

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](#): or follow us on our social media channels -[Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#).

Covid & flu vaccination overview

Last weekend, eligibility for the booster vaccine was extended to include those over the age of 40 and we have been using our social media channels to encourage people to book an appointment using either the national [online booking portal](#), or by calling the national helpline on 0800 030 8013. For those unable to access a suitable appointment, we have been providing a series of [drop-in booster vaccination clinics](#) throughout this week, where those eligible can receive a booster, first or second dose vaccine without scheduling an appointment.

This week the JCVI published guidance recommending the provision of a booster vaccine to people aged 18-39. In response to the changing risk posed by the new Omicron variant, the JCVI also recommended booster eligibility be brought forward to three months after the primary course, and that a second dose of vaccine be given to young people aged 12 to 15 no sooner than 12 weeks after their first dose. We have now received instruction from the Chief Medical Officer and updated our clinical protocols as a matter of urgency to enable our vaccination staff to legally administer boosters and second doses to the additional groups from today (3rd December). In line with the new guidance, we will be prioritising booster doses for those aged 40 and over who have received their second dose a minimum of twelve weeks previously, to ensure those most at risk of the effects of Covid-19 can be vaccinated as quickly as possible. Similarly, those considered clinically vulnerable and requiring third doses, along with anyone aged 12 and over requiring first and second doses, will also continue to be seen. People aged 18 to 39 years old who are not considered clinically vulnerable will be able to book booster appointments in the coming weeks, as the vaccination of those aged 40 and over nears completion.

Impact of Storm Arwen

Last Friday (26th November), in light of the red weather warning for Storm Arwen we took a decision to stand down all our vaccination clinics at around 5PM. The decision was taken to ensure the continued safety of both staff and patients. Those who we could contact were rearranged with those we were unable to contact encouraged to rebook via social media messaging.

The following morning vaccinations at Oakley Community Centre, the Neuk Centre in Anstruther, and the Larick Centre in Tayport had to be temporarily suspended due to power outages caused by the storm. Once again, we worked to reappoint patients or redirect those who were able to travel to nearby alternatives. To help us manage capacity during this time, general drop-in clinics at Dunfermline and St Andrews were stepped down.

Vaccination of Housebound Patients

The programme for vaccinating the housebound population of Fife commenced in early November and the significant number of patients requiring home visits, coupled with the operational challenges of delivering a programme of this size, have led to significant challenges in achieving our target timescale for completion. Despite this, the teams delivering the vaccines have worked at pace and we still expect to have all housebound patients offered vaccination ahead of Christmas. We do not expect the recent booster eligibility changes to have a large impact on the vaccination of housebound patients, who are vaccinated by local community nursing teams. Housebound patients who are yet to be vaccinated should be assured that they will be contacted shortly to arrange a home visit, and anyone with concerns can contact their local GP practice to ensure that they are known to their community nursing team.

Booster drop-in clinics

All confirmed drop-in clinics, including opening times and criteria, are listed [here](#).

Flu vaccination for pregnant women

Women who are pregnant continue to be provided with the opportunity to be vaccinated against flu at upcoming hospital appointments. Those who do not have upcoming hospital appointments are encouraged to phone the following number to arrange for vaccination:

[Victoria Hospital: 01592 729 089](#)

[Queen Margaret Hospital: 01383 627 033](#)

COVID cases in West Fife villages

In recent weeks we have seen a slightly higher level of infection in some West Fife villages, particularly amongst school-age children. We are aware of a particular cluster of Covid-19 cases associated with Carnock Primary School, where parents have been issued with advisory letters to inform them of recent cases and given public health advice to reduce the risk of catching and passing on the virus. We continue to ask people across Fife to remain vigilant for the signs and symptoms of the virus, regardless of how mild, and self-isolate and book a test if they develop any of these.

Further information

[This table](#) 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. Further information about the joint Covid booster and flu vaccination programme can be found [here](#). The current number of confirmed cases, people in hospital and intensive care in Fife can be viewed [here](#).

