

Core brief

**Message from Jane Grant, Chief Executive
(29 April 2022, 2.15pm)**

This week, we have seen the number of hospital patients and care home residents who have been diagnosed with COVID continue to reduce, albeit at a slower rate than in recent weeks. There remains, however, a significant number of people with COVID in our care and so it is really important that we do not become complacent about the continuing improving position.

It is however important that we give ourselves the opportunity to start looking ahead and planning for the future. For example, I am really pleased that many of our clinical research studies have, over recent months started progressing again, following a pause during the pandemic. Our Research and Innovation teams have been able to restart 1,100 paused research studies while starting 300 new ones, involving 499 principal investigators and with over 8,000 recruited patients, which is on par with pre-pandemic activity. This is hugely important work, where colleagues have made significant efforts to move these studies forward and I would like to thank Professor Julie Brittenden and all those who contribute to research and innovation for their tireless efforts.

From the end of this month, community testing for COVID-19 in Scotland will cease. This means that we will no longer be recording community case numbers. For our staff it is important that the distinction is made between community testing and the testing of the health and social care workforce. The expectation remains that our staff will continue to self-test using LFT kits twice weekly and report your results on the NHSScotland portal. It is important that we continue to do all we can to keep our patients and our colleagues safe and this testing regime will help us to be able to do this. As such, I would encourage all staff who are testing regularly to continue to do so and for those of you who are not testing as frequently, to please start. LFT kits are available free of charge to our staff, so if you require more, please speak with your line manager who will order them for you.

It is also important for staff to note that the rules around self-isolation, if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or you test positive, remain the same. Therefore, if you do have symptoms or test positive, you should not physically come into a work environment. If you feel well enough and are able to work from home during the self-isolation period then please continue to do so once you have agreed this with your line manager. While we do expect updated guidance from the Scottish Government regarding self-isolation requirements for health and social care staff, it is important that until this is received, we continue with the status quo.

I would like to make staff aware that following a thorough review, as of tomorrow at 8am, we will be removing some of the visiting restrictions within our hospitals. As such, one interchangeable visitor at a time will be supported in adult acute wards at Stobhill Hospital Lightburn Hospital, the Vale, RAH, IRH and all wards at the GRI, including our Nightingale Wards. All other patients in adult acute, mental health and maternity wards will be permitted to receive up to two interchangeable visitors at one time. This is great news for our patients and their loved ones and I would like to thank staff for the additional support they have shown their patients while restrictions have been in place.

Finally, this week, I would like to share some feedback I have received about the team responsible for stroke services for the elderly at the QEUH. The family member of the patient, who spent several months in Ward 57 at the Langlands unit, writes: "My father was admitted through A&E to neurology and onwards to Ward 57. The care he received through the three months he stayed in hospital was remarkable. The whole team worked together to keep him motivated and encouraged. He made wonderful progress through the phenomenal efforts of Shona and her physiotherapy team. Calum, a student occupational therapist, was learning his craft while offering help, support and humour. The entire nursing team worked tirelessly and with a positive encouraging attitude. They managed without complaints to offer wonderful care. Thank you all." This wonderful feedback shows the extent to which effective cross-team working brings substantial benefits to our patients as well as our staff and I would like to thank Shona, Calum and the rest of the team in Ward 57 for the care, compassion and humility shown to this patient and his family. Thank you.

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