



Dear Colleagues,

On Monday morning, after a week of leave, I was again reminded how fast the world is turning at the moment, as I got up to speed on a number of things.

What hasn't changed is the sheer dedication of folk across all our service areas, the independent sectors and third sector (including community groups). People are working hard to continue delivering despite the challenges.

Whilst yesterday's national headlines signals the start of a covid vaccination programme which is more than welcome, it will take a number of months to complete and in the meantime we continue to live with the covid threat, winter and the usual pressures.

We have our plans for winter in place and it is highly likely that we will need to enact them as we see early signs of winter pressure in the wider system.

So as we race towards Christmas and thoughts about how we will celebrate the festivities, we must remember not to let our guard down and to continue following the national public health advice on covid. Please look after yourselves and keep those you are caring for safe.

**Simon Bokor-Ingram,
Interim Chief Officer**

COVID vaccination programme - The national COVID-19 vaccination programme got underway yesterday to protect people in Scotland from the virus. Those most at risk will be prioritised.

The vaccine programme is the largest of its kind ever undertaken, offering additional protection that not been available until now and bringing hope and encouragement that the position the country is in now will end come to an end.

It represents one of the biggest logistical challenges the country has faced - from scaling up the workforce, to inviting large numbers to get vaccinated safely, to the transportation and storage of the vaccines.

The Moray programme goes live on 14 December. NHS Grampian staff have been recruited and trained to carry out the vaccinations. Health and social care workers will be amongst the first to be vaccinated to lower the risk of them getting COVID-19 or passing it on to the people they care for and support.

Residents in care homes for older adults and care home staff will also be vaccinated in the first wave which is planned to run from December 2020 to February 2021.

People are asked not to contact the NHS or their GP practice to request a vaccination. Those eligible will be contacted during December and January to be told where to get their vaccine and how to make an appointment.

Protection levels – Moray remains in level 1 of the Scottish Government's protection levels with a continued restriction on visiting other households indoors, it was confirmed yesterday.

Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire remain in level 2. Travel restrictions remain in place and no one should travel into level 3 or 4 areas unless for essential purposes.

More details on the protection levels are available [here](#).

North-east outbreaks – The Moray partnership is ready to deploy available staff to provide extra support to colleagues in Aberdeenshire following outbreaks of covid-19 in two care homes.

An Incident Management Team has been established and NHS Grampian and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership are working to support the care home management team to continue to care for residents.

Moray care homes – Care home managers and staff teams continue to work diligently to comply with guidance to protect residents and staff. We continue to work closely with Public Health and all our care homes.

Community hospitals – Health and safety checks have been carried out by the Partnership at all community hospitals. Staff were found to be fully compliant with infection control measures including physical distancing and appropriate use of PPE.

Staff and patient testing – Testing has now been extended to all patients on admission to hospital. Staff in patient-facing roles will be tested twice weekly using the lateral flow devices which give a result within 30 minutes. The devices will also be used for testing for designated visitors of carer home residents once initial trials are concluded.

Cases detected using the lateral flow device will be retested using PCR testing to confirm a positive result.

Walk-in testing centre – A walk-in testing centre has been established at Lossie Green in Elgin, one of 22 centres which will be in place across Scotland. A self-help guide to accessing testing is available on NHS Inform.

At the walk-through test centre, people will self-test in a booth. The test involves taking a swab from the nose and the back of the throat. People can either do this themselves or a site assistant can do it for them. The test sample is then collected by staff and sent to a lab for analysis.

From next week, the Protect Scotland app - currently available for use only by people who are 16 or over - will be available to everyone from age 11.

Flu vaccinations programme – The second phase of the flu vaccination campaign is underway this week with people aged 60-64 receiving appointments to attend a community vaccination centre.

Walk-in clinics are taking place in a number of locations and these can also be accessed by partnership staff.

Remobilisation of mental health services - Mental health services in Moray have remained open during the pandemic to ensure people in crisis have had access to mental health assessment, care and treatment.

In March 2020, mental health services in Moray moved to critical function in response to COVID-19. Emergency (seen same day) and urgent (seen within 7 days) referrals were triaged and prioritised by a newly-formed Urgent Care Team. The in-patient wards - Ward 4 at Dr Gray's Hospital and Muirton at Seafield Hospital - continued to provide services.

Remobilisation of mental health services is continuing, however face to face work and in-reach to people's homes remains challenging for all service providers due to covid restrictions. Face to face mental health assessment, care and treatment is provided for more complex and priority cases at Pluscarden Clinic at Dr Gray's Hospital but this is on a reduced sessional basis due to physical distancing requirements and infection, prevention and control measures.

The community mental health service is mainly being delivered remotely. Patients are offered telephone appointments or virtual appointments utilising the NHS video calling platform Near Me / Attend Anywhere. Third sector partners continue to provide essential community support including advocacy, peer support, wellness service and 12 week reablement support.

Delegation of services – A Programme Board has been established to oversee the proprietary work required for the proposed delegation of children and families and justice social work to the Moray Integration Joint Board.

The change would require the approval of Moray Council and NHS Grampian before a revised integration scheme incorporating any new responsibilities could be submitted to the Scottish Government for approval.