

Dear Colleague,

Respiratory Viral Infection in Children – Clinical Pathway

Further to joint correspondence (6 July) from the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Nursing Officer, this letter sets out the clinical pathway agreed after engagement with the Royal College of General Practitioners, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, the Scottish General Practitioners Committee, NHS 24, the Scottish Ambulance Service and Board Primary Care Leads to support planning and response arrangements for a potential surge in viral respiratory infections in children, including Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

Parents and carers seeking advice for unwell children **under 12 years of age** should contact their GP during practice hours or NHS24, out of hours. This approach is consistent with pre-Covid practice, although previously no age limit was applied. This reflects the positive impact of the vaccination programme. The Scottish Ambulance Service has confirmed that their existing services would not require any alterations to support and manage this clinical pathway.

Public messaging will be crucial in raising awareness amongst parents and carers on the appropriate steps to take should their child show signs and symptoms of respiratory illness. Messaging developed by Public Health England (PHE) is currently being amended by Public Health Scotland (PHS) to reflect the Scottish context.

This will emphasise that standard practice and guidance around paediatric respiratory care should continue to be followed and that there is nothing new in the approach to managing the response to such cases. This simple messaging should reassure parents and reduce anxiety associated with a specific focus on RSV. Messaging will also focus on moving children out of the Covid pathway to help alleviate pressure on a range of paediatric services.

It is expected that the pathway for children under 12 years of age will commence from **Monday 6 September**. This is to allow time for NHS 24 and GP practices to amend their patient facing messaging.

**From the Chief Medical
Officer
Dr Gregor Smith
Anne Armstrong
Deputy Chief Nursing Officer
Designate**

30 August 2021

SGHD/CMO(2021)20

Addresses

For action

Chief Executive - NHS Territorial Board
Nominated Regional Leads
Chief Executive - SAS
Chief Executive - NHS 24

Further Enquiries to:

Eddie Doyle
St Andrew's House
EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

Tel: 07867 902272
Email: Edw.ard.Doyle@gov.scot

Wendy Mitchell
St Andrew's House
EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

Email: Wendy.Mitchell@gov.scot

I would be grateful if you can ensure that this information is widely communicated to appropriate service providers within your NHS Board.

Yours sincerely

Gregor Smith

Anne Armstrong

Dr Gregor Smith
Chief Medical Officer

Anne Armstrong
Deputy Chief Nursing Officer Designate