

Core brief

**Message from Jane Grant, Chief Executive
(17 December 2021, 5.20pm)**

As staff will be aware, cases of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 are increasing rapidly across Scotland and it has now become the dominant variant, bypassing Delta. This is very significant news, particularly as it is currently assumed that there is increased transmissibility of the Omicron variant.

In line with this, staff will have seen that enhanced self-isolation measures have come into force for members of the public, however, it is important to remember that the guidelines are slightly different for our staff. If you are a household or passing contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, you are exempt from the 10-day isolation period if you do not have any symptoms and remain asymptomatic, you return a negative PCR test before returning to work and you have received all COVID-19 vaccinations, including your booster. Please remember you will also be required to undertake a daily LFD test for the remainder of the 10-day period.

Due to the swiftly changing picture in relation to Omicron, we have taken the extremely difficult decision to bring forward new, temporary visiting arrangements to hospital visiting in adult wards. The changes mean that from Monday 20 December, patients in shared accommodation, such as four and six bedded bays and Nightingale wards, will be able to have essential visits only. Patients in single room accommodation will, due to personal isolation, be able to see one, interchangeable visitor each day. These changes, which are being made in an attempt to protect our patients and stop the spread of this much more transmissible variant of COVID-19, do not apply to paediatrics, neonatal and maternity wards, where patients can still have two visitors each day.

I realise this will cause significant concern to patients and their families, especially with regard to visiting arrangements for the festive period and in particular Christmas Day. I would like to reassure staff that the situation will be kept under constant review and we expect to be able to advise patients about arrangements for Christmas Day no later than Wednesday next week.

The positive news is that there is some evidence that the booster continues to give 70% protection against the Omicron variant and this may be higher for protection against severe disease. As such it remains hugely important that we all ensure that we take the opportunity to be vaccinated and I would like to encourage any members of staff who are yet to take up the offer to do so as quickly as possible.

As you will have seen, on our social media channels, following the updated guidance from the Scottish Government, our vaccination team has redoubled their efforts to bring forward more vaccination appointments in all of our Local Authority areas and have set-up drop-ins, including at Hampden Stadium. I would like to thank all of our vaccinators and our programme team, who have been working tirelessly to ensure that NHSGGC can meet the new requirements swiftly and safely, working towards achieving the target of offering a booster appointment to all adults before the end of the year. I appreciate that we have seen queuing at some of our clinics and this is due, in part, to significantly increased number of people who

have turned up for their appointment, which is encouraging news ahead of families getting together next week.

I would like to congratulate the entire team at the IRH for achieving their Investors in People (IiP) accreditation. This is a huge achievement and I am immensely proud of all that has been done by everyone in Inverclyde and our HR and OD team, especially given against a backdrop of the pandemic. Achieving this accreditation requires a great deal of work and commitment and I would like to thank everyone involved. You have all done an amazing job.

Our IiP journey doesn't end there. We are now rolling out the process to our Corporate Services cluster, which will include staff based across several directorates. The assessment phase will commence in early 2022 and I am very much looking forward to seeing what lessons we can take forward from the Inverclyde team in order that we can take the next steps to full IiP accreditation across all of NHSGGC. I should note that the process doesn't end with accreditation, this is one element of our commitment to continuous improvement across our organisation and I would like to ask all staff for their support to make positive changes to the way we work and further build on our success.

Finally, staff and patients at the RHC were visited by a very special guest this week, when Santa and two of his elves abseiled down the building to raise money for the Children's Hospital Charity. This brought great delight to the many children inside the hospital and those who caught a glimpse from outside. At this time of year, it is great when we have the support of others to help bring that extra bit of joy to our patients, many of whom will be with us over Christmas, rather than at home with their families.

I would like to thank all staff who will be working over the festive season for going that extra mile to provide such exceptional care and support to our patients and their families over the coming weeks. Thank you.



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