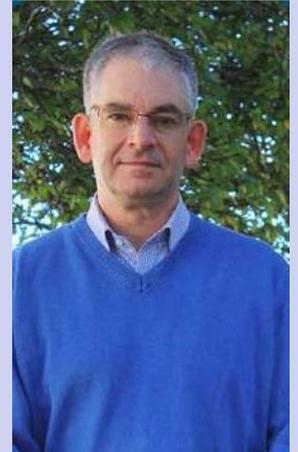


Dear Colleagues,

As we head towards Easter the system is under huge pressure. Whilst a number of folk will be taking well deserved leave, many will be working during this time and it is ever more important that we look out for each other as the barometer of demand edges upwards.

As difficult as it seems, we also have to look out at the horizon and plan ahead. The first Strategic Planning Group with a combined membership from the original group and what was the Moray Transformation Programme Board met on Tuesday and we heard about some of the really innovative work going on.

We will be refreshing the IJB Strategy this year and important that everyone can contribute to shaping future service delivery. More on this in the coming months.



Simon Bokor-Ingram
Chief Officer
Moray Portfolio

Covid infection rates

Across health and social care settings, staff continue to be faced with considerable covid related challenges as has been the case for a prolonged period. The community case numbers are going in an improving direction, however, and it is hoped we should begin to see this trend replicated within our services soon.

Susan Webb, Director of Public Health at NHS Grampian, said: “Case numbers remain exceptionally high, however, and widespread across Grampian. Covid hospital occupancy remains at extraordinary high levels but the good news is that there has been a fall in new admissions with symptomatic disease over the past 10 days or so.

“Looking ahead to what we might expect over the next 6-8 weeks, if the case numbers are a good reflection of actual trends then we may see hospital occupancy climb until mid-April before falling. Of course the situation remains uncertain, and we are constantly tracking to refine our forecasts and highlight changes to help with short term planning.”

For now we continue to manage significant patient numbers in hospitals and there are many residents affected by covid in care settings and at homes. There are relatively high numbers of staff absent as a result of covid or on annual leave for the Easter holidays, with many more having to juggle home and work life with family members being impacted by the virus.

Staff continue to provide compassionate care and support despite the professional and personal challenges they face, with teams pulling together to do all they can to ease the pressures on services and colleagues alike.

Staff wellbeing

April is Stress Awareness Month and after a long two years, it's important we all have someone we can talk to about our stresses to help us sort through them.

If you work in health or social services in Scotland, the [National Wellbeing Hub](#) has information and advice to help you cope with issues such as stress, anxiety, resilience, and how to improve your sleep.

The helpline – 0800 111 4191 – provides a 24/7 service to those seeking psychological support and can offer advice, signposting and onward referral to local services where required. The Focus on Wellbeing webinar programme is aimed at empowering and encouraging everyone delivering health and social work/social care services, and unpaid carers, to enhance self-care and personal resilience.



Strategic Plan review

The current Strategic Plan is due for review by the end of 2022 and the proposed approach to engagement for the refresh and development of the next iteration has been approved by the IJB.

The Strategic Planning and Commissioning Group is leading on the development of the plan which will build on the direction in the existing Partners in Care document. The plan must set out how the IJB intends to deliver its vision to improve health and wellbeing for people in Moray through care and support that is integrated and how it will deliver the nine national health and wellbeing outcomes through its strategic priorities and transformational change programmes, all against a background of demographic, financial and staffing challenges.

See the existing plan [here](#).

Board members step down

The March meeting of the IJB was the final meeting for a number of Board members.

Tracey Abdy, who has been Chief Financial Officer since the formation of the IJB, has taken up a senior auditor post at Moray Council.

She was described by Councillor Shona Morrison, IJB chair, as a hugely valued and respected colleague.

“Tracey’s vision, drive and knowledge has provided all members with assurance and direction and she has always done this in a way that ensures that no one is left behind. It is a rare attribute, especially in certain areas of health and social care, to make sure that complex information becomes meaningful and tangible and Tracey excels at doing just that,” Councillor Morrison said. “We wish Tracey all the very best in her new role and will miss her very much.”

Heidi Tweedie has stepped down from her role as Third Sector stakeholder representative and was also thanked for her invaluable contribution.

Councillor Morrison said: “Her ability to comment and scrutinise in a way which resonates with us all and reflects the views of those voices she represents, has been hugely appreciated. I thank Heidi sincerely for her contribution.”

The process to appoint a new Chief Financial Officer is already underway and the post is due to be advertised a second time.

Applications will be invited shortly for individuals interested in advocating the interests of the Third Sector on the Board and within various service improvement programmes.

New future for Leancoil

The vision to acquire, conserve and repurpose a former community hospital as a state-of-the-art health and wellbeing centre and veterans’ activity centre for the community of Forres and beyond, is a step closer to being realised.

Leancoil Hospital closed to patients in November 2018 having served the community for over 125 years. A group of people passionate about securing the future of the site for the community established the Leancoil Trust Board which has been working with Health & Social Care Moray and NHS Grampian on a community asset transfer.



The request - which can be read here - has now been formally published by NHS Grampian. Any comments/representations should be made by 26 April 2022.

Approval of Integration Scheme

A revised Integration Scheme for the Moray Integration Joint Board (IJB) is now in place following Ministerial approval.

The scheme is the legally binding agreement setting out how Moray Council and NHS Grampian work together to deliver adult health and social care services through the IJB, which is responsible for improving health and wellbeing outcomes for the people of Moray.

There have been a number of revisions made to the Integration Scheme since it was first introduced in 2015 to improve legislative compliance and provide clarity around governance arrangements. The latest amendments

allow for an increase in the number of IJB voting members from six to eight – four elected members from Moray Council and four non-executive members of Grampian NHS Board.

Professor Siladitya Bhattacharya, Head of School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition at the University of Aberdeen, joins fellow non-executive members Dennis Robertson, Sandy Riddell and Derick Murray on the IJB.

The four elected members will be appointed to the Board at the first meeting of the full council following next month's local government elections.

Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund

40 community and voluntary organisations across Moray are celebrating after learning they will share just over £257,000 to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

The successful applicants were announced by tsiMoray which was responsible for distributing the Scottish Government's Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund, providing grants to grassroots organisations in response to mental health needs arising from the pandemic.

Among those awarded the maximum grant of £10,000, were:

- Elgin 1st Scout Group – disabled access, covered outside area and classroom
- Cullen Sea School – mental health and wellbeing initiative
- Four Pillars – LOC (LGBT+ Outreach Coordinator)
- Finechty Men's Shed – to support shed site and workshop
- SACRO – Transition and Outreach Project
- REAP – Feelgood Gardening
- Forres Area Community Trust – Getting Active - Getting Together
- Moray Firth Credit Union – Supporting Financial Wellbeing in your Life

Help with money worries

The energy price cap – the maximum amount a utility company can charge an average customer in the UK per year – increased on 1 April. Electricity and gas bills for the average household will rise by £693 a year amid a warning that this will push around a quarter of households into fuel poverty. Household budgets are being stretched with food costs and fuel prices soaring at the same time as many other outgoings have continued to rise.

The cost of living increases will affect everyone, and some of us more than others. Anyone experiencing worries about money can contact Moray Council’s Money Advice team. The Money Advisers, Welfare Benefit Officers and Income Maximisation Officers offer free, confidential and non-judgemental support.

