

Here is the brief for Monday 21 March 2022.

Pressure in the system The weekend just past was arguably one of the busiest we've seen during the pandemic. Sandra Macleod (Aberdeen City HSCP Chief Officer & Portfolio Lead for Medicine & Unscheduled Care) and Paul Allen (Executive Director on-call over the weekend) recorded a short video message of thanks; [if you've not had a chance to watch it, you can do so here](#).

Norovirus As you'll be aware, we are currently dealing with an outbreak of norovirus affecting wards at Dr Gray's Hospital. This is a stark reminder that COVID-19 is not the only infection capable of causing significant illness and disruption to health & social care. Norovirus is highly contagious and easily spread where people are in close contact with each other, making outbreaks a real risk in both health and care settings.

Good, thorough, hand hygiene is vital; alcohol-based hand rubs/hand gels are not as effective against norovirus, so water and soap should be used. If you experience any episodes of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, you should stay off work until you have been free of symptoms for 48 hours. Although unpleasant, norovirus is generally short-lived. There is more information on the Health Protection Scotland website, [including a dedicated section on the management of outbreaks in care settings](#). The Infection Prevention & Control team should be contacted for advice if clinical areas identify 2 or more individuals with enteric symptoms (D&V)

Fuel costs The current rapid rise in fuel costs – and the impact it is having on those of you who drive regularly as part of your work duties – has been raised a number of times in recent weeks. The mileage reimbursement rate is part of national terms & conditions, which individual boards are unable to deviate from. However, the matter is under discussion nationally and we will share any further updates with you when available.

Support for Ukraine NHS Scotland is committed to supporting Ukraine at this time of crisis and is supplying medical supplies and equipment to help address urgent needs identified by the Ukrainian Government. Via NHS National Services Scotland, over 500,000 emergency items, including wound dressings, bandages, hypodermic needles, and oxygen masks, have been gathered. Four planes containing these consignments of necessary medical equipment donated by NHS Scotland have departed and been successfully received in Ukraine, with further shipments being planned.

The clear ask from relief agencies responding to the situation on the ground now is for financial support, rather than physical donations. [The Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine appeal is open](#); further information on this is available via that link, should you wish to donate.

Grampian data The local report is shown below. [The Public Health Scotland daily dashboard can be viewed here](#). Our daily data report looks a little different - following your feedback and the changes in testing policy, we will no longer include the daily number of people tested.

	New cases in past 24 hrs	Daily no. of contacts isolated in past 24 hrs	Patients in hospital	Patients in ITU	Deaths in hospital
Fri 19/3	981	158	157	1	2 <small>17 & 19.3.22</small>
Sat 19/3	897	140	159	1	0
Sun 19/3	925 <small>Up 28 from 20/3/22</small>	146 <small>Up 6 from 19/3/22</small>	155 <small>Down 4 from 20/3/22</small>	1 <small>No change from 20/3/22</small>	0 <small>Last death 19/3/22</small>
	<small>Reported by PHS Dashboard. Midnight to midnight</small>	<small>Reported from CMS up to midnight</small>	<small>Confirmed patients from Trakcare according to new definitions from 15/9</small>	<small>Confirmed from Trakcare as per SG definitions - includes patients who were +ve >28 days. ECMO patients included if flagged for COVID-19</small>	<small>Confirmed from Trakcare</small>

Final reminder – annual leave buyback

Deadline – 31 March 2022 for Agenda for Change and Executive/Senior Managers and for Medical and Dental staff the last day of their personal 2021/22 leave year.

As communicated in November 2021, all employees are expected, wherever possible, to take all their accumulated leave by the end of the 2021/22 leave year. However, it is recognised that service demands have meant this has been difficult for some colleagues. The preference remains for managers and staff to work together to ensure all leave is taken, where this is feasible, to support wellbeing by getting rest and recuperation, which managers should both encourage and facilitate. All requests to take annual leave should still be considered to enable staff to rest and recuperate. A local communication, outlining the options (please note the deadlines outlined above) where it is not possible to take the entirety of the accumulated leave due to service demands, is available on the [intranet news pages](#). Please read it carefully to understand how it affects you.

If the option of annual leave buy back is agreed, a maximum of 10 days can be made up of a combination of leave from any of the leave years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22. If a form is submitted to Payroll for in excess of 10 days, payment will be capped at 10 days.

Consultation on amendments to NHS Scotland Pension Scheme Back in January we let you know about a Scottish Government consultation on amendments to the NHS pension schemes. The consultation sought views on a new member contribution structure which proposed making changes to the existing member contribution rates, and phasing these in over two years. It also proposed that the contribution rate a scheme member pays would be based on actual pay.

The consultation closed on 27 February 2022, and an interim response has now been issued. It has been agreed that the reform of the pension contribution structure can be delayed until October 2022. This avoids increasing pension contributions at the same time as increases to National Insurance contributions. Scottish Ministers have decided this delay would be appropriate and would avoid immediate pressures on the take home pay of NHS staff. This is consistent with the approach being taken for the pension schemes in England & Wales. [The interim response can be viewed here](#).

Patient menu change – 22 March Following an equipment failure in the Cook/Chill kitchen at Dr Gray's Hospital, patient menus at Dr Gray's and in all community hospitals in Moray and Aberdeenshire will be altered tomorrow (Tuesday 22 March). Patients requiring Level 4 texture modified meals in all NHS Grampian sites will also have an altered menu and there will be no Level 4 snack provision.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused. Normal menus will resume on Wednesday 23 March.

Axe the Fax NHS Grampian are in the process of replacing all circuits that provide incoming and outgoing calls with SIP channels. Once this is complete (estimated June 2022) faxing will **not** be possible from any NHS Grampian site. The NHS Grampian Fax Server will also be switched off on the 1 June 2022. Please make arrangements to replace your fax machine with an alternative form of communication. This applies to fax machines, fax cards in multi-function devices (MFD's), and the NHS Grampian Fax Server. If you require any information or assistance in finding an alternative form of communication please log a call with the IT Service Desk on ext. 54444.

Opportunity for reflection We are surrounded by stories. They are how we share meaning, how we learn, how we connect and how we protest – they influence everything we do. Sometimes we find ourselves within a story: a story told to us, or about us. A story of reputation or a story of change. What stories are you part of - are they energising or constraining, enabling or challenging? How does your next chapter begin?

Our thanks as ever to the Guided Journaling programme for supplying this opportunity to reflect each Monday. If you are interested in Guided Journaling or any of the other We Care opportunities, you can [find out more on their dedicated website](#).

Tune of the day Kate Macrae steps up to our virtual jukebox, suggesting [Whiskey in the Jar by Thin Lizzy](#). Thanks to Kate and all the recovery team in the main theatre suite at ARI.

If you want to request a song for tune of the day, follow up on items included in this brief, or suggest an item for sharing, drop us an email via gram.communications@nhs.scot