

Thursday 31 August 2023

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**New COVID-19 variant** As you may have seen today, a new variant of COVID-19 has been identified in Scotland. BA.2.86 is an emerging variant and is currently under further investigation. More information is available in Public Health Scotland's weekly respiratory infection report, available here: [National respiratory infection and COVID-19 statistics \(publichealthscotland.scot\)](https://www.nhs.uk/publichealthscotland.scot)

**COVID-19 treatment line** The telephone number for our COVID-19 treatment line for those in the highest risk groups is changing. From tomorrow (1 September) the number will be 01224 556527. Callers will be asked to leave contact details to receive a call back from one of the team. This phone number is **NOT** for urgent medical advice, general health enquiries or vaccination. People are **ONLY** eligible to be assessed for treatment if **ALL** the following apply:

- you're aged 12 or over
- you have symptoms of coronavirus that started in the last 5 days that **aren't getting better**
- you're in a group who are deemed to be at **highest risk** of getting seriously ill from coronavirus
- you've **tested positive** for coronavirus

Details of the conditions or treatments that make someone high risk and eligible are available on NHS Inform here: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Treatments | NHS inform](https://www.nhs.uk/health-topics/coronavirus/coronavirus-treatments)

**RAAC update** Specialist surveys are continuing to take place in the 54 buildings – or parts of buildings – identified as potentially containing Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC). Inspections were made in Aberdeen last week, across Moray sites this week, and in Aberdeenshire next week. Thank you to everyone involved for their co-operation and support. Formal reports will follow once the surveys are completed, and we will share a full update in due course. However, if we receive initial verbal feedback which suggests immediate action is required, our teams will liaise directly with any area affected. As a reminder, we recorded the two virtual information sessions held at the start of August, and these are available to watch on the NHS Grampian YouTube channel. [You may also wish to read our RAAC FAQ.](#)

**Public Holidays 2024/25 and 2025/26** The public holiday dates for the next two financial years have been set and are available to view here (networked devices only): [Pages - PublicHolidays \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/public-holidays)

**Nursing opportunities** Interested in a career in nursing? Here is information on two alternative routes into training:

**1.Return to Practice** Has your NMC registration lapsed, and you want to return to work as a nurse or midwife? The return to practice course is suitable for those who have previously been registered with the NMC, including nurses (of all branches), midwives and those previously on the SCPHN register. We run cohorts in February and September, which begin with a 7-week theory block before commencing clinical placement hours. If you want to find out more then come along to our information session, which

will be held via Teams on Monday 2 October at 6pm. Contact [gram.rtp@nhs.scot](mailto:gram.rtp@nhs.scot) to receive the link to the meeting or get in touch if you have any further queries.

**2. Become a Registered Nurse with the Open University** They offer a four year, part-time, programme blending online and practice-based learning, leading to a qualification in adult, mental health, learning disability, or children and young people nursing. To be eligible, you must have a permanent post with NHS Grampian, working a minimum of 26 hours/week, have numeracy and communications skills at SCQF Level 5 or equivalent, and have your line manager's support. Information sessions are taking place as follows:

- Tuesday 12 September, 2.30-3.30pm
- Thursday 12 October, 6.30-7.30pm
- Tuesday 7 November, 2.30-3.30pm

[All sessions will take on Teams, using this link.](#) You can scan the QR code below if viewing a printed copy of the brief:



**Working with Harvey's Gang to support young patients** We're delighted to say the haematology laboratories team is working with Harvey's Gang to help young patients understand the treatment they are receiving, and perhaps spark an interest in the healthcare sciences. Harvey's Gang started life as a small charity, offering lab tours to young patients, to help them understand what happens to the blood samples they gave, and why lab teams need so many. As of April this year, Harvey's Gang is now looked after by the Institute of Biomedical Science, and as of September it is coming to ARI.

Any clinical member of staff can nominate a patient - they must be under 16 - with a long-term condition for a tour of the labs with their parent or carer. For more information and to request an application form, please email [gram.hghaematologylab@nhs.scot](mailto:gram.hghaematologylab@nhs.scot)

**In the mood for a blether?** Book Blether, run by the Libraries team, returns next Thursday (7 September) at 1pm. If you are looking for reading inspiration, the opportunity to connect with health & social care colleagues, and are keen to boost your own wellbeing, then come along! Find out more in [NHSG Libraries invite you to join in the 'Book Blether'](#)

The Libraries team are also pleased to offer new 'Focused Blether' sessions. Working with Organisational Development, they have put together sessions which sit somewhere between a journal club and a book group. These sessions are not expert led but rather conversation is inspired by a shared stimulus (e.g., video, article, podcast etc) for curious participants to unpack and learn when sharing views with and listening to each other. Library staff and colleagues facilitate chat flow within an informal, relaxed digital space. The first four organised 'Focused Blethers' will look at 'Belonging and Trust' taking Brene Brown's work as a starting place for interesting chat. [All you need to do is watch this short video](#) then select which session you'd like to join from the dates below, emailing [gram.drgrayslibrary@nhs.scot](mailto:gram.drgrayslibrary@nhs.scot) for the joining information.

- Tuesday 19 September – 10.30am
- Tuesday 26 September – 8am
- Thursday 5 October – 4pm
- Wednesday 11 October – 12.30pm

**Tune of the day** Kate Watson from the Tissue Viability team makes today's request, dedicated to Patsy Grant, who retires from the team next week. Patsy has worked with NHS Grampian since 1985, starting out her career as an auxiliary nurse before completing her training as an enrolled nurse and then registered nurse. In the past 10 years she has worked as a District Nurse/Team Leader in Aberdeen City before joining the Tissue Viability team in 2016. She will be missed by us all but hopefully this isn't a final goodbye from the team! They've asked for Anna Kendrick and [The Cup Song](#). In a lovely twist, Patsy herself has also been in touch to ask for a dedication to her many co-workers over the years; Jim Reeves' [Adios Amigo](#) rounds out our Thursday (EP)

If you want to request a tune, follow up on items included in this brief, or suggest an item for sharing, drop us an email via [gram.communications@nhs.scot](mailto:gram.communications@nhs.scot)