

Operation Snowdrop

1. Actions Recommended

The Board is asked to note:

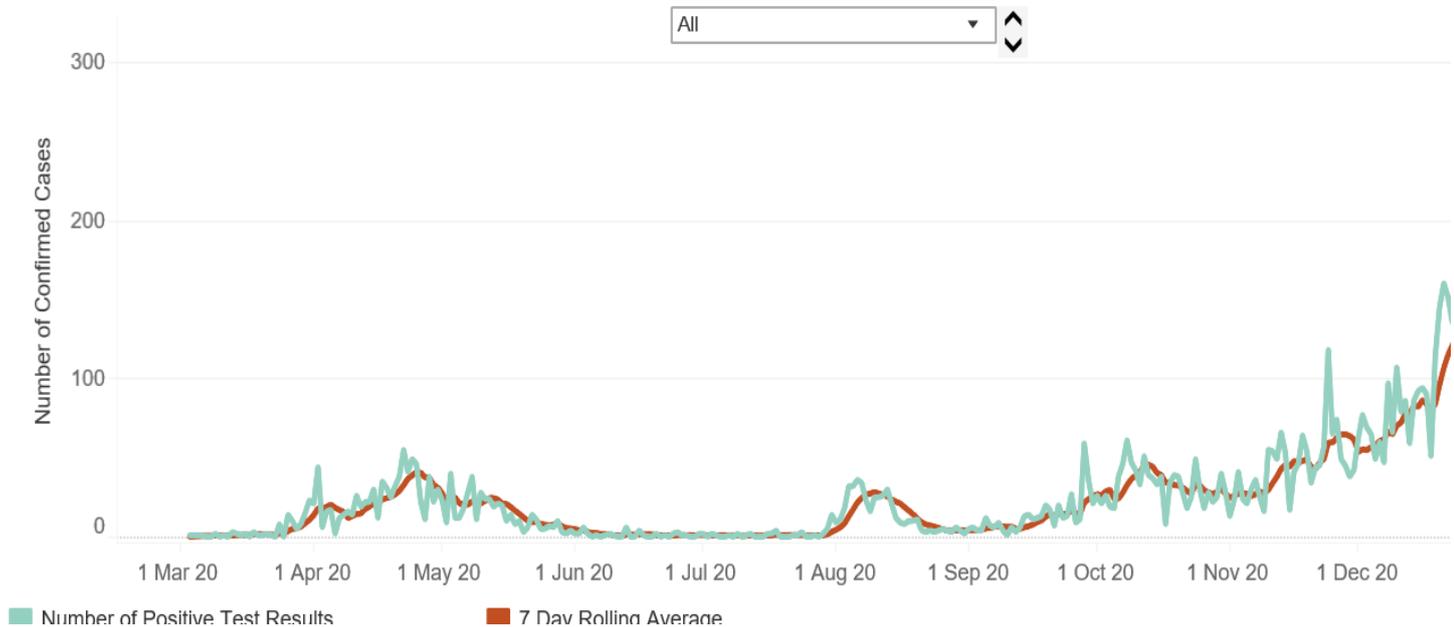
- The current position regarding COVID-19 transmission within the Grampian area, including hospital admissions;
- Review and challenge the performance status (included in the attached report) in relation to Critical and Protected Services, Test and Protect and Surge & Flow.
- The position regarding the COVID-19 vaccination programme across Grampian and the focus of the Staff Health and Wellbeing programme.

2. Strategic Context

Since the last Board meeting in December 2020, the overall position regarding COVID-19 transmission and its impact on our health and social care services changed significantly.

As a result the Scottish Government implemented further lockdown measures during the festive period to control the spread of the virus and reduced community transmission.

Epidemiological Curve of Positive Test Results with 7-day Rolling Average



During November and December 2020, Scottish Government Health and Social Care directorates set out the priorities for NHS Boards and arrangements for decision making should Boards need to pause resumed services or redeploy capacity to deal with the COVID-19 resurgence or manage other winter pressures.

These arrangements were supported by guidance for prioritising elective care as set out in the Framework for Clinical Prioritisation of Elective Care and confirmation that Boards should:

- maintain and enhance the COVID Community Pathway with virtual hubs and Community Assessment Centres;
- ensure new urgent care pathway/access arrangements are safely and effectively introduced, as part of our national programme to redesign urgent care and provide access to the appropriate clinical pathway at the first engagement with the patient;
- maintain urgent elective and vital cancer services including National Cancer screening programmes.
- continue to provide appropriate support to local care homes in order to protect some of our most vulnerable citizens, including continued support for infection prevention and control practice, broader nursing care and all other care standards in care homes, providing mutual aid where this is necessary; and
- ensure appropriate infection control measures are in place; the delivery the delivery of vaccination programmes and a Test and Protect response which minimises the risk of further transmission; fulfilling our core aim of suppressing the virus to the maximum extent possible

Boards were also advised that they could pause all non-urgent elective and routine services during January and February 2021 to help free up capacity to manage these pressures.

