



Dear Colleagues

Please note the updates below for the latest information about Covid-19 response activities in Scottish Primary Care. This information should be considered alongside the latest [National Supporting Guidance for Scottish General Practice](#) published on 17 March 2020 and the [joint Scottish Government, BMA, and RCGP letter](#) published on 13 March 2020. Links to further information and guidance is attached in annex A.

The Scottish Government published the [route map through and out of the Covid-19 pandemic](#) on 21 May 2020. On 28 May 2020 the First Minister confirmed that we have seen sufficient progress in suppressing the virus to enable us to move from the Lockdown to Phase 1. On 31 May 2020 the Scottish Government published [Re-mobilise, Recover, Re-design: the framework for NHS Scotland](#), which Sets out how health boards will safely and incrementally prioritise the resumption of some paused services, while maintaining COVID-19 capacity and resilience.

### **HEALTH PROTECTION SCOTLAND UPDATES FOR CASE DEFINITION, TEST AND PROTECT, AND PPE:**

Please note that Health Protection Scotland guidance is being written, reviewed and updated on a regular basis – please refer to the [Health Protection Scotland website](#), the website of the [Scottish Government](#) and [NHS Inform](#) for the most up to date information.

**NEW COVID-19 CASE DEFINITION FROM HPS** - The Chief Medical Officer issued a [letter on 18 May 2020](#) to advise that the case definition for Covid19 has changed, to now include Anosmia (loss of normal sense of smell or taste). The new definition is now: new continuous cough **OR** fever **OR** loss of / change in sense of smell or taste. Practice reception teams will need to be made aware of this as it may change the protocols that are used in the practice. Information on practice websites and telephone systems may also need to be changed.

**TEST AND PROTECT** – The Scottish Government has implemented [Test and Protect](#), our approach to implementing the ['test, trace, isolate, support' strategy](#), across Scotland from 28 May 2020. GP Reception teams can sign post patients to [NHS Inform](#) and may wish to familiarise themselves with these pages for ease of reference, remembering that information will change on a regular basis as the programme is rolled out.

**PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT** – Health Protection Scotland have established a Primary Care Steering Group at a national level to consider a sustainable supply of PPE for the Primary Care contracted services. The process for GP practices is to continue to liaise with their local Health Board procurement teams to maintain their stock levels. Every Health Board may have a slightly different process, so it is important for practices to work with their procurement teams particularly as processes evolve at a local level. This may involve updating local teams on practice stock levels of PPE on a regular basis. There will be variation in use across Scotland and local and national teams are working on models to understand demand particularly as service requirements change. Please refer to the guidance and resources at [Health Protection Scotland](#) and the [Scottish Government](#) websites. HPS guidance includes [PPE posters](#) that can be used to highlight what PPE is required.

### **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT UPDATES**

**COVID-19: MOBILISATION PLANS: NEXT PHASE OF THE NHS RESPONSE** - On 14 May 2020, John Connaghan, Interim Chief Executive of NHS Scotland, wrote to NHS Chief Executives to ask them to prepare plans for the next phase of pandemic response, covering the period to the end of July. The first iteration of these plans have been shared with the Scottish Government for consideration. The letter also

set out the initial views of the Scottish Government's Interim Chief Medical Officer and National Clinical Director on those areas for prioritisation in the next phase of Health Board mobilisation planning. In the context of those priorities, the focus for primary care is expected to be the following:

- resuming those services that have been suspended, delayed or deferred during the initial emergency response; including the review and management of all long term conditions and chronic disease, e.g. diabetic foot and hypertension clinics, adult screening programmes once these re-start; face to face appointments, where required; referrals to secondary care which may have been deferred/avoided;
- ongoing anticipatory care planning and delivery of care; particularly home visits for those patients in the shielding group and the over-70s non-shielding at risk group;
- service delivery, where clinically appropriate, should be via telephone and digital consultations; Boards have a responsibility in ensuring that practices have the appropriate hardware, software and connectivity infrastructure to maximise the use of digital technology;
- workforce resilience: ensuring the capacity and capability of the workforce to respond to the needs of their practice population including the future of the community hubs and assessment centres;
- helping move patients quickly through the system in line with plans emerging on locally agreed clinical priorities, i.e. urgent cancer referrals, other non-cancer urgent care; pre-referral diagnostic work;
- and preparedness on administering the next round of flu vaccinations.

**ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR GENERAL PRACTICE FOR COVID-19** - The Scottish Government issued a [letter to the GP profession](#) 20 May 2020 that served as an update to [the letter](#) of 28 April 2020 setting out arrangements for additional funding to GP practices for Covid-19 response activities. The May letter provides further detail and clarification to those arrangements. The [General Medical Services Statement of Financial Entitlements 2020/21](#) was also published on 28 April 2020.

**SHIELDING** - On 21 April 2020 the Scottish Government [published guidance for GP Practices](#) to support people taking part in shielding due to a clinically high risk of severe morbidity and mortality from Covid-19. The document sets out the key asks of General Practice for this work and provides additional guidance and sign posting to other resources. A [further update to shielding guidance](#) was published on 11 May 2020 that expands the list of patients to the shielding risk group to include people receiving renal dialysis treatment and people who have had their spleens removed. The letter also provides some additional guidance on how to identify and record shielding patients on a range of GP clinical IT systems. Part of this challenging work involves discussing potentially sensitive topics with patients over the phone. The Royal College of General Practitioners [has produced some guidance and resources](#) to support GPs in this work.

**SHIELDING - PRIMARY CARE INFORMATION DASHBOARD** - The Scottish Government Shielding Identification team have worked with Public Health Scotland to make practice level data available on the existing [Primary Care Information Dashboard](#). This will enable each practice to see a list of their patients who have been on the central database for Shielding and will include showing by which group they were included. Patients may appear multiple times in the list if they meet several group criteria for Shielding. Practices will also be able to see which patients have been removed from the Central list and the reason for this (such as by clinician request, deceased, false positive, moved etc). Practices will be able to filter the lists and print out specified lists of patients. This dashboard will be familiar to some practices who have used it for High Health Gain patient data. If you have not previously registered as a user you may wish to consult [ISD guidance](#) for details of the process for registering to access the Dashboard. As the Dashboard contains patient specific information there are security measures in place when registering for access.

**FIREARMS CERTIFICATES** - Police Scotland have reviewed their Covid-19 interim processes with regard to the grant and renewal of firearms applications. They will continue to accept a minimal amount of new grant applications for Firearms and Shotguns and are processing only those for essential employment purposes. They are progressing all renewal enquiries and would seek to contact local GP practices where necessary. Where practices have capacity to complete the GP response form, Police Scotland would appreciate if they could continue to do so. This will enable Police Scotland to manage this process without retrospective enquiry with GPs and support GP practices post Covid-19 by reducing the backlog that will develop. Individual participation is at the practice's discretion. If you are unable to complete the requested

GP response form at this time, arrangements will be made to follow up in the future. GPs should continue to contact Firearms Licensing where they identify any concerns in respect of their patients. Firearms Licensing continues to be a critical function for Police Scotland at this time.

**LAUNCH OF WELLBEING HUB** - The Scottish Government has launched a digital platform to help health and social care workers look after their physical and mental health. [The National Wellbeing Hub](#) is a partnership between national, local and professional bodies and provides advice on self-care and personal resilience to help users recognise warning signs, along with information on services available at national and local level.

**GUIDANCE FOR DEATH CERTIFICATION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC** - On 20 May 2020 the Interim Chief Medical Officer [published updated guidance](#) to Medical Practitioners for Death Certification during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This letter is intended to adopt uniform terminology of the disease and the virus, and support the reduction in time to provide the Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death (MCCD/Form 11) during this challenging time.

**GP DATA EXTRACTS DURING COVID-19** - On 14 May 2020 the Interim Chief Medical Officer [published a notification](#) to all GPs and Practice Managers to advise them of the use of GP data for the purpose of supporting the EAVE-2 research project. This is instead of each individual GP Practice, as joint data controller, approving this extract, which in this public health emergency is not feasible. The letter provides further information about how GP data will be used and on the Eave-2 clinical trial.

**GENERAL PRACTICE AND CARE HOMES** – on 17 April [a letter was jointly issued](#) by the Interim Chief Medical Officer, the Chair of the Scottish General Practitioners Committee of the BMA and the Chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners in support of the role GPs have providing high level care to residents of care homes during this pandemic.

On behalf of the Scottish Government, thank you for your continuing hard work and service to Scotland's people.