Other news

Workforce update

We continue to experience recruitment and retention challenges across professions and significant work is underway to alleviate this. 150 newly qualified nurses have recently been appointed, following a successful recruitment campaign, whilst we are also one of the first Scottish health boards to work with the Yeovil Trust, which is an agency that works to bring international talent to the UK; so far, we have appointed 40 nurses and three radiographers via this route. A new campaign to recruit healthcare support workers will begin later this month.

In addition to the proactive recruitment detailed above, around 50 staff from non-clinical areas are being given accelerated training and support with the goal of redeploying them to patient facing roles in areas of particular need.

Cases of winter vomiting bug

We have seen an increase in norovirus cases across Fife and we are reaching out to local people to offer advice on how to reduce their chances of catching the bug, and what they should do if they are unlucky enough to fall ill with it. Norovirus can affect people of any age group and spreads rapidly, but usually clears up by itself in a few days and without the need for medication. Although more common in the winter months, people can catch the bug at any time of year. Because it's highly contagious, anyone experiencing symptoms should avoid going to hospital, attending their GP, or visiting a care home so they don't pass the virus on to others. Those needing healthcare advice should instead call their GP practice or the NHS 24 111 service.

Launch of health and wellbeing conversation

We are asking local people to join a conversation about health and wellbeing by taking part in a new survey and would encourage our elected members to promote this opportunity via your own contacts and communications channels. The pandemic has brought the most significant health challenge in the history of the NHS and we believe the time is right for us to think differently and make change, for the better. As we develop plans for the future, it is important to us that we capture the thoughts, views, and attitudes of Fife's residents. We want to start a conversation with individuals, community groups, partners, and stakeholders, on how we can support their future health and wellbeing, learn lessons from the pandemic, and recognise the impact of Covid-19 on specific groups of people. Our new 'Community Conversation Survey' will launch at 10am on **Monday 6th December** and will enable residents to give us their

feedback on local health services, both now and into the future. For more information and to access the online survey will be available at: www.nhsfife.org/conversation. Paper copies of the survey will also be available at all Fife Council Libraries, NHS Fife receptions and our main vaccination venues.

Community testing suspension due to snow

The impact of heavy overnight snow meant that we were required to stand down our community testing programme on Sunday (29th November). It became clear that accessing some of our more remote sites was a challenge and to ensure the continued safety of both staff and the public, mobile testing was suspended. Fixed testing continued and community testing resumed as advertised the following morning.

Hospital visiting

Hospital visiting arrangements continue to be reviewed on a weekly basis and remains at one visitor, [with some exceptions](#).

Test & Protect

Community testing and festive campaign

1 in 3 people with COVID-19 don't have symptoms but can still pass the virus on. Vaccination provides very good levels of protection; however, it is still possible to catch the virus. By testing regularly, members of the public can help to protect those around them. In the run-up to the festive season, a local campaign has been developed highlighting the role of community testing and encouraging members of the public to test regularly as part of their normal routine. In addition, people should test prior to socialising or heading out to busy venues. A range of channels will be utilised over the coming weeks and a supporting toolkit has been developed to support partners and community organisations to further promote the messaging. The toolkit is available to download [here](#).

Community testing sites operate across Fife, operating seven days a week. Members of the public can drop-in at any time during opening hours, no booking is necessary. LFD home testing kits are also available to pick up from testing sites across Fife, participating community pharmacies and can be ordered for home delivery. Further information on community testing and LFD home testing kits is available [here](#).

Symptomatic cases

Anyone with the symptoms of COVID-19 or who has been advised to take a test should book a test via www.nhsinform.scot If support is needed with the booking process, call 119.

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.

Keep in touch

We 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 meetings

NHS 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 date for 2021 is:

Friday 10 December at 9.30 am

Elected members enquiries

NHS Fife is committed to responding to elected member enquiries 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

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](#).

Covid-19 statistics

Vaccine progress data update

Public Health Scotland publishes [daily statistical data](#) 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](#) 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](#).

General Covid-19 data

You can find the latest Covid-19 statistical report [here](#). The number of confirmed cases, people in hospital and ICU in Fife can be found [here](#). 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](#). 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](#).

General statistical publications

The latest local health and social care performance statistics, including emergency department, cancer, and delayed discharge, are published [here](#).

Issued by NHS Fife Communications, all information correct at time of publishing.