In view of these challenges, the NHS Grampian Chief Executive, with the support of the NHS Board, agreed to move to Level 4 of the Contingency Plan. This is the highest level of escalation and places all services across Grampian on an emergency and business continuity basis.

Operation Snowdrop aims to concentrate the whole organisation effort on a discrete number of activities to ensure that our finite workforce capacity is directed at the most urgent issues. Operation Snowdrop at level 4 comprises the following:

 The logo for Operation Snowdrop features the word "operation" in a grey sans-serif font above the word "snowdrop" in a green sans-serif font. A stylized green arch connects the 'o' and 'p' in "snowdrop", with a light blue teardrop shape hanging from its center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff Health &amp; Wellbeing</li><li>• Critical &amp; Protected Services</li><li>• Test &amp; Protect</li><li>• Vaccination</li><li>• Surge &amp; Flow</li></ul>
---	--

### **3. Key matters relevant to recommendation**

#### **Overview**

Operation Snowdrop is the NHS Grampian approach to the initial three months of 2021 and will deliver a cohesive system-wide & community response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the delivery of health & care services during the “winter period” and delivery of critical and protected services. The aims of Operation Snowdrop are:

- To maintain public confidence in the health and care system
- To have a coherent plan which creates a unity of purpose for the whole health and care system and draws on the help and expertise of wider partners.
- To create a specific focus for staff, for a finite period, to ensure we have enough capacity to deliver against the key priorities and to maintain the health and care system in a coordinated and cohesive manner.
- To support our staff, ensuring everyone’s wellbeing, through the coming period and to plan the recovery for staff following the end of Operation Snowdrop.
- To plan the recovery of the health & care system ensuring learning from the pandemic - increase volume of delivery, focussed on clinical priority, improving outcomes and ensuring patient safety.

A short briefing on each of the elements of Operation Snowdrop is presented below, with a supporting performance report covering Critical and Protected Services, Test and Protect and Surge & Flow. At the Board meeting a short presentation will be made in relation to the COVID Vaccination Programme and the Staff Health and Wellbeing Programme.

#### **Staff Health and Wellbeing**

Throughout the pandemic response, staff health and wellbeing has been a consistent priority, particularly now given the length of time that the health and social care system has been operating in a revised manner. The commitment, dedication and professionalism of our staff has been exemplary and it is important that as a Board we recognise and respond to the challenges our staff are facing at this time and may continue to face for a further period.

The Staff Health and Wellbeing programme is focused on

- Ensuring our staff are safe whilst working during the pandemic and to support them in maintaining their wellbeing; and
- Ensuring our staff groups will be given time to recuperate and recover once the COVID situation starts to ease and prior to the managed remobilisation of services which have been paused or reduced at this time.

The current programme has a number of key elements at present and will be expanded to take account of the ongoing assistance we will require to provide to staff to support their recuperation and recovery.

### Staff Resilience

Focused on provision of tailored non-medical therapeutic support, prevention and advice and mapping of skills to enable safe and effective deployment

### Remote and Agile working

Supporting the continued smooth operation of delivery and the changes required to enable remote and agile working, including investment in equipment, health and safety and any policy changes

### My Healthy Life

To facilitate the provision of advice and opportunities for staff to participate in a range of activities and actions to support good physical well being

### Safe work environment and PPE

Ensuring that all measures are being taken to protect staff whilst working in a COVID environment and that the necessary equipment and advice is provided

### Breaks and rest areas

Ensuring that appropriate and safe areas are established to enable staff to take breaks and rest whilst at work

### Psychosocial Support

Provision of psychological support for staff given the challenges facing colleagues providing care in a challenging environment

## COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme is currently being rolled out across NHS Grampian and the rest of the UK. The vaccination helps to reduce the risk of developing the virus and makes symptoms milder if an individual catches the virus.

