



Dear Colleagues,

I've found the transition to the clocks going back an hour on Sunday easier to cope with this year. Perhaps with all the change we've undergone in the last few months it has been easier to accept the next one?

There has been a huge amount of change in the last few months. Those changes have meant we could continue delivering services and meeting need in a time of real challenge. Add to that the need to deliver a flu vaccine programme larger than previous years, reduce delayed discharges, work within the physical distancing rules, and keep developing services - and that seems like a huge ask.

The effort has been tremendous. As we go into another winter, with all the associated challenges, let's remember how far we have already gone in a short time and look to how far we will get by the time the clocks go forward an hour.

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

Flu vaccination programme – Some 69,000 people in Grampian received their flu vaccinations in the first three weeks of the programme despite administrative issues leading to delays in appointment letters being received.

The Moray programme is on track with good levels of uptake across all communities.

This year the vaccine is being offered to more people than ever because of the additional risk posed by coronavirus. Over 300,000 people are eligible in Grampian and the aim is to vaccinate the majority before the flu season starts in December.

The programme is being delivered in phases to ensure those most at risk are prioritised. Over 65s are the first priority followed by those aged 18-65 with an underlying health condition. Appointment letters are being sent out daily.

The NHS Grampian flu helpline is available on 0343 337 9899.

Re-opening of day services – Three internal services for adults with learning disabilities welcomed back the first of their service users on Tuesday in the initial phase of the re-mobilisation of day services.

Staff from the services, social work, the council's transport unit and Quarriers carers support service have worked together to engage with service users and their families

and support them to understand the changes which have had to be made. They will continue to involve them in monitoring the impact of the new ways of working.

The oversight group is supporting external providers to submit risk assessments to Public Health and prepare for the return of service users in ways that are considerate to the fact that covid-19 presents a continuing public health challenge to the Moray population.

Care Homes - Health & Social Care Moray is maintaining close partnership working with all local Care Homes. Regular phone calls and situation reports are received from each home which provide data in relation to residents and staff. This information is collated and discussed at a daily partnership huddle under the leadership of the Chief Nurse.

A weekly joint Care Home Forum is hosted for all managers and owners, providing an opportunity for shared learning, review and discussion relating to guidance updates and local issue identification and resolution.

The weekly testing of staff is a critical preventative measure in helping suppress the virus and protect residents, staff and visitors. The Scottish Government has begun the programme of transitioning care home staff testing from UK Government laboratories to the NHS and it is anticipated Moray's homes will move across in the next 2-3 weeks.

It has been announced that Grampian will host one of three regional Covid-19 testing hubs (the others will be in Glasgow and Lothian). Once fully operational these hubs should increase the capacity of NHS labs by a total of 22,000 tests per day. The lab will be based on the Foresterhill Health Campus and the recruitment of staff and the installation of additional equipment is underway.

Covid Commendation – The efforts of the volunteers from The Oaks specialist palliative care unit in Elgin have been recognised with the award of a Covid Commendation from the Lord-Lieutenants of Banffshire and Moray.

Before services at The Oaks were temporarily suspended at the end of March, an amazing army of 72 enthusiastic volunteers were supporting the work of the unit. On average 40 were giving their time and energy each week to carry out roles including receptionists, drivers, day unit workers, complementary therapists, beauticians, hairdressers and gardeners.



At the start of lockdown many of the volunteers were stood down as they came into the “at risk” category. Others were able to carry on supporting people in the community and have made a wonderful contribution by doing people's shopping, delivering meals, checking on those who were shielding and carrying out befriending phone chats with those who were lonely and isolated.

Angela Stewart, Volunteer Co-ordinator at The Oaks, praised all the volunteers for their efforts before and during lockdown.

“We are very grateful for all the support the volunteers have given to the unit week in, week out. Some have done this since The Oaks was opened 17 years ago,” she added. “We couldn't run the unit without our dedicated team of volunteers and I am so grateful to them all for all they do. They certainly are the most amazing team of wonderful, caring people.”

Planning is currently underway for the re-mobilisation of some of the services which were provided at The Oaks where the Letter of Commendation will be displayed with pride.

Retirement – Happy retirement to Professor Amanda Croft who stepped down on Monday from her post as NHS Grampian's Chief Executive after more than 25 years' service to the NHS. Professor Caroline Hiscox has taken up duties as the new Chief Executive.