

Dear Colleagues,

Fortunately we seem to be missing the worst of the weather again, with warnings for areas surrounding Moray this week but never touching Moray, for now. There is no schadenfreude - our thoughts go to those having to cope with what we know to be disruptive and destructive, and can so easily manifest in Moray.

As the restrictions begin to ease (see further on in the update) around covid precautions, we will have to remain as vigilant as we are with the weather, as we know from past experiences how fast that a position can change from ok to bad. You will remember the steeply climbing covid rates that Moray saw a couple of times.

As we emerge from winter and the sun shines more strongly I hope that covid will recede as quickly



Simon Bokor-Ingram
Chief Officer
Moray Portfolio

Covid rules changing in Scotland

Scotland's approach to managing Covid and its associated harms effectively for the long term, were set out by the First Minister yesterday following an update of the Scottish Government's strategic framework.

Addressing MSPs, Nicola Sturgeon said the government will rely less on legally-imposed measures and more on vaccines, treatments and public health behaviours.

The wearing of face masks on public transport and in indoor settings, such as shops and places of worship, will become guidance as of Monday 21 March rather than mandatory. The requirement of businesses such as pubs and restaurants to record details through track and trace will end on the same date. The Covid passport scheme requiring Scots to show proof of vaccination status before entering certain venues will no longer be required from 28 February.

Access to lateral flow and PCR tests will continue to be free of charge, ahead of a detailed transition plan being published on the future of Scotland's test and protect programme in March

People who test positive for COVID-19 will continue to be asked to self-isolate to reduce the risk of infecting other people. Any changes to the recommended period of self-isolation will be considered on an ongoing basis.

Scotland will now follow the updated framework during any future spike in Covid cases sparked by new variants through low, medium and high threat levels.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Scotland's Strategic Framework Update - February 2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/strategic-framework-for-covid-19-2022/pages/2022-02-23-covid-19-strategic-framework-update-2022-02-23.aspx)

Covid vaccination programme extended

Vulnerable people and those aged 75 and over are to be offered an extra dose of the Covid vaccine this spring after a recommendation by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

Immunity from vaccination declines over time and many older adults received their last vaccine dose in September or October 2021.

Up until now, only people with severely weakened immune systems had been eligible for a fourth dose - three doses plus a booster. Those advised to get a second booster this spring, to be administered six months after their previous dose, are:

- adults aged 75 years and over
- residents in a care home for older adults
- individuals aged 12 years and over who are immunosuppressed, or have weakened immune systems

The JCVI considers winter is likely to remain the season when the threat of Covid is greatest and has provided additional interim advice to ministers ahead of planning for an expected autumn booster dose for a wider cohort.

Last week, the JCVI advised that all children aged 5-11 be offered the Covid vaccine. Vaccination appointments will be offered in community clinics from 19 March 2022. Appointment letters will be sent to those with parental responsibility, with appointments scheduled according to age. 11 years olds will be invited first, followed by those aged eight to 10, and then those between five and seven years old. Where there are siblings, efforts will be made to invite them to back-to-back appointments to avoid multiple trips for families.

Details of how to rearrange unsuitable appointments will be included in the letters

Flu vaccination programme restarts

The adult programme, which was paused in December so that health boards could prioritise the delivery of Covid booster jabs to address the immediate challenge of the Omicron variant of the virus, is back on track.

Flu vaccinations are now on offer again until the end of March for those in high-risk groups and anyone who is eligible is urged to still get vaccinated and get protected.

Flu is serious. Every year people are hospitalised with flu, and this winter our immunity may be lower than usual. The annual flu vaccine is the safest and most effective way to help protect against the flu. It is offered to those aged 65 and over, people with an eligible health condition, pregnant women, frontline health and social care workers, adult unpaid carers and household contacts (aged 16 years or over) of someone with a weakened immune system.

More information on how people in Grampian can get their flu vaccination can be found at: www.grampianvax.com.

The Oaks

Remobilisation of services at The Oaks palliative care day unit continues to gain momentum.

The Elgin unit provides a welcoming environment for people diagnosed with a life limiting condition who, following an initial assessment, can work one-to-one with members of the nursing team on goal setting and engage in an eight week educational programme of group sessions designed to encourage and support self-management approaches.

The living well programme covers topics including: fatigue, anxiety, sleep and medicine management; mindfulness; diet and exercise; relaxation therapy; spiritual care; and anticipatory care planning.

People attending the Oaks also have access to complementary therapy, yoga, counselling and the wig service.

The nurse-led unit, with support from specialist allied health professionals (AHPs), complements the care provided by GPs and clinicians who can make referrals to The Oaks. Individuals can also make contact with

the unit direct on 01343 555104 to learn more about the available services and support opportunities.

Volunteers are being remobilised and looking forward to returning to new and adapted roles as part of the wider Oaks team.

On Random Acts of Kindness Day last week, staff were surprised to be presented with a dream ring courtesy of Harry Gow bakery.



Act against harm

Last Sunday's National Adult Support and Protection Day was supported by Health & Social Care, which is part of the multi-agency approach to ensuring adults at risk of harm in Moray experience improved safety outcomes.

The pandemic has made vulnerable adults less visible and their protection is a priority for health and social care partnerships, local authorities, Police Scotland and the NHS. Authorities can only act on concerns that are known about, so if something doesn't seem right, people are urged to share any concerns.

Adult protection is everyone's business and communities have a crucial role to play in looking out for one another and identifying adults who may be at risk of harm, said John Paterson, Chair of the National Adult Support and Protection Scotland Independent Convenors' Group.

Information can be found at: <http://www.moray.gov.uk/adultprotection>

Tea for 2 project

A good neighbour initiative has supported community ambassadors in Moray to reach out to socially-isolated older people for a welcome chat over tea and biscuits.

Loneliness affects huge numbers of people and increased isolation during the pandemic has left many struggling with declining physical and mental health.

Local volunteers continue to play a vital role in supporting older people who have found themselves spending much of their time alone over the past two years, and it was to this community network that the partnership's Wellbeing and Development Team turned for help with the Tea for 2 initiative.

To encourage meaningful conversations with older people who may be less socially active at present, 200 Valentine's themed tea and biscuit hampers were prepared by Forres-based Maclean's Highland Bakery and funded through the Integration Joint Board's Covid Winter Support Fund.

The hampers were distributed across Moray by the members of the Ball (Be Active Life Long) and SET (Seated Exercise and Tea) groups and by partner community groups including the Men's Sheds in Forres and Fochabers, Active Minds and Moray Firth Credit Union.

Tracey Peden, Health & Social Care Moray Social Enterprise Development Officer, explained that the idea behind Tea for 2 was to encourage community group members to identify people who would benefit from sharing a hamper and to reach out to them over a cuppa.

"The project aimed to increase mental and physical wellbeing through encouraging meaningful conversations. Community members are best placed to engage with people in their neighbourhood who may have become more socially isolated over recent times and help them gain confidence to start rebuilding connections," Tracey said.

"The feedback we have had has been fantastic – those who received the hampers were thrilled and overwhelmed. They were so grateful that people are thinking about them."