As set out by the Scottish Government, the groups most at risk will be vaccinated first. These are:

- residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
- people aged 80 and over
- frontline health and social care workers

Vaccination for other groups will begin as soon as the supply of vaccines becomes available. The order in which people will be offered the vaccine is based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and is as follows:

- residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
- all those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
- all those 75 years of age and over
- all those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
- all those 65 years of age and over
- all individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
- all those 60 years of age and over
- all those 55 years of age and over
- all those 50 years of age and over

The tactical operating plan for the COVID vaccine programme has been agreed and a significant logistical effort, with support from partners, is well underway.

These efforts include:

- The recruitment and training of additional staff to administer the vaccinations and to enable us to be able to respond to the anticipated supply of vaccines and the shared objective of being able to complete the mass vaccination programme at the earliest possible time.
- The establishment of vaccination centres across Grampian with the capacity to increase the number of vaccinations stations should supply of vaccine levels increase during the next period. We are grateful for the support of our partners in being able to establish these centres over a very short time period.

At the Board meeting we will provide updated figures on the progress with the vaccination programme to date and details of the planned programme during February 2021.

### Critical and Protected services

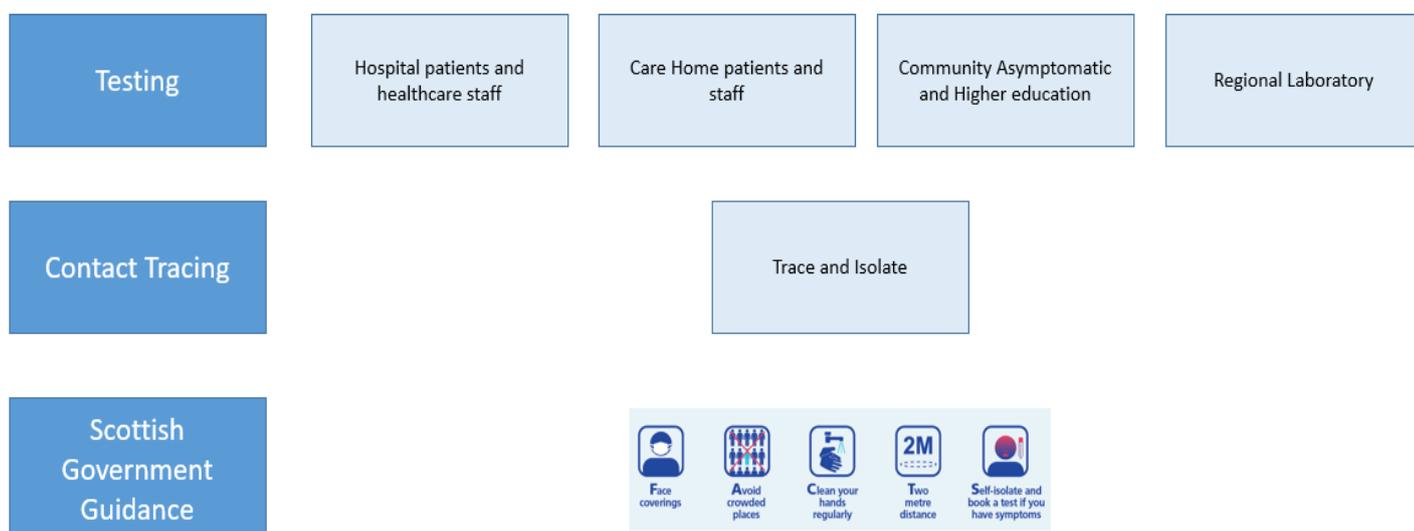
Whilst responding to the COVID pandemic we have continued to

- maintain urgent elective and vital cancer services including National Cancer screening programmes; and
- operate the ESCAT clinical prioritisation framework for elective care which has now been established in Grampian for several years and ahead of the use of this framework across Scotland.

The attached performance report provides an updated position in relation to elective and cancer provision.

### Test and Protect

The Test & Protect Programme was established to support and coordinate NHS Grampian's urgent operational response to the multitude of requirements associated with national and local priorities. A number of work-streams were established, with operational project management support provided at variable stages and levels in some of the work-streams.



Since the December 2020 Board meeting the key changes that we would highlight are:

- All patient facing staff are being offered and have access to twice weekly Lateral Flow testing. Weekly test kits have been distributed to approximately 5,500 of applicable patient facing staff, with a target completion in early February 2021.
- The Regional Laboratory HUB was completed and handed over to NHS Grampian on 18th December. The laboratory has the capacity to undertake approximately 4,000 tests per day during early 2021, with further capacity potential for 6,000 tests per day if 24/7 workforce can be achieved.
- During the 1st COVID wave approximately 50% of care home testing transitioned to the NHS Grampian laboratories. It is anticipated that full transition of care home testing will be completed in early February.
- Prior to the end of the academic term in December testing of all students returning home was undertaken by Higher Education colleagues and completed pre-Christmas. These arrangements will be ongoing for returning students.
- Following the increase in the number of positive cases, we have further increases the size of our contact tracing team to support this key element of our community and public health response to reducing community transmission.

