacies or can be picked up through our community testing programme. Further information on testing in Fife can be found [here](http://www.nhsfife.org/testing).

## 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 touchWe 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 final dates for 2021 is:**Friday 10 December** at 9.30 amElected 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/).  |

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