Issue 69 | 18th 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**

The spring booster vaccination campaign began in earnest this week, with the vaccination of residents in local care homes. Over the coming days and weeks, we will be in touch with people who are housebound to arrange home vaccination visits and sending out appointment letters inviting people over the age of 75, and those aged 12 and over who are immunosuppressed, to attend a suitable clinic.

As vaccine protection wanes over time, it is important to top-up virus defence levels with a booster. This is brought into particular focus during the last fortnight where, across Fife, there has been a significant rise in positive cases – across all age groups - resulting in a notable increase in Covid related hospital admissions.

The carers and parents of children aged 5-11 are now beginning to receive appointment letters inviting them for a first dose of vaccination and, in addition, we will shortly begin to advertise child-only drop-in sessions. Due to various considerations, including logistical and vaccine requirements, some clinics and drop-in sessions will be dedicated specifically to those aged 5-11. Further information on these sessions, including venues and times, will be made available in the coming weeks, although they will predominantly include evening and weekend appointments to ensure education is not disrupted.

Elsewhere, drop-in sessions and [outreach work](http://www.nhsfife.org/dropin) continued this week with visits to venues, including Tesco Superstore in Dunfermline.

**Community and workplace resource**

We have developed an [online resource](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/campaigns-and-projects/coronavirus-information/covid-resources-for-local-workplaces-and-community-organisations/) that is being made available to local businesses, hospitality, and other community organisations to help them promote the benefits of vaccination and testing to clients and staff. The resource includes social media graphics, posters, videos, and other helpful assets to outline the importance of maintaining good practice and playing a role in keeping both individuals and businesses safe from the effects of the virus.

**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. 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 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, participating community pharmacies, and online for home delivery. Further information is available [here](http://www.nhsfife.org/communitytesting).

**Test message scam circulating**

We've been made aware of a text message scam circulating, where people posing as Test and Protect contact tracers are texting people to suggest they have been in close contact with a positive case and signposting them to pay for test kits. This is not a genuine message from our Test and Protect team. If constituents receive a text claiming to be from Test and Protect and they have any doubts around its authenticity, they should call 0800 030 8012 to verify. If constituents require home test kits, these can be picked up [free-of-charge](https://www.nhsfife.org/testing/). Potential contact tracing scams should be reported to Advice Direct Scotland on 0808 800 9060.

**Other news**

**Healthcare services under extreme pressure**

Earlier this week, we put out communications to advise members of the public that we are under extreme pressure due to managing a very significant demand for healthcare services. In particular, this has been caused by an increasing number of people presenting with Covid and a range of other conditions, coupled with a rise staff absence through Covid. The rise in demand is affecting our hospitals, particularly within our Emergency Department and admissions wards, and is also having a significant impact on local GP practices. We have asked people to use healthcare services responsibly and make use of the full range of services available, including local pharmacy, dentist surgery or high street optometrist. More information is available [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/news-updates/latest-news/2022/03/healthcare-services-in-fife-under-extreme-pressure/).

**New pregnancy self-referral system launched**

Women in Fife who discover that they are pregnant can now self-refer to maternity services to start their pregnancy journey. The first step is for them to complete our online referral form to register with a midwife, or find out more about the options available to them [here](https://www.nhsfife.org/.../youre-pregnant-what-happens-now/). Alternatively, women can also call 01592 643355 (extension 28374) Monday to Friday between 10am–12 noon. Once they have registered, a midwife will be in touch to provide them with all the information and support they need to guide them through their pregnancy.

**Nursing recruitment**

NHS Fife has recruited extensively for nursing and support staff throughout the Covid pandemic. However, pressures on nursing staffing remain and recruitment continues to be challenging due to there being a limited supply of suitably qualified or experienced staff, coupled with the need for an expanded nursing workforce because of the pandemic and the subsequent vaccination programme. Several programmes are ongoing which are assisting us in increasing our qualified nursing workforce. One example is our overseas recruitment programme, with NHS Fife becoming the first in Scotland to welcome international recruits into the workforce as part of a partnership with Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. This partnership will see the recruitment of up to 40 registered nurses in the coming months. We have also had considerable success in recent years attracting newly qualified nursing staff and continue to work with universities and colleges to demonstrate the benefits of a nursing career in Fife. Further, NHS Fife is also committed to expanding the wider team to support frontline clinicians and expanding our nurse bank to widen the pool of both qualified and non-qualified clinical support.

**Social media comments relating to the University of St Andrews**

Following online comments made by our chair relating to an article in the student publication, the Saint, we have released the following statement:

*“The tweet issued by Tricia Marwick was posted in a personal capacity from her own social media account. The views expressed in the tweet are her own and do not reflect those of NHS Fife. NHS Fife has a much-valued relationship with the University of St Andrews. Staff and students at the School of Medicine have played an integral part of Fife’s frontline response to the Covid pandemic and we collaborate with the university on a wide range of research and development programmes. We look forward to building upon these relationships still further for the benefit of both institutions, and indeed for the people of Fife."*

**Lochgelly and Kincardine Medical Centre**

Earlier this week NHS Fife’s executive director group considered the business case for a new health and wellbeing facility for Lochgelly and Kincardine. The report comprehensively captures various factors, including the proposed new service delivery model and increased size of building, and is mindful that the new centre will play a larger role than it has done previously within the community it will serve. The business case will be formally submitted for Scottish Government scrutiny in May.

**General Practice recruitment**

There continues to be challenges in recruiting to some GP vacancies in Fife, as there has been across much of the UK. Whilst NHS Fife does not recruit GPs – this is carried out by individual medical practices – we do work collaboratively with practices to identify what additional support we can provide and ensure patients continue to receive good quality local healthcare. NHS Fife is working closely with practices to support their recruitment efforts, including through the ScotGEM programme, as part of the overarching medical oversight group, and supporting practices to embed highly skilled multi-disciplinary teams to work alongside GPs in practices.

There are systems in place to ensure all patients in Fife have access to care and treatment from a medical practice within their local area. While there are currently practices with full lists, those practices continue to be allocated new patients through NHS Practitioner Services. NHS Practitioner Services always allocate patients to practices within their area of residence.

**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/)

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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