



Dear Colleagues,

At some point this morning (writing this on Tuesday 20th April) I noticed the date on my computer. It bugged me for a few minutes - then I remembered. It was a year ago exactly that I joined Health and Social Care Moray.

I can jest and say it feels like 10 years, but in some ways it feels like 5 minutes with 10 years packed into that space.

You have all achieved so much. We continued to deliver services and keep the system operating through an incredibly challenging year.

On top of that, we have made some significant strides around transformational change. And set up the vaccine delivery. And continued caring for lots of folk with all the complexities that covid created.

We will continue to evolve and transform services with partner agencies and our communities, and I look forward to being able to reflect in a year's time on further achievements. My thanks to you all.

**Simon Bokor-Ingram,
Chief Officer**

Deaths in care homes – Crown Office data on all reported Covid-linked deaths in Scottish care homes since March 2020, has just been published by BBC Scotland.

The report, which included nine deaths in Moray care homes investigated by the Scottish prosecution service, is a sad reminder of the loss and grief the virus has brought to our communities. We must never forget that behind the figures are individuals who are greatly missed by those who loved and cared for them.

Social care has been on the frontline throughout the pandemic with staff working tirelessly in challenging circumstances to protect those in care homes and supported accommodation, as well as those receiving care in their own homes.

From early on in the pandemic, NHS Grampian and the three local health & social care partnerships have provided oversight, support and assurance regarding care in care homes across Grampian.

The Moray Oversight Group continues to work in close partnership with social care providers to ensure we are alert to any emerging issues and respond as required.

The Crown Office Covid-19 Deaths Investigation Team is working together with other agencies to consider the 3,400 deaths in Scotland's care homes as part of a wider

inquiry to determine whether the deaths should be subject to fatal accident inquiries or criminal prosecution.

Easing of restrictions – The go-ahead has been given for mainland Scotland to move down from level four to three of the Scottish Government's five tiers of restrictions on Monday 26th April as planned.

It means cafes, restaurants and beer gardens can open, along with non-essential shops, gyms, swimming pools, libraries and museums. Hospitality will need to close at 8pm indoors, with alcohol only allowed to be served outside. Travel between Scotland, England and Wales will be permitted and tourist accommodation can welcome back visitors.

It is expected that all of Scotland would move to Level 2 on Monday May 17 – allowing people to meet in "small numbers" in homes for the first time since Christmas.

As restrictions begin to ease and we get out and about more, we should all be staying within the rules and continuing to follow F.A.C.T.S to keep each other safe.

Vaccination programme – NHS Grampian is about to call on those aged 45-49 to come forward to be vaccinated. This is a very large group requiring a phased approach, so the first round of appointments will be for those aged 49 and 48.

Everyone aged over 50 has now been invited to attend their first Covid-19 vaccination appointment along with people in the other key priority groups who were offered appointments earlier in the programme. This means we have protected the most vulnerable people in our local communities who are most at risk.

Second doses of the vaccine continue to be delivered to people in the initial priority groups including those aged over 65 and the clinically extremely vulnerable. Household members of those included on the shielding list due to being immunosuppressed are now eligible for priority vaccination and the Scottish Government are sending letters to those shielding for that purpose to direct their household contacts to the national helpline.

Unpaid carers are urged to continue to register for an appointment via the national helpline on 0800 030 3018.

Work is also ongoing to identify and contact anyone in the priority groups who may have been missed or were unable to attend their scheduled appointment.

Over 140 member of staff are working tirelessly as part of the team at the Fiona Elcock Vaccination Centre in Elgin. Additional facilities have been installed to improve staff support including rest areas, more toilets and dedicated office space.

Lateral flow testing – Across Moray we see fluctuating numbers of Covid-19 cases on a weekly basis, making the underlying trend difficult to predict. As we learn to live with the threat of the virus and seek to return safely to everyday activities, we continue to underline the importance of ongoing staff testing.

As part of Test and Protect, twice weekly Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing is offered to all health and social care workers. Taking part in the voluntary self-testing programme helps protect yourself, your patients/service users, your families and colleagues.

LFDs have a sensitivity of 76.8%, meaning the tests identify more than seven in 10 positive cases of the virus. At-home testing allows asymptomatic but Covid-positive staff members to be identified at a much earlier stage and they can then self-isolate immediately, reducing the risk of further spread to others.

Testing is quick and simple to do and staff should speak to their line manager if they have not been offered access to LFD testing kits. It is vital that all staff who have collected kits start to use them and register their results each time they test.

We know that many of our staff have been self-testing for a long period now and we urge them to stick with it. Even as case numbers decrease and the number of people being vaccinated increases, it is important we continue to test regularly. Infections (especially asymptomatic infections) are still possible, and testing can help reduce the risk of spread.

Professor Jason Leitch, National Clinical Director of the Scottish Government, has recorded a short video on why testing is so important. View it on the HSCM website [here](#).

The mobile testing unit for people in the community without symptoms will remain at the Williamson Hall in Elgin until at least 30 April. No appointment is needed – just drop in between 7am and 7pm.

Welcoming back shielding staff – Due to the pandemic, some members of staff were unable to remain in their substantive post or anywhere within the work environment. Shielding will end on Monday 26th April and we can begin to support those staff members to carefully return to the workplace if required. This return is likely to cause a degree of anxiety and will be responded to with compassion, support and flexibility from colleagues and managers who should be taking steps now to ensure they keep up to date with return to the workplace guidance issued by NHS Grampian and/or Moray Council

Working at home if you can remains the default position. The new ways of working we have successfully adopted over the past year, such as an agile, flexible approach to working and service delivery, will continue to be embedded as we go forward.

Staff support - The We Care website, available to all health and social care staff in Grampian, has been updated with a number of useful self-help resources and links. To view, click [here](#) or copy this link into your browser:
<https://www.nhsgrampian.org/your-health/wecare/staff-resilience-and-wellbeing/resources-and-links/>