Issue 71 | 31st March 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**

**Local vaccination overview**

Across Fife, more than 830,000 doses of vaccine have been delivered since the programme began in late 2020, and more than 235,000 people are up to date with their recommended number of vaccines.

Over the last week, efforts have largely been focussed on continuing to vaccinate the [5-11 age group](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-and-projects/coronavirus-information/covid-19-vaccination-programme-in-fife/children-and-young-people-5-11/child-vaccination-clinics-drop-ins/) via scheduled appointments and older residents in care homes. This weekend will see the first of our [child-only drop-in clinics](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-and-projects/coronavirus-information/covid-19-vaccination-programme-in-fife/children-and-young-people-5-11/child-vaccination-clinics-drop-ins/), where parents and carers who were unable to make their previously scheduled appointment can visit with their child/children for vaccination. We have also [published a video](https://youtu.be/L1NNstT8X80) to our social media feeds and websites, featuring a member of our children’s community nursing team explaining more about the vaccine and what to expect at an appointment or drop-in.

Next week, we commence scheduled Spring Booster vaccinations for the over 75 age group, as well as expanding the programme to all of those who are housebound.

[Drop-in clinics](https://www.nhsfife.org/dropinclinics/) are ongoing and we continue to plan for the upcoming extension of vaccination eligibility to those aged 12 and over who are immunosuppressed, which is likely to begin in June.

**National scheduling issue**

We are aware that some parents and carers contacting the national helpline following a positive Covid test have been unable to reschedule appointments for their children due to a scheduling issue. We have been assured that the national team are working urgently to resolve this issue and ensure appropriate future appointments are available. In the meantime, guidance from the national team is that parents and carers who have so far been unable to postpone their appointments should instead cancel their appointments and call back closer to the time where their child becomes eligible.

**5–11-year-old eligibility for vaccine following positive Covid test**

Following enquiries from the constituents of Elected Members, we would like to take this opportunity to clarify vaccination eligibility for children aged 5-11 years who have tested positive for Covid-19. Currently, children aged 5-11 years should wait 12 weeks from their positive test before vaccination, unless they are considered at higher risk from the virus, where this interval can be reduced to four weeks. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine/the-vaccines/vaccinating-children-aged-5-to-11-years/).

**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**

You can find out about the numbers of people in Scotland who are vaccinated along with data about case numbers, and hospitalisations by accessing the Scottish Government [Daily Update](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-data-for-scotland/) or by visiting Public Health Scotland’s [Daily Dashboard](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/phs.covid.19/viz/COVID-19DailyDashboard_15960160643010/Overview)

**Test & Protect**

**Scottish Government Test and Protect Transition Plan**

Scottish Government have published the transition plan for Test and Protect. The plan outlines the transition from population-wide testing to a more targeted approach. The plan also includes a helpful appendix which sets out associated timescales. It is available to view [here](https://www.gov.scot/publications/test-protect-transition-plan/).

**Self-isolation, close contact and testing guidance**

Up-to-date guidance around isolation periods, rules for close contacts and further testing information, including a walk-through guide, can be found [here](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-protect/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-individuals-with-possible-coronavirus-infection).

**Community Testing**

Alongside UK Government symptomatic testing, our community testing sites continue to operate across Fife, seven days a week, providing LFD tests, and PCRs where needed. Members of the public can drop-in at any time during opening hours to access testing and a variety of support. A targeted approach is also now being taken to distribute LFD home testing kits directly to members of the public at selected venues including food banks, supermarkets, and local shops, with staff on hand to signpost to further support. As well as these targeted distribution sites, home LFD kits continue to be available to pick up from testing sites and can be ordered online for home delivery.

* **As part of the transition plan, there will be no home testing kit distribution from participating community pharmacies beyond 31st March 2022. Since the start of the 'Pharmacy LFD Collect' service in June 2021, 286,838 kits have been distributed from community pharmacies in Fife. Further information on testing is available** [**here**](http://www.nhsfife.org/communitytesting)**.**

**Other news**

**Healthcare services under extreme pressure**

Our healthcare services and the staff working there continue to persevere working under extremely challenging circumstances.  The demand for patient care within the Emergency Department at the Victoria Hospital has been sustained at a very high level for several weeks and on Monday (28th March) our ED recorded one of its busiest days on record.

The reasons behind the increasing demand for urgent and emergency care are multifactorial but is no doubt impacted by the increasing community transmission of Covid-19 and while patients may wait longer for less urgent issues, all efforts are made to ensure that the most critically ill patients are assessed and treated as a priority.

We continue to ask the people of Fife to use their Emergency Department responsibly and where appropriate make use of the full range of support available -  details of which are available on NHS Inform.

**Hospital visiting**

The current hospital visiting arrangements in Fife are that patients can receive at least one visitor per day. This position remains under regular review and the latest provision s can be found [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/visiting/). We have used our social media platforms to remind those who are visiting patients in our hospitals to ensure they are up to date with the latest arrangements for that ward by [calling in advance.](https://fife.link/97e8)

**Dental access update**

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we are aware that there have been access issues for non-urgent NHS dentistry, due to the need to adhere to strict Infection Prevention and Control guidance. Remobilisation from this position has been undertaken in phases and, mindful of ongoing Infection Prevention and Control measures, dental practices are now broadly able to provide the full range of NHS treatments to patients in need of both urgent and non-urgent care. In addition, we are continuing to work closely with practices to support activity and help access additional funding for investment in areas such as improved ventilation and additional dental handpieces.

Covid-19 staff absence has impacted dental practices similarly to the rest of the community, leading to absence that directly impacts on the ability to deliver care. We have supported dental practices when during outbreaks through contact tracing, risk assessment and use of buddy practices to provide urgent dental care.

In addition to contacting their practice directly, patient can contact NHS Fife’s Dental Advice Line, which is a service that is staffed by members of our Public Dental Service and provides information for both registered and unregistered patients. The Fife Dental Advice Line is 01592 226 555 (Open Monday to Friday, 8.00 am – 5.00 pm).

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.

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/).

All Information correct at time of publishing. Issued by:

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