

**Issue 3 | 23 April 2020**

## **Introduction**

**As part of efforts to keep you informed, NHS Fife is issuing a weekly update dedicated to our response to the Coronavirus pandemic. This weekly briefing is circulated to Fife’s MPs, MSPs and local Councillors.**

##### This digital update includes information on matters including planning and resilience, operational updates, along with signposting to the latest media updates issued by NHS Fife to ensure clear, consistent and timely sharing of information.

##### Updates are also issued on our new public facing Coronavirus micro site which provides a hub of information and advice as well as our established, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages.

## [**https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org**](https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/)

## **Hot Topics**

**Clap for Carers/Social Distancing – 16/04/2020**

NHS Fife appreciates all of the incredible support that has been shown to the NHS and key workers– including last week’s display by the emergency services in Fife as part of the national #clapforcarers movement. A show of support on that scale and of that nature at our sites was unprecedented in the history of NHS Fife and our staff were humbled and moved by this gesture. A small number of our staff caught up in the moment, went outside to express their gratitude to the emergency services for this show of solidarity. However, NHS Fife recognises that staff are ambassadors for the NHS and must abide by the social distancing guidelines that have been put in place across the UK to slow the spread, save lives and protect the communities we serve from the virus.

**Resuscitation policy**

NHS Fife’s policy on resuscitation (DNA CPR) remains unchanged despite the spread of coronavirus and there are no protocols in place preventing staff from performing resuscitation on patients with COVID-19. The care we provide to all patients is person-centred, with any clinical decisions made based entirely on the individual and their particular circumstances.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

NHS Fife continues to work round the clock with partners across the public sector to ensure patients and staff in both our acute and community hospitals remain protected and supported throughout this pandemic. NHS Fife has established a hub to distribute quantities of personal protective equipment to healthcare sites across Fife. This enables NHS Fife to provide supplies of important PPE quickly and efficiently to healthcare staff working in the Kingdom’s communities and in its hospitals.

**Importance of seeking timely emergency care**

NHS Fife is experiencing a significant reduction in the number of patients presenting at our Emergency Department. We are aware that there are some seriously unwell patients that are delaying coming to hospital or dialling 999. We have published a video on our social media channels stating that our Emergency Department remains open, and encouraging those who are seriously unwell to seek help as early as possible to ensure their chances of a positive outcome are as high as possible.

## **Media**

**£500,000 donation to support local coronavirus effort**

A local donor has gifted £500,000 to support patients and healthcare staff in their efforts to tackle coronavirus in the Kingdom. The donation was made to the Fife Health Board Endowment Fund and the benefactor, who wishes to remain anonymous, has asked the funds be used immediately in providing additional support for patients and the healthcare staff working tirelessly to care for them. The Fife Health Board Endowment Fund is a registered charity which funds a range of initiatives to benefit the patients, carers and staff of NHS Fife. The charity is funded entirely through donations and supports programmes aimed at health improvement and disease prevention. The Endowment Fund is separate to the Fife Health Board and its monies cannot be used to provide core health services.

**30 medical school graduates join Fife coronavirus response**

More than 30 graduates from medical schools across the UK have joined Fife’s medical workforce this week, after graduating early to support the response to coronavirus in the Kingdom. The latest cohort of medical staff have had their registrations accelerated to allow them to take up roles in Fife’s hospitals around 10 weeks early. The date was brought forward following guidance from the General Medical Council which allowed the latest medical graduates to assist earlier with frontline healthcare services. Each new graduate has undergone six years of intense medical training and will be mentored by an experienced clinician in the early months of their new role. The new graduates will initially supplement clinical teams based at the Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy and Queen Margaret Hospital in Dunfermline. This, in turn, will enable medical staff based within the acute hospitals to instead offer greater support to colleagues providing frontline healthcare within Fife’s communities.

