### OMICRON

As you will no doubt be aware we are now dealing with a new and more virulent strain of COVID-19 - "Omicron".  This new strain is once again putting pressure on all aspects of life and especially health and social care services.

Community Pharmacy has been at the forefront of delivering care within our communities and has been since the start of the pandemic in March 2020.  To ensure that we protect this invaluable service and maintain ongoing care we have to ensure that we protect each other in the working environment.

With this in mind I provide this timely reminder of key tools available to allow us to do this:

1. For those without a medical exemption, wear a mask while working within your designated area of practice including rest rooms and areas out with the pharmacy;
2. Regularly wash your hands or use hand gels which contain alcohol at 70%;
3. Maintain social distancing wherever possible although we do recognise the small working spaces that Community Pharmacies have to work in can make this challenging;
4. Stagger staff breaks;
5. Clean down benches including tearoom tables regularly especially after usage;
6. Take regular Lateral Flow Tests - if a positive test is highlighted stay away from the working environment and take a PCR test;
7. If symptoms develop stay away from the working environment unless a negative PCR is received;
8. Re-install protective screens if these have been removed;
9. Consider patient flow within your pharmacies including maximum capacity limits considered.

These are all practical tasks that can be carried out, put in place or continued within your pharmacies however the strongest tool we have to protect ourselves is to ensure that colleagues within our pharmacy teams have been vaccinated not once or twice but three times in line with current medical guidelines.

For those colleagues who have not had their three Covid vaccinations, I make a special plea for you all to utilise the link below and arrange an appointment to complete your vaccine course as soon as possible (adhering to current guidelines).

[Book a flu or coronavirus booster vaccination | The flu vaccine (nhsinform.scot)](https://www.nhsinform.scot/flu-vaccine/invitations-and-appointments/book-a-flu-or-coronavirus-booster-vaccination)

Together we can fight this virus and continue to deliver great pharmaceutical care to the people in our communities.