

The Interim Chief Officer is currently on leave. He'll be back next week with his regular column.

**Increase in daily cases** - COVID cases are on upward trend nationally and Moray is experiencing a rising number of positive cases.

While the total number remains small, the week on week increase demonstrates this is a widespread virus with the potential to impact on everyone in every community which is why we all need to be on our guard.

It is vital that everyone continues to follow national directions around regular handwashing, physical distancing and observing restrictions which mean we cannot meet up inside other households.

It is so important that anyone experiencing symptoms immediately self-isolates and arranges a test. A great deal of work is being undertaken by the region's Test and Protect team to identify everyone who might be a close contact of someone who tests positive and give them the appropriate advice which will limit onward transmission of the virus. Individuals must work with the Test and Protect team if contacted and follow their advice.

New ways of delivering services, use of technology and an expanded flu vaccination programme are all key elements in protecting our communities from coronavirus.

**Flu immunisation** – There have been significant changes to the public vaccination programme this year, with the jab being delivered in local vaccine clinics rather than in GP surgeries. Teams have been working extremely hard on the ground to get these up and running and this week are delivering clinics in Elgin and Keith.

Regrettably there have been some local delays in the delivery of appointment letters which has meant some people have been unable to attend appointments. New appointments will be arranged for them. NHS Grampian has worked closely with Royal Mail to resolve the postal issues.

**Staff vaccinations** – Every year several outbreaks of influenza occur in hospitals and care homes across Grampian. These outbreaks have resulted in serious illness and deaths among patients/residents and placed a significant burden on staff.

This can be reduced if the majority of staff take up the opportunity to have their free flu vaccination. This is more important than before due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

NHS Grampian staff, and social care staff who provide direct care, including voluntary sector personnel employed to provide personal care to children and adults (in care settings and the community), are eligible for the vaccination.

Full details can all be found at the new NHS Grampian flu website [www.fluvaxgrampian.com](http://www.fluvaxgrampian.com)

**Care home visiting** - Care home residents and their family and friends will soon be able to enjoy longer visits together and greater personal interaction – including “therapeutic touch” - following the Scottish Government’s recommended easing of restrictions.

The partnership is supporting Moray’s care homes to plan for the changes which will be implemented once the homes are satisfied that they can be managed safely alongside existing safety measures such as the weekly testing offered to all care home staff and sample testing in homes with no cases.

**Day services remobilisation** – The re-mobilisation plan for day service continues with learning disability services making good progress towards being able to resume services later this month.

The majority of risk assessments have been completed and submitted to Public Health for approval with decisions on individual service re-opening dates to be made at the weekly oversight group and communicated to service users, families, providers and staff.

Day services for older people based in residential settings will not be able to resume and we continue to work with our partners to explore alternative buildings suitable for day service provision.

**Dental services** - NHS dentistry services in Scotland are due to resume next month after being halted due to the pandemic.

A full range of treatments to all NHS patients within dental practices will be able to restart for patients from November 1 as part of the next phase of dental remobilisation although the sector will not return to “business as usual” as practices will still need to limit footfall into practices.