

Core brief

**Message from Jane Grant, Chief Executive
(18 March 2022, 4.45pm)**

This week we have continued to experience very challenging circumstances across our health and social care services. As the number of patients within our hospitals diagnosed with COVID continues to rise, so too do the number of cases in our communities and our adult care homes. This is having a significant impact on our ability to discharge patients swiftly.

The number of our colleagues who are absent as a result of COVID also remains high and I realise that there is a real impact on our remaining staff. While the HR team continue to move forward at pace with our Board-wide recruitment, we are also looking at other potential interventions we can make to relieve some of the pressure on our services. This includes actively encouraging members of the public to only attend our EDs if their condition is very serious or life threatening and for those who can be seen elsewhere to please speak with their GP or pharmacist, utilise NHS 24 or one of our MIUs.

Given the rise in patient cases and the resulting ward closures at some of our hospitals, we have, once again, had to take the very difficult decision to move to essential visiting only in our shared wards at the GRI and RAH. This decision is never taken lightly and I recognise the impact it has on our patients, as such, we need to do whatever we can to reduce the risk to both staff and patients in our hospitals. In addition, you will have seen the Scottish Government announcement that restrictions currently in place concerning the wearing of face coverings will carry on into April. As such, we will continue to encourage everyone working or visiting our sites to follow these rules.

As we begin to move to the next stages of COVID service delivery, I would like to thank our teams who have worked so tirelessly at the Community Assessment Centres over the past two years. Many members of staff have been part of the service since the start of the pandemic in March 2020 and have played a significant role in setting up and developing the way in which care was provided. I have received some very positive feedback that the CAC teams fostered a flexible and can-do approach, working tirelessly to accommodate patients and support their colleagues and I would like to thank everyone who has been part of the CAC team for a job well done. I, along with my colleagues in the HSCPs very much appreciate the role you have played. Thank you.

I have also received some positive patient feedback about the Gastroenterology team at the New Victoria Hospital. One of our colonoscopy patients was delighted with the care provided, commenting on the efficiency of the team and the support received. The patient said; "The staff were thoughtful, kind and caring of everyone in the day ward. And funny through-out, but extremely professional at the same time. It's a difficult balance but the staff have it to a tee and it's obvious these guys are not just doing it for a job. In particular, Gail, Heather and Louise in the ward. Sister Weston & Corrine for the scope. My final thank you to Katie who looked after me during the colonoscopy and kept me comfortable with her kind words and a cool cloth was on my forehead before I even knew I needed it. An absolute angel, thanks." Team work is so important and in this case, very clearly appreciated by the patient. Thank you and well done to entire team.