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**First round COVID-19 vaccinations completed in Fife’s care homes with more than 12,000 jabs administered across the Kingdom so far**

The first round of COVID-19 vaccinations have now been carried out in all 76 of Fife’s care homes as the efforts to protect the Kingdom’s most vulnerable residents gathers pace.

Around 5,000 vaccinations have now been carried out in Fife amongst care home residents and staff, who were amongst the first to be prioritised for immunisation.

A further 7,100 healthcare staff working in Fife have also been vaccinated as part of the efforts to maintain critical NHS services over the extremely busy winter period.

NHS Fife’s Director of Public Health, Dona Milne, said of the progress made so far:

“We have made significant strides over recent weeks to protect those in Fife most vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 and completing the first round of vaccinations in our care homes is an important milestone in these efforts.

“While this is really encouraging, it is vital that we do not become complacent. We know that the prevalence of COVID-19 in our communities has increased and we need local people to continue to follow the public health measures in place if we are to supress the virus and reduce the numbers becoming seriously unwell with COVID-19.”

Fife residents aged 80 and above are the next priority group to begin vaccination, as set out in the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) guidance. This follows the recent approval of the Oxford/ AstraZeneca vaccine, which will see those aged 80 and over vaccinated at their local GP practices.

All 54 GP practices in Fife will be participating in the COVID-19 vaccination programme, with most beginning to book appointments this week.

Patients aged 80 and over will be contacted by their local GP practice by letter or telephone as a vaccine becomes available to them. Those aged 75-79 will be in the next priority group to begin vaccination, followed by those aged 70-74 and those considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable. Broad timelines for the vaccination of these other groups will be confirmed in the coming days.

Given the significant scale of the vaccination programme, patients are asked not to contact their local GP practice for updates to ensure phone lines remain available to those requiring urgent assessment.

Scott Garden is NHS Fife’s Director of Pharmacy and Medicines, and said of the rollout of the community vaccination programme:

 “We recognise that many people are incredibly keen to get vaccinated and we are asking for continued patience over the coming days and weeks as the community vaccination programme rolls out.

“Healthcare staff are working incredibly hard to vaccinate local people as quickly as vaccine supply allows and we will get to all of those who are eligible and who wish to be vaccinated in the coming weeks.”

A local online support hub has been created to provide information on testing for COVID-19 and updates on the pandemic. Visit: [www.nhsfife.org/coronavirus](http://www.nhsfife.org/coronavirus)

Additional information on the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Scotland is available on the NHS Inform website by visiting: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/immunisation/vaccines/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine>. A freephone helpline is also available to help with any questions about COVID-19. The helpline is open from 8.00am to 10.00pm each day on 0800 028 2816.

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**Notes to Editors**

* All figures stated are correct as on 13 January 2021.
* Public Health Scotland has commenced publication of weekly data by board. This data is available here:- <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/news/2021/january/covid-19-vaccination-in-scotland-update-to-the-weekly-data/>
* The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-30-december-2020/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation-advice-on-priority-groups-for-covid-19-vaccination-30-december-2020#vaccine-priority-groups-advice-on-30-december-2020>

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