(The following information was shared as part of the Practice Manager Webinar held on 2 June 2020)

## Information and Guidance which will be of use to the GP Team

**Please note that guidance is being written, reviewed and updated on a regular basis – please refer to the Health Protection Scotland website, the website of the Scottish Government and NHS Inform for the most up to date information.**

### Change to case definition

CMO letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 indicates that the case definition for covid19 has changed, to now include Anosmia (loss of normal sense of smell or taste). The new definition is now: New continuous cough **OR** fever **OR** loss of / change in sense of smell or taste. Practice reception teams will need to be made aware of this as it may change the protocols that are used in the practice. Information on practice websites and telephone systems may also need to be changed.

### Infection Control in the Healthcare Environment

The NHS Scotland National Infection Prevention and Control Manual was first published on 13 January 2012, by the Chief Nursing Officer ([CNO \(2012\)1](#)), and updated on 17 May 2012 ([CNO\(2012\)01-update](#)). It is an evidence based National Infection Prevention and Control (NIP&C) Manual for Scotland and is intended to be used by all those involved in care provision.

It is a practice guide for use in Scotland which when used can help reduce the risk of Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) and ensure the safety of those being cared for, staff and visitors in the care environment. The manual can be accessed at this link: <http://www.nipcm.hps.scot.nhs.uk/about-the-manual/> and provides the necessary guidance in relation to the care environment, management of linen and safe disposal of waste.

[The use of the manual is important in any healthcare setting but even more so when in a pandemic. The practice may have already identified someone to take responsibility for infection control in the practice and they will find this manual extremely helpful](#)

Further information on infection control, PPE and PPE Tables:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>

Infection Control Educational Resources:

<https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-theme-initiative/healthcare-associated-infections/scottish-infection-prevention-and-control-education-pathway/pathway-foundation-layer.aspx>

Handy Hints for Infection Control – educational resources and posters:

<http://www.nipcm.hps.scot.nhs.uk/resources/standard-infection-control-precautions-sicps/>

<http://www.nipcm.hps.scot.nhs.uk/resources/respiratory-hygiene-catch-it-bin-it-kill-it/>

### PPE for General Practice

A Primary Care Steering Group has been established at a national level to consider a sustainable supply of PPE for the Primary Care contracted services. The process for GP practices is to continue to liaise with their local Health Board procurement teams to maintain their stock levels.

Every health board may have a slightly different process, so it is important for practices to work with their procurement teams particularly as processes evolve at a local level. This may involve updating local teams on practice stock levels of PPE on a regular basis. There will be variation in use across Scotland and local and national teams are working on models to understand demand particularly as service requirements change.

HPS Primary Care Guidance including information on PPE:

[https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-primary-care/Scottish Government advice on PPE](https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-primary-care/Scottish%20Government%20advice%20on%20PPE)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

PPE Resources – posters which can be used to highlight what PPE is required:

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-posters-a4/>

### **Trace, Track, Isolate and Support (TTIS)**

Scottish Government has produced a strategy for TTIS and this is being implemented in three pilot Health Boards from week commencing 18<sup>th</sup> May with planned roll out to other Health Boards by the end of May.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-test-trace-isolate-support/>

GP Reception teams are bound to be asked questions about TTIS by their patients. They can sign post patients to NHS Inform and may wish to familiarise themselves with these pages for ease of reference, remembering that information will change on a regular basis as the programme is rolled out.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

### **Educational Resources relevant to the pandemic**

Infection Control for GPs, Nurses and Reception Staff from NES:

<https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-theme-initiative/healthcare-associated-infections/scottish-infection-prevention-and-control-education-pathway/pathway-foundation-layer.aspx>

Covid related training materials for GPs, Nurses and Reception Staff from HPS:

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/covid-19-workforce-education/>

Resources from Infection Control Manual:

<http://www.nipcm.hps.scot.nhs.uk/resources/>

NHS Inform (great for reception staff to familiarise themselves with and sign post patients to):

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

19 minute video on management of infection control in healthcare settings suitable for all members of the healthcare team:

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-infection-prevention-and-control-in-health-and-social-care-settings-an-overview/>

Infection Control Manual appendices with posters and quick guides:

<http://www.nipcm.scot.nhs.uk/appendices/>

RCGP learning materials:

<https://www.rcgp.org.uk/covid-19.aspx>

HPS donning and doffing of PPE:

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-the-correct-order-for-donning-doffing-and-disposal-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-for-healthcare-workers-hcws-in-a-primary-care-setting/>