



Dear Colleagues,

Last week marked a year on from the country going into lockdown. The efforts from each and every individual providing health and social care services in Moray is to be commended. You have done an amazing job, in very challenging circumstances.

I came into contact at the weekend with one service and was humbled by the tireless way that each and every individual was cared for through their journey as I worked my way through the Fiona Elcock Vaccination Centre with the rest of my fellow residents receiving their vaccination at that time.

I was one of many getting their vaccine that day. My own experience concurs with the many compliments we receive about the vaccine programme.

Thank you to all those working to vaccinate us; and to all those working tirelessly across health and social care in Moray.

**Simon Bokor-Ingram,
Chief Officer**

Covid-19 vaccination programme – Over half the adult population of Moray has now received a Covid-19 vaccination as people take up the opportunity to protect themselves and their families.

The Moray programme is well on track to have offered a first Covid jab to all patients in the first nine priority groups by the mid-April target date. This is all those over the age of 50, or have a health condition which puts them at increased risk; or is an unpaid carer; or is a frontline health or care worker.

GP practices are continuing to roll out second doses of the vaccine to the over 80s. Appointments for second vaccinations for patients aged 75-79 are being brought forward in line with current vaccine supply forecasts. People are being contacted by NHS Grampian rather than the national booking team due to the acceleration of the time table. It is really important that everyone attend their second dose appointment to receive maximum protection from COVID-19.

Day of Reflection – Dennis Robertson, co-chair of the Moray Integration Joint Board (IJB), opened last Thursday's board meeting by praising the efforts of staff and communities over the past 12 months of the pandemic.

“One year on since the initial lockdown took place, can I on behalf of the Moray IJB extend our sincere thanks to all members of staff, including our volunteers, and everyone else that has been impacted and effected by Covid-19,” Mr Robertson said.



“Many people have stepped up to the mark, many people have gone well over and above their normal duties and we are extremely grateful.”

Last Thursday’s meeting was the first to be webcast live. The recording is available for viewing via the Moray Council webcast library at: <https://moray.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>



Home First programme progresses - A new approach to reduce the number of people being delayed leaving hospital and maximise their ability to live independently at home, has been approved by the Moray Integration Joint Board (IJB).

Discharge to Assess supports the rapid discharge of people who are medically ready to leave hospital and appropriate to have their functional needs assessed among the familiar surroundings of their own home.

It is widely recognised that staying in hospital for longer than necessary has a negative impact on older people in particular. Ensuring that people receive the support they need to continue their lives at home is vital for their longer-term health and wellbeing.

Discharge to Assess supports patients through comprehensive physiotherapy and occupational therapy assessment and the provision of timely rehabilitation to maximise their independent living skills. The targeted functional approach results in more people remaining independent after a hospital admission or attendance, and a reduced dependency on formal care services.

Funding of £500,000 for 2021/22 to scale up the Discharge to Assess team was agreed by the IJB meeting last Thursday following consideration of a report on the success of a test of change. Evidence was presented by project lead Dawn Duncan, Professional Lead for OT, of improved patient outcomes, prevention of admission to hospital and readmission rates, and increased capacity in Moray’s hospitals for people requiring acute care.

During the six month test, 48 patients aged between 64 and 96 were supported by the Discharge to Assess team to return home to continue their recovery. All 48 recorded improved assessment scores in their gait, balance and mobility, reducing their risk of falls. 88% of patients agreed their functional performance had improved.

Supported early discharge through Discharge to Assess forms a key part of Moray’s Home First strategic shift to a more community focused model of care which places people and their families at the centre of decision making, working alongside them to understand what is important to them and what will enhance their personal outcomes.

Approaches are being stepped up to provide greater community support to people to maximise their ability to live independently at home and to avoid unnecessary hospital attendance or admission.

Covid-19 positivity rate – A spike in Covid-19 cases in Speyside has led to a jump in the infection rate in Moray.

Data from Public Health Scotland shows the seven day infection rate per 100,000 population is 87.7, well above the national figure. In the period between March 20-26, Moray reported 84 cases, ranking at 9th highest among Scotland's local authority areas with an infection rate of 4.2% (2.8% nationally).

Please continue to follow the advice on social distancing and precautions.

Community testing – The mobile testing facility will be sited in Williamson Hall on Moss Street, Elgin, until 16 April and will include longer opening hours as businesses start to re-open. If arriving by car, users are asked to access by the Duff Avenue entrance.

The hours of operation in Elgin will be 29-30 March and 1-2 April 9.30am-4.30pm, 31 March 1pm-7pm. From 5-16 April the testing centre will be open 7am-7pm.

The community testing site also continues at Buckie's Fishermen's Hall until 2 April. Testing is available 9.30am – 4.30pm (Mon, Tues, Thur & Fri), 1 - 7pm (Wed).

PPE hub – Due to the severity of the Covid-19 outbreak, and the demand it has placed on resources, the Scottish Government agreed to provide PPE to social care settings where business as usual supply routes have failed.

A national distribution network of around 50 PPE Hubs was established last April and will remain operational until the end of June 2021 when they become subject to monthly review.

Staff at the Elgin hub have worked hard to ensure a reliable and responsive system is in place to ensure appropriate items of PPE are available to staff, unpaid carers, personal assistants and visitors in social care settings.

Cervical screening – New weekend cervical cancer screening clinics are being trialled to improve access for women in Moray who have received an invitation to take up the lifesaving test.

Women aged 25 to 49 years are offered screening every three years, and women aged 50 to 64 are offered screening every five years. The number of women attending cervical screening in the UK is falling and this has been accelerated during the pandemic. However, early detection of changes is key to effective treatment and improved survival rates.

Providing additional clinics is part of a drive to increase participation in the national NHS cervical screening programme which has now resumed in Scotland. This does not replace the service which continues to be offered to patients through the week by their own GP practice.

Appointments are currently available in Buckie, Elgin and Forres on Friday evenings, Saturday and Sunday. Bookings can be made online at <http://bit.ly/mcervsc>

Traffic disruption – A major upgrade to the gas network in Elgin starts next week. To minimise disruption as much as possible, the work will be carried out in five stages with the first phase focusing on the area around Dr Gray's Hospital.

On Tuesday 6 April SGN will begin work in Pluscarden Road. For a four-week period, the exit to Dr Gray's will be closed and West Road will become the entrance and exit road to the hospital. There will be one-way traffic on the A96 eastbound between the roundabout at West Road and the roundabout at Wittet Drive.