

## **ALL EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR - COVID-19, NO 44, 10 MARCH 2021**

I hope this latest briefing finds you and your family well. It is difficult to believe that we are fast approaching the one-year anniversary of the announcement of the first national lockdown on 23 March 2020 and although the pandemic is still far from over, I am delighted that we are really starting to see sure signs that meaningful progress is being made in the fight back against this awful virus.

One of the areas where great progress has been made is in relation to the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme and so I wanted to provide you with some information in relation to this and also provide some other key updates and reminders.

### **Paid Time Off for COVID-19 Vaccinations**

The UK's COVID-19 Vaccination Programme is now well underway and as at 9 March 2021, the number of people in Scotland who had received their first dose of the vaccine was 1,789,377.

The Scottish Government together with NHS Scotland and Public Health Scotland are actively encouraging individuals to get the vaccination as soon as it is offered to protect yourself, your family, your colleagues and the communities we live and work in.

Tayside Contracts is keen to support colleagues if they wish to take up the offer of the vaccination and therefore, we have developed a COVID-19 Vaccination Policy which our recognised Trade Unions have been fully consulted on. This new policy can be found [here](#) on the Tayside Contracts' website and states that if you are invited to attend an appointment to obtain a COVID-19 vaccination during your working day, you are entitled to **reasonable paid time off to attend your appointment**. This entitlement applies to appointments relating to both the first and second dose of the vaccine. Please follow the notification requirements set out in the policy should you require time off to attend your vaccination appointment.

Accepting a COVID-19 vaccination is a personal choice and we respect that you may choose not to get vaccinated, for example, due to health reasons, religious beliefs etc. You will not be treated less favourably for declining a COVID-19 vaccination.

If you have any hesitation in accepting a COVID-19 vaccination or have any questions, you can visit the NHS Inform website [nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine](https://nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine) or call **0800 030 8013** from 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week for further information.

### **Keeping Each Other Safe**

We have all worked diligently over the last year to protect each other from the risk of COVID-19 by following the FACTS rules around wearing face coverings, avoiding crowded spaces, cleaning our hands, maintaining a physical distance and self-isolating and it is exciting that the vaccination programme offers us all the route out of this pandemic. However, it is very important to understand that the vaccination does not offer any of us immediate protection or remove the requirement for the control measures that we have all become familiar with.

Therefore, even if you have already received your first dose of the vaccine or are soon invited to receive this, please continue to adhere to all Tayside Contracts' COVID-19 risk assessments and control measures which are published on our website [here](#).

These measures are in place for not only your own health and safety but that of others including members of our families, our work teams, vulnerable people, and our communities.

If you have received a letter from the Chief Medical Officer advising you to shield, you must continue to do so until told otherwise whether or not you have received the vaccine.

### **Self-isolating and Booking a Test**

On a related note to the above and in light of a recent small cluster of COVID-19 cases within one of our depot/workshop locations, I wanted to emphasise again the importance of self-isolating immediately if you experience any COVID-19 symptoms which are a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a change of smell or taste. A new continuous cough means coughing for longer than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours. If you experience any of these symptoms, you should not attend work and should book a COVID-19 test immediately by visiting:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides/self-help-guide-access-to-testing-for-coronavirus>

Employees who need to self-isolate will receive full contractual pay during their self-isolation period and will not be penalised for this. I understand that you may feel that you are letting down your manager or colleagues by not attending work, especially if you only have mild symptoms, but it is very important that you do not put your colleagues, service users or members of the public at risk by travelling to and attending work when you may have the virus. The virus is extremely transmissible and therefore please apply caution by self-isolating and booking a test immediately.

### **COVID-19 Employee Survey**

Once again, thank you very much to everyone who took the time to complete our recent COVID-19 Employee Survey. As I have previously reported, we achieved a very encouraging response rate of over 51% to the electronic survey which I am delighted with. Of the 1,158 responses received, 10% were office-based employees, 68% were front-line employees and 22% did not disclose this information. The overall satisfaction rate was 88% which is a measure of all the 'positive and neutral' responses over the 6 main sections totalling 32 questions. Work is well underway to communicate the full results of the survey out to managers, our three recognised Trade Unions via our Joint Consultative Committees and employees via our April edition of Target. In addition to publishing the results, we will be working with managers to identify the areas where we can make improvements and share areas of good practice.

### **Summary**

I hope that you have found this briefing helpful, I appreciate that once again it is a lot of information to take in, but I do believe that it is important to share this information with you. Should you have any questions about any of the topics covered in this briefing please speak to your line manager.

Please continue to refer to Tayside Contracts' website [www.tayside-contracts.co.uk](http://www.tayside-contracts.co.uk) on a regular basis to check for further updates.

If you have not already done so and wish to provide your email address to us in order to benefit from electronic access to communications such as these, please forward your email address to [Communications@tayside-contracts.co.uk](mailto:Communications@tayside-contracts.co.uk) We will not forward your email address onto any third parties or use it for any other purpose other than to communicate with you.

Keith McNamara, Managing Director, 10 March 2021

