



Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year to you all. Thank you to all of you for the huge efforts in 2020.

This year, 2021, doesn't feel like it has got off to the best start. A covid variant is spreading more rapidly; further restrictions are needed on our lives to slow the spread; and we also have some significant challenges including the delivery of a vaccination programme.

And yet I feel optimism around me. Yes, folk are tired and even if you had

a break over the festive it won't have been long enough, and the constant uncertainty of how we can live our lives at the moment is wearing.

I remind myself each day that I work with a great team and although things seem a bit grim now, we have a vaccination programme underway and it will accelerate as we head towards spring with more folk being vaccinated.

There is huge public appreciation for the work you are doing, whether it be vaccinating or providing daily care to someone vulnerable in their own home. We do a worthwhile job and when it all seems to be getting on top of us, remember why we are here doing what we do. Amazing work. Day in, day out.

I remain proud to be working with you all. Thank you.

**Simon Bokor-Ingram,
Interim Chief Officer**

COVID-19 vaccinations – Residents in all Moray care homes have been offered their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. We have also vaccinated a number of patient/client facing health staff and social care workers.

Moray's first delivery of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine will be received later this week, providing additional and more portable vaccines allowing further extension of the programme, where the focus remains on the elderly and those at risk.

The second dose for both vaccines can be given up to 12 weeks after the first which means that the vaccines can be deployed in a way that reaches as many people as possible as quickly as possible – with the emphasis on targeting vulnerable groups first. The second dose remains critical for longer term protection and to complete the course.

The vaccination programme within Moray has been adjusted to rebook staff for their second dose within the 12 weeks and to offer appointments to more staff in the priority groups.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has retained the same priority list for both vaccines and all focus is now to vaccinate as many people with their first dose as quickly as possible, working through the priority groups - residents in a care home for older adults and their carers, people over the age of 80 and frontline health and social care workers. The programme will then be rolled out to the rest of the population sequentially based on the JCVI's priority list, starting with people aged 75 to 79 years of age, followed next by 70-74-year-olds alongside those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

A number of GP practices have already come forward to support the delivery of the programme while a recruitment campaign for vaccinators and support staff has met with a great response with new starts ready to undergo induction training. Resource from the existing workforce will also be identified to provide additional capacity with many staff keen to sign up.

The first large scale venue for the mass COVID-19 vaccination programme in Moray has been agreed. Remedial building and ICT works are ongoing to ensure the site is ready when the roll-out begins for the next wave.

People will be called forward for vaccination in accordance with the JCVI advice on clinical prioritisation. A door drop information leaflet and TV advertising campaign goes live this week. The National Advice line is fully operational from 8am to 8pm on 0800 030 8013 with language translation and British Sign Language support in place.

The vaccination programme is a major logistics exercise. We continue to vaccinate at pace and at scale in line with the national guidance as quickly as supplies are received.

System pressures – Health and social care continues to be challenged to manage the increase in covid-19 cases combined with winter pressures. Rising hospital admissions has resulted in very limited capacity in Dr Gray's and ARI, including in the Intensive Therapy Unit (ITU).

Absolute vigilance remains key. Actions continue to ensure all staff have awareness of the latest infection control measures and PPE guidance, including the wearing of face visors, and adhere to these.

Testing kits – Almost 1,000 lateral flow device testing kits have been made available to hospital staff in patient-facing roles across Moray and the roll out continues in line with current Scottish Government criteria.

The twice-weekly routine testing of asymptomatic staff provides an additional layer of protection, working to identify patient-facing staff members infected with the virus who do not have symptoms, and allow them to self-isolate, so reducing the risk of infecting colleagues and patients. If shown to be positive for the virus, staff will have to self-isolate immediately, along with their household in line with existing government guidance.

Testing is offered on a voluntary basis, with eligible staff strongly encouraged to undertake the testing.

Shielding staff – Staff at highest clinical risk from COVID-19 are now required to work from home and if they cannot do so, they should not work. Line managers are supporting shielding staff to plan for the weeks ahead and consider how best to utilise their skills while away from their usual workplace, and to monitor any impact on service delivery.

Staff recognition - Many congratulations to the Health Visiting and School Nurse Teams in Moray who have been recognised for always going above and beyond.

The Teams were nominated for a NHS Grampian ORANGE Award for their dedication and hard work for families in our local communities throughout the year. The teams continued to visit families and support children when other services were reduced or withdrawn due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Sue Martin, Team Leader Moray East Health Visiting & School Nurse Teams, said: "In these challenging and changing times, public health nursing has been a constant. We have found new and alternative ways to support our families. We haven't gone away - we are still here. It's what we do."