The attached performance report provides an updated position in relation to our relative testing and contact tracing performance.

### **Surge and Flow**

The Board approved the Winter Surge Plan for 2020/21 at its meeting on 14 January. The attached performance report provides an updated position in relation to our relative performance in relation to testing and contact tracing.

### **Taking account of health inequalities**

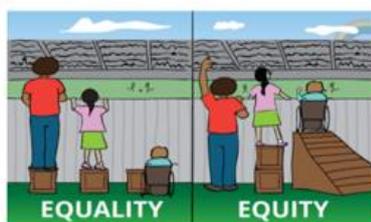
Integral to our approach we also remain focused on taking account of health inequalities in all our responses during the pandemic and when planning for beyond.

The concept of NHS Grampian as an 'Anchor' institution will be key, acknowledging that the long term sustainability of health services is tied to the wellbeing of the population we serve, and we are well placed to make an important contribution as part of our community planning partnerships towards the strategic development of local economies.

Within the remobilisation plan we set out the following summary setting out how health inequalities are an integral part of our response. These elements of our response are under review and will be updated as part of our revised plan which will be considered by the Board in April 2021.

**Context – Creating Equity playing our part**

- Health inequalities are the unjust and avoidable differences in people's health across the population and between specific population groups.
- Healthcare is one determinant of health which can vary in terms of access, uptake or outcome.
- Impacts of COVID-19 are disproportionately borne but those who have fewer resources and poorer health.



**Re-Mobilisation Plan – our commitment to making a difference**

COVID-19 has heightened our awareness of the need to maintain and increase our focus on reducing inequalities in health. As a health system our focus will be guided by intelligence, our processes will seek assurance that services are inequalities sensitive in design, development and delivery, as an Anchor Institution we will be an inclusive employer and procurer and with public and third sector partners we will work together to support those facing the highest levels of inequalities.

## Re-Mobilisation Plan Part one

**Our commitments as set out in our overall approach include**

**Leadership and Culture**

- Health equity is a strategic priority for NHS Grampian and our partner organisations
- Our culture will reflect a commitment to embedding reducing health inequalities and improving equity of access across all services

**Principles supporting the plan**

In delivering against our core principles, we commit to:

- reducing the risk facing the most vulnerable individuals within our health and care system
- a Whole System approach to recovery and continued improvement that optimises the health and wellbeing outcomes for the population and reduces inequalities

**Surge Plan**

- Operation Home First is based on the foundation of enhancing resilience within our communities, improving equity of access to services and supporting those in the population who are most vulnerable.
- We will build on the existing strengths that traditionally exist across our communities in Grampian, supported by our partners and third sector



## Re-Mobilisation Plan Part two



**Our tactical services responses all include commitments; for example**

- **Public Health**
  - Leadership within existing multiagency partnerships to drive actions against the social determinants of health inequalities
  - Annual health inequalities data dashboard NHS Board review
- **Service developments**
  - Service developments to be informed by analysis of variation in service access, service use, or uptake and/or health outcomes
  - Deliberate efforts to hear the views of people who live in our most deprived communities to ensure they are heard when service developments are being planned
  - Service developments to include documented Health Inequalities Impact Assessments
- **Child health**
  - Implementation of statutory duties set out in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 and continued delivery of services and programmes which support children and families from deprived backgrounds
- **Primary care**
  - Establishment of community hubs to provide accessible care to vulnerable patients closer to home
- **Learning and development**
  - Education for staff on health inequalities
- **Infrastructure**
  - Ensuring equitable accessibility and protection for those accessing services
- **Technology**
  - Actions to address digital exclusion and to prevent or mitigate inequalities in access to digitally provided healthcare
- **Transport**
  - Efforts with partners to ensure transport options to ensure equitable access to healthcare
- **Employment and procurement**
  - Increased participation in *Family First*
  - Social Benefit Clauses to be included in procurement processes, with an audit of current practice against agreed policy

## 4. Responsible Executive Director and contact for further information

If you require any further information in advance of the Board meeting please contact:

### Responsible Executive Director

Alan Gray  
 Director Of Finance  
[alan.gray2@nhs.scot](mailto:alan.gray2@nhs.scot)

26 January 2021