**Remote GP consultation software use expanded across Fife**

NHS Fife is expanding its use of a ground-breaking system that allows clinicians to consult with patients remotely. The Near Me video consulting service was initially used mainly in the Highlands, where distances can be an issue. Now, its use is being rapidly escalated across Scotland as part of the Covid-19 response. All GP Practices in Fife are now equipped to use Near Me. Remote consultations are being carried out in the first instance by telephone but Near Me is used if a video link is felt to be more appropriate. Patients offered a Near Me appointment at home will need to have a device for making a video call, such as a smartphone, tablet or computer with webcam, and a reliable internet connection. As with any other appointment, patients must first contact their GP practice and it will arrange for an appointment to be booked in the normal manner. This may be by telephone, virtual or face to face. General information about Near Me is available at [www.nearme.scot](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.nearme.scot%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR0oxQ2LwUdz6iMu05OYRmTG7aEJKZQLaP71ZK-0798UnVkphU5g0x6-I-Y&h=AT0zaMlt53V525qNRTHmVaa7-E4mpHfIrD0-bCNai7hDNjQH7FB8ISVVjZr-K_msK7oBmmfOiANRxI4TTQWjHaouE2r7YaUjteDytQCPGaC5gb-5BnvuOdoR3BrPgnCK8eETShztn7CUOta8GXI4OdkrQy1oRz2JIJRJ1-PaLxSugtNxHqTUX8wJDJOdFPAMwJZyX3_3bgH4XIoc5thxd8qANOoC0Bab8JXET6rchWol1bi--nwlwvcazxlQWo9gkbNBoSPLelDpwUbJ5XRsfIXl_0jxcottivCFvFvHSQ7P3RKRTOQUwM5qv_PoFrAlz1TnFwxV54LHigcWjUKisxxmC58wWTadh_wsIvtatk8sXkMLYdGd8tON8_0kDZGJ8dRz6Ol3HgiPSnwYlOoIukSigH4qY7hfMRJ8GC4WV_urfoiwSsbkI6mWTdqL0urg_mNsYIhOQAaBJhl5kJOheT6Us5A_BDD8tdJav1e-HcATROaH87tu2dGyZ2K5eLpNUY3k_PbZwRcLGxSpigFgGAEWQBbjdQcQx7SfeXkCasPciRI7d-wKpdbiHLDcNjTpn1sAdCgeMNjRBmR1Oy7NwLLllVkJumStnOf_GaZC-qT2rZOx9AT8QoXP) and a short video is also available showing how easy it is to use.

**New iPads helping hospital patients stay connected**

55 new iPads are helping to bring families and friends closer together in the face of restricted visiting arrangements at NHS Fife. Resilience measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus mean that visiting is suspended at all hospital sites across Fife, with a small number of exceptions. The new iPads are available at all hospital sites in Fife and allow patients to stay connected with loved ones throughout their stay using video calling software. They will be funded by the Fife Health Board Endowment Fund to help all hospital patients and alleviate some of the stress that the suspension of visiting brings in general.

**Patients urged to order only the medicines that they really need**

Patients in Fife are being reminded that they should follow their normal repeat prescription ordering pattern and only order the medicines they need. There are no issues with the supply of medicines so there is no reason to stockpile. Due to significant demand being placed on local pharmacies, some will close for short periods, or operate reduced opening hours. Where this happens there is clear signage on the entrance to the pharmacy as to when they will be open again or directions to an alternative open pharmacy. NHS Inform has a complete list of local pharmacies on the [NHS Inform website](https://www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory/pharmacies) where people can search for the nearest pharmacy if their usual one is temporarily closed. The increased demand may also lead to prescriptions taking longer than usual to be processed and the patience and understanding of the public is very much appreciated. Like all other healthcare facilities, those with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should not visit their local pharmacy. If people have any flu-like symptoms, a cough, a fever or a cold – or if they generally feel unwell –we would advise them to stay at home. Advice on self-care is available at [www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus](http://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus) and if symptoms worsen then they should contact NHS24 on 111.

**Donations and offers of support**

A new section of the NHS Fife Coronavirus micro site has been launched to outline the process for members of the general public and organisations wanting to assist NHS Fife’s response to the Coronavirus pandemic in relation to donations and offers of help - including supplying PPE. For more information, visit: [**https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/donations-and-offers-of-help/**](https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/donations-and-offers-of-help/)

## **Clinical updates**

**Changes to services/visiting arrangements**

The latest information around changes to services, access and visiting can be found in a new area of our new micro site (<https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/changes-to-services/>)

**Updated guidance around visiting for vulnerable patients**

The Scottish Government has updated its principles for restricting visitors to patients across NHS Scotland during Covid-19 outbreak to essential visits only. The following visits are deemed essential:

* A birth partner during childbirth
* For a person receiving end-of-life care
* To support someone with a mental health issue such as dementia, a learning disability or autism where not being present would cause the patient to be distressed
* To accompany a child in hospital.

**Fife chosen as coronavirus monitoring pilot site**

Fife is to host the first pilot project to monitor the Scottish COVID-19 Programme. The programme is being run by Health Protection Scotland, on behalf of the Scottish Government, and will monitor the COVID-19 infection in the Scottish population over the next few months. The data gathered will be used for scientific modelling, political decision-making and social interventions that will help maintain the functions of the NHS.

