

### Changes to health protection guidance

Policy changes set out in the Scottish Government's Test and Protect transition plan – including the end of contact tracing, self-isolation and PCR testing for the public – came into effect on Sunday.

Free Covid testing has now ended for most people in Scotland with and without symptoms. The public PCR testing site at Lossie Green in Elgin has now closed.

Most people no longer need to take a test and should follow guidance on staying at home and avoiding contact with other people if they have symptoms of a respiratory infection such as coronavirus and have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities. They should do this until they no longer have a high temperature (if they had one) or until they feel better.

The expectation remains that health and social care worker will continue to self-test twice weekly using LFT kits available through their workplace and report their results on the NHS Scotland portal. This will be kept under clinical review.

The Elgin and Huntly staff testing sites remain open and colleagues experiencing symptoms should continue to book a PCR test online.

<https://www.nhsgrampian.org/covid-19/information-for-nhs-grampian-staff/>

Updated guidance from the Scottish Government regarding self-isolation requirements for health and social care staff with symptoms of a respiratory infection or a positive Covid test, have been published. This applies to staff who work with patients and service users in a face-to-face setting and is available [here](#).

### Testing for hospital and care home visitors

Lateral flow testing continues to be available to anyone planning to visit a care home or hospital.

Lyn Pirie, Nurse Lead for Person Centred Visiting in NHS Grampian, said: "We know hospital patients and care home residents benefit enormously from being able to spend time with family and friends. We want people to do this as safely as possible and would strongly encourage visitors to continue with LFD testing.

"I would also remind potential visitors that Covid is not the only risk. If they are experiencing vomiting, diarrhoea, muscle aches, coughing, sneezing, and/or sore throats, they should postpone planned visits."

Person-centred hospital visiting has been extended and now includes - Wards 4, 1, 5, 6, 8, Stroke Ward and AMAU, all at Dr Gray's Hospital; Muirton Ward at Seafield Hospital, Buckie.

Free test kits can be ordered online for home delivery at <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests> or by calling 119 (available 7 days a week, 7am-11pm). Unpaid carers can also order packs of testing kits following the same route.

### Celebrating success

Many congratulations to Jess More, a Community Nurse working in Fochabers and Keith, who is a finalist in the Student Nursing Times Awards 2022.

Jess, who is in her second year of the Queen Margaret University Graduate Diploma in Integrated Community Nursing, has been shortlisted for the Learner of the Year: Post Registration Award in recognition of her outstanding commitment to learning and motivation to continually update her knowledge and skills in order to improve patient outcomes.



The annual Student Nursing Times Awards are the only national awards dedicated to celebrating student nurses, student nurses, midwives and trainee nursing associates. There are also award categories to recognise and congratulate others supporting nursing education including practice supervisors, placement providers and universities. The winners will be announced on 27 May at a ceremony in London.

Nursing Times editor Steve Ford said: “The Student Nursing Times Awards provide us with a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the next generation of nurses and all those individuals and organisations who support them. I look forward to announcing our award winners.”

### Covid Spring booster

The programme to offer a spring booster vaccination is well underway. Please note that health and social care staff are NOT automatically included in this campaign. The Joint Committee on Vaccinations & Immunisations recommends the following groups receive a spring booster:

- adults aged 75 years and over (or who will turn 75 by 30 June 2022)
- residents in care homes for older adults
- individuals aged 12 years and over who have a [weakened immune system](#) (please follow link for a complete list of eligible conditions)

Appointments are being sent directly to those who are eligible. Anyone attending a vaccination clinic for a spring booster who is not in one of the above groups will not be vaccinated. See the NHS Inform website for more details:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine/invitations-and-appointments/who-will-be-offered-the-coronavirus-vaccine>

### Reading for pleasure

NHS Grampian’s Library Services is hosting an online Book Bletcher for health and social care staff on Thursday 5 May at 1pm. Contact [cornhill.library@nhs.scot](mailto:cornhill.library@nhs.scot) for the meeting link.

### Highest risk list to end

The Covid Highest Risk List - formerly known as the Shielding List - will end on 31 May. The success of the vaccination programme and the new medications now available to treat Covid have shown that, for the vast majority of those on the list, the risk of hospitalisation or death from the virus has been significantly reduced and is no greater than that of the general public.

Letters will be sent out by the Chief Medical Officer to advise individuals what ending the list will mean for them.

Support remains in place for those who are immunosuppressed and who may still have some reduced immunity. This group are likely to need general

protection from a range of infections in addition to Covid-19.

The UK wide Distance Aware initiative aims to support people – including those who have been on the list, older people, people with disabilities and people with underlying health conditions - in adapting to the changes in guidance as we continue to live with the virus in ways that are less restrictive.

Distance Aware uses a shield icon and is displayed as a badge or lanyard to allow individuals to signal that they would like to have space and care around them where possible. This can help to build confidence about returning to public settings.

### Census deadline extended

Householders across Scotland now have until the end of May to complete their census, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to complete their return and help shape important services in their community.

The extension allows outstanding online and paper questionnaires to be submitted over a further four week period. This includes around 68,000 households who have begun their census returns online but have not yet been completed and a similar number of requested paper forms that have yet to be returned.

Information collected informs how services are delivered and how public

money is invested in the nation's schools, transport, hospitals, care services and more. Census data will be used extensively across the public, private and third sectors.

It is a legal responsibility for every household to complete their census (including second home owners and students), and anyone who doesn't complete the census could face a fine.

For those wishing to complete their census questionnaire online, the website will remain open and for those wishing to request a paper questionnaire, they can call the contact centre on 0800 030 8308.

## FIT Surgery website launch

NHS Grampian has launched a new prehabilitation website to encourage patients getting ready for surgery to use their waiting time to improve their health and wellbeing which in turn will aid their recovery.

Fit Surgery aims to improve patient experience, recovery times and shorten hospital stays through providing information on topics that enable patients to be as prepared as possible for surgery, their time in hospital and going home.

The resource has been developed by a steering group which included NHS Grampian's acute sector dietitians, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech and language therapists who worked alongside a wider multi-disciplinary team. They were supported by eHealth web developers and the project was funded through the NHS Grampian Endowments Fund.

Professor Duff Bruce, Clinical Lead for the National Treatment Centre in Grampian and General Surgeon, said: "We know that the better prepared someone is and the fitter they are when they undergo surgery, the better their experience and outcome will be.

"The website offers advice about physical exercise, how to have a healthy diet, how to reduce your smoking and alcohol intake, information about your medicines and how to prepare yourself mentally for your admission, and also that you have your home ready for when it's time to go home."

FIT Surgery can be accessed directly at <https://www.fitsurgery.org>

