



Dear Colleagues,

Over the last two years I had been doing an introductory piece to each weekly update. You can breathe a sigh of relief – I will do a piece monthly, usually in the first update of each month. There is the danger that I would start repeating myself if I continued with the weekly update - I suspect that happened a bit over the two years. However, I have had some positive feedback over that time and Fiona, who collates the update each week, hasn't told me to stop... yet!

We talk about recovery – of the system and for ourselves – and I am very aware of how pressured it continues to be, and some of the weariness as we continue to have significant challenges across the health and care system. I know I am repeating the message here, and deliberately, and it's about how we continue to be kind to ourselves and each other. I do see so much kindness in how we all interact with each other and that in itself is commendable.

The level of redesign continues at pace and I am sure we all have in mind that as summer (hopefully) begins, that winter and all the pressures that come with that are not that far away. It is crucial that whatever we can do to make those planned changes happens now.

As I write this the rain is hammering on the window. I am sure the forecast is for better weather as we head into June. I need to have some dry dog walks - and my dog indicates that she would like that, too!

- **Simon Bokor-Ingram**
Chief Officer, Moray Portfolio

Moray Integration Joint Board

Councillor Tracy Colyer has been welcomed as the new Chair of the Moray Integration Joint Board (IJB). Councillor Colyer, who represents the Keith-Cullen ward on Moray Council, took up her appointment at last Thursday's meeting of the Board.

The local authority will also be represented on the IJB by Councillors John Divers, Scott Lawrence and Kathleen Robertson.

Councillor Shona Morrison, the outgoing Chair, was thanked by Denis Robertson, Vice-chair, for the knowledge, experience and stability she brought to the Board during her five year membership.

Mr Robertson also thanked Dr Lewis Walker, Dr Malcolm Metcalfe, Councillor Theresa Coull and former elected member Frank Brown for their contributions to the work of the IJB over the years.

Dental services in Moray

Anyone in Moray who has dental pain, whether they are registered with a dentist or not, continues to have access to urgent or emergency dental treatment.

The NHS Grampian Dental Information and Advice Line (DIAL) on 0345 45 65 990 is available for patients to talk to qualified dental nurses between 8.05am and 6pm, Monday to Friday. The nurses can assess people's needs and offer an emergency appointment if necessary or give advice for dental problems.

Unless they have priority needs, however, new patients are currently unable to register with a NHS dentist in Moray for routine care. Some High Street dentists (local independent NHS contractors) have recently taken steps to de-register patients.

The dental access issue was reported to the Clinical and Care Governance Committee of the Integration Joint Board last Thursday by Laura Stevenson, Dental Clinical Lead, who highlighted that the recruitment of new dentists to Moray, and nationally,

continues to be a major challenge. This is in part due to the adverse impact of the pandemic on dental education leading to the deferred graduation of dental students in 2021/22, but also the regulation requirements for overseas dentists.

Moray Public Dental Service – the salaried NHS Grampian service – is still able to register priority group patients and has activated contingency plans to temporarily support NHS dental access with increased provision of single courses of treatment for unregistered patients in greatest need.

To support practices to increase staffing and capacity, NHS Grampian is offering recruitment and retention allowances to dentists new to the dental list in Moray.

The SDAI (Scottish Dental Access Initiative) funding is also available for the setting up of a dental practice in Moray. This gives a substantial level of financial assistance to expand dental access capacity for the Moray population.

Platinum Jubilee weekend

All GP surgeries in Moray will be closed on Friday 3 June. Patients are urged to make sure they order and collect their regular medication if required before the long weekend. There is no need to order additional medication.

Anyone with a non-urgent health issue over the Jubilee bank holiday should wait until their GP surgery reopens or contact their community pharmacy (opening hours may be different) for advice. There are also self-help guides for a range of common health concerns at www.nhsinform.scot.

If you need urgent medical advice while your GP practice is closed, call NHS 24 on 111. Please be aware that holiday weekends are always one of NHS 24's busiest periods so it may take them a little longer to answer. Patients who need to be seen will be directed to the Out of Hours Service or their hospital Emergency Department.

Gateway to support

For anyone looking to find out more about care and support from Health & Social Care Moray, information is available on the Moray Council website www.moray.gov.uk under Social Care and Health.

The Access Care Team is the first point of contact for Adult Social Care for anyone making an initial enquiry or who hasn't had recent support. Our First Contact Advisers will talk with you about your situation and offer information about possible options, including connecting to community assets and sources of support.

They may refer you on to a Social Worker or Occupational Therapist for a more in-depth discussion about what a good life looks like for you and the resources which would support you to achieve your goals.

Enquiries should be emailed to Accesscareteam@moray.gov.uk. Alternatively you can call the Access Care team on 01343 563999 Monday to Friday, 8.45am – 5pm. The lines are often very busy, particularly on Monday and Fridays, but an answer machine is in operation.

Volunteers Week 2022

Today marks the start of Volunteers Week 2022 and we are taking the opportunity to thank all the wonderful health and social care volunteers and recognise them for their fantastic contribution.

In a letter of thanks to volunteers, Simon Bokor-Ingram, Chief Officer, wrote: "We are fortunate to live in an area steeped in community spirit. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic - and more recently during Storm Arwen and Storm Corrie - we have seen individuals and community groups continue to step up to help others.

"The past two years have had a profound impact on all our lives. Health and social care remains challenged by the growing numbers of people who require care and support, and volunteering remains an essential component of the whole system response as we work together to reset and redesign services for the future.

"Volunteering has had to change and adapt over the past two years and we are incredibly grateful for way you have responded to help people keep connected to their community and to promote good health and wellbeing for all."

We are also sending best wishes for a long and happy retirement to Margaret Cowie (pictured right with colleague Edweena Hayes) who over the past 10+ years in her role as our Volunteer Development Officer, has recruited and supported hundreds of volunteers. We're delighted she'll be continuing in her roles of volunteer buddy and alarm responder with the service.



Oedema service

The Oedema Service is returning to The Oaks day unit in Elgin from 7 June. Referrals can be made by any clinician by email to: gram.oedemaservice@nhs.scot

Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry

Lady Poole, who has been appointed to chair the public inquiry into the handling of the coronavirus pandemic in Scotland, is continuing the process of appointing staff so the inquiry can begin considering evidence.

The period covered by the inquiry will be from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022, but it will also consider pandemic planning undertaken prior to this. The terms of reference for the enquiry were published last December and set out 12 specific areas it will investigate, covering lockdowns, education, health, care and nursing homes, including the transfer of residents and infection control measures.

Lady Poole has said she will carry out a “fair, open and thorough investigation”.

She said: “In Scotland, all of us have been affected by the pandemic and the measures taken to handle it. The suffering and hardship experienced by many is unprecedented. Covid-19 has left loss, heartbreak and tragedy in its wake. People have legitimate questions about the handling of the pandemic in Scotland. This inquiry has been set up to provide answers.”

It is important that our decision making and processes are preserved if needed for the enquiry, which can include personal logs, emails and minutes of meetings.

Mind to Mind for mental wellbeing

A new national website has launched in a bid to help people look after their mental wellbeing.

The NHS Inform website Mind to Mind features over 30 videos from people who have experienced their own challenges, each sharing their tips and techniques for getting through life’s ups and downs.

Designed to help people who may be going through a difficult patch, or those keen to look after their mental wellbeing, the contributors share practical advice across a range of topics such as dealing with feeling anxious, stressed or low, how to improve sleep and moving through grief. The website www.nhsinform.scot/mindtomind also signposts where people can access further help and support.