**Coronavirus RECOVERY trials**

NHS Fife is playing its part in contributing to global research and development through the RECOVERY Trial. The RECOVERY Trial has now entered a second phase to collect data and biological samples from patients in Fife with suspected or proven COVID-19 infection to help the rapid, coordinated clinical investigation of the disease. All patients hospitalised with suspected or proven infection may be invited to participate in one or both of these studies. Karen Gray, NHS Fife’s Lead Research and Development Research Nurse, gained national recognition in recent days when she was nominated as the first ever  ‘Researcher of the Week’ by the coordinators of the RECOVERY Trial in Scotland for all her hard work in getting this COVID-19 study open and recruiting.

## **Workforce updates**

**StaffLink – the new NHS Fife Staff App**

NHS Fife is about to launch its new staff app – StaffLink. StaffLink will ensure our workforce have the important news and information they need at their fingertips, whether they are at work or at home. They will also be able to access key guidance and documents quickly and easily to help them in their daily roles. Secure and free to use, the app is easily accessible on their work or personal smartphone, tablet and desktop.

**Mobile testing for staff**

Mobile testing, where the testing team visits a staff member at home to take a sample, is available Monday to Friday. A mobile testing appointment will only be considered if:

* They meet the testing criteria set out in protocol, **and**;
* They live within Fife, **and**;
* The staff member / household member has no access to their own transport, **and**;
* They do not have a household member living with them that can drive them to a drive-through appointment

The mobile testing service will be subject to review depending on demand and capacity of the testing team.

**Bank staff encouraged to sign up for additional shifts**

NHS Fife Bank staff are being encouraged to sign up for additional shifts to support a range of service priorities and changing demand**.** NHS Fife needs to ensure that our nurse bank resource is assigned to areas of greatest need to sustain essential service delivery. Service priorities and demands are being highlighted each day ensuring that we can, as a system, appropriately deploy our resources to assist and maintain continuity of patient care.  Current opportunities for bank deployment include: registered nurses for hospital at home and registered nurses and healthcare support workers for community hospitals.

**Recruitment area on coronavirus micro site**

As part of ongoing Covid-19 resilience, NHS Fife is recruiting additional staff to complement its existing workforce. Details on how we are recruiting to these additional roles can be found on our dedicated Coronavirus micro site at [**https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/opportunities/**](https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/opportunities/)

**Public Health Update**

**Covid-19 local data**

There have been a lot of enquiries about Covid-19 data and what is available at a Fife level. Most of the data published on Covid-19 is published at a Scottish level, but there is some local data published and updated daily.  You can find the number of confirmed cases, people in hospital and ICU in Fife here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-data-for-scotland/>

Importantly, NHS Fife does not directly collect data relating to Covid-19 deaths that occur in a care home setting. NHS Fife only collates and reports hospital deaths.  Deaths in care homes relating to Covid-19 are submitted and then recorded directly by the registrar of births and deaths. 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 at: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats>

**Population health challenge**

The NHS Fife Public Health Department would appreciate the support of all Elected Members in re-enforcing the key messages around issues such as hand washing, respiratory hygiene, and physical distancing in communication with constituents.

Whilst the Covid 19 pandemic is primarily a physical health challenge, there will also be significant challenges posed by the socio-economic effects of the virus and the subsequent local and national responses to these. Public Health in Fife work with local resilience partners to mitigate some of this impact and this will continue to be a local priority.

## **National Guidance**

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| **Health Protection Scotland Guidance**  Available at:  [www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19](http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19) |
| **Information and Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings**  <https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2973/documents/1_COVID-19-Guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings.pdf> |
| **Information and guidance for social or community care residential settings**  [www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-information-and-guidance-for-social-or-community-care-residential-settings/](http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-information-and-guidance-for-social-or-community-care-residential-settings/) |
| **Ready Scotland Information**  <https://www.readyscotland.org/coronavirus/> |
| **NHS Inform**  [www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19) |
| **NHS Inform Covid-19 translated materials**  NHS Inform has created a toolkit of accessible versions and translated Coronavirus information.  [Download the Coronavirus (COVID-19) communication toolkit (ZIP, 20 MB)](https://www.nhsinform.scot/media/3011/coronavirus-communication-toolkit-18032020.zip)  [Download translated versions of our COVID-19 posters (ZIP, 22MB)](https://www.nhsinform.scot/media/3021/coronavirus-covid-19-posters_-7_-languages19032020.zip) |
| **Free Helpline for those who do not have symptoms**  A free helpline has been set up for those who do not have symptoms but are looking for general health advice Tel: 0800 028 2816. |
| **Helpline for small businesses**  A helpline providing businesses across Scotland with advice and guidance on COVID-19 is open Monday to Friday, between 8.30am to 5.30pm.  Tel: 0300 303 0660. |

*Issued by NHS Fife Communications, information correct at: 23/04/2020*