



Addresses

For Action
GP Practices

For Information
Scottish General Practitioners Committee
Primary Care Leads NHS Boards

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Dear Colleague

General Practice Recovery Guidance v2 and other updates

In my letters of 13 April and 4th May 2021 I set out the work we are doing to support General Practice and the wider primary care team through this period of recovery. I am writing to you with an update on this work and other updates including Management of distressed patients, Recruitment Guide and the Activity Survey which I hope will be of interest. My apology for the length of this letter but there is a lot happening, and we thought it would be helpful to include it all in one correspondence.

Version 0.2 of GP Consolidated Recovery Guidance for Practices

Please find a link to [Version 0.2 of the GP Consolidated Recovery Guidance](#) on the [NES website](#) including all appendices.

Following the Long Term Condition Teams Live event on 1st June, an additional section and appendix has been added on managing Long Term Conditions (Section 8 and Appendices J and K). This has been designed to help practices start a conversation about how they can best design their long term condition services going forward with a focus on team working and what matters to patients. This work will be supported by a second teams live event on the 24th June which is being delivered by the GPN network at NES and is for the whole practice team. You can register [here](#).

Other new sections: 3.8 Accessibility and Dementia, 3.9 Vaccine Certification, 4.3 Lateral Flow Testing, and Section 7 Pharmacy First have also been included.

The following new Appendices have been added:

- Appendix C [FAQs and Resources – version 2](#)
- Appendix H [Care Navigation – example from Kirriemuir MP](#)
- Appendix I [Scottish Government - Care Navigation in Primary Care](#)
- Appendix J [Long Term Conditions – case study](#)
- Appendix K [Guidance on Long Term Condition Management](#)
- Appendix L [Kind to Remind: Health Care Workers Toolkit](#)

Together with this guidance, you can also access webinars/ teams live events that have already been broadcast: [Workshops and Webinars | Practice Manager Development | Scotland Deanery \(nhs.scot\)](#) as well as accessing a programme of other available training: <https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/your-development/practice-manager-development/workshops-and-educational-events/>

If you have any queries about this guidance, can offer any further resources to support this work or have any other training needs please email charlotte.leggatt@nhs.scot in the first instance.

We continue to hope that the information and examples given in the guidance and appendices will help you and your practice make the best decisions regarding how you are going to provide services going forward to meet the needs of your practice team and patients. Any specific questions about what services you can and cannot provide at this time should be discussed with your local Health Board Primary Care Team

At the heart of any good change management is communication and we would strongly encourage you to consider how your practice engages and communicates with your patients and review your practice website, social media use etc as well as review your appointment systems, number of face to face appointments etc as we come out of lockdown. The guidance gives lots of examples and tips on how you may want to do this, including information on infection control etc in the FAQ.

But we know patients are confused and anxious at the moment and that you, along with other parts of the health and social care system are having to deal with an increase in the number of distressed patients, which sometimes results in an increase in Violent and Aggressive behaviour.

Management of distressed patients

Some of you may be aware of a shocking video [‘If I die it will be your fault’](#) that was developed by the Institute of General Practice Management in England to support practices with the increase in violent and aggressive behaviour. In Scotland we are in discussion with a number of colleagues including the National Practice Managers Network around the development of a Scottish video and other resources such as staff training, staff protocols etc to support practices and their teams. We will include more information in the next version 0.3 of the guidance but wanted to reassure you all that we are aware of this issue and that any violent and aggressive behaviour is absolutely not acceptable and should be dealt with by the practice appropriately, including removal from the practice list if appropriate, as per the GMS regulations.

GP Practices are well aware that they have a duty of care to their staff and are doing everything they can to support them, but I am also conscious that we need to consider why there is an increase in patients becoming distressed and anxious. The last 18 months has been difficult and exhausting for everybody and it is important at this time that we all try to be kind and caring, even in the most challenging and frustrating of circumstances, but I know that isn't always easy.

Care Navigation

As noted above, communication is at the heart of many of these issues, and we hear from many patients their perception that it is difficult to access general practice, eg ‘my practice is still closed’, ‘I can't get through to my practice on the telephone’ etc and that when they do they sometimes perceive barriers are put in their place making it difficult to access the care they want. As we have noted before, practices have introduced systems such as telephone triage, asynchronous consulting (such as eConsult) and Care Navigation to support new ways of working during the pandemic and manage the increase in demand, which many patients have welcomed but which don't always suit everybody. How we communicate to patients how practices are providing services now and in the future is really important and any messaging needs to be clear, simple and consistent. National work on this is ongoing and includes working with NHS Inform (section 6

in the [guidance](#)), but as every practice delivers services in a different way it is really important that **you** and your team explain to your patients how you are providing services so they can have the best experience possible.

Within v0.2 of the guidance there are two new appendices which you may find helpful. Firstly [Appendix H](#) is a Care Navigation flowchart from Kirriemuir Practice (thanks to Dr Scot Jamieson) which is a good example of how a practice is managing the flow of patients and secondly [Appendix I](#) is a Care Navigation crib sheet which you may want to develop locally to support your receptionists/ patient advisors to care navigate patients to the most appropriate service for them. Further information on Care Navigation and the work developed by HIS through the Practice Admin Staff Collaborative (PASC) is included in the document in Section 3 of the [guidance](#).

Urgent Care

This document also includes some information regarding when patients should be signposted to NHS24 111 service, and when they shouldn't in [Appendix I](#). Further information on when to phone 111 is available on the [NHS24 website](#). You may also want to consider including information about local pathways eg how do practices refer patients direct to the local Flow Navigation Centres, local pathways for x-ray referral etc which are not appropriate to be sent to 111. At the moment patients with covid symptoms should only be signposted to 111 if they are unwell or if their symptoms are worsening. Children with respiratory issues should be managed by the GP practice as clinically appropriate, following locally agreed pathways. Locally there may be different covid pathways developing as we move out of lockdown so please look out for local information.

Regionally and nationally work is ongoing to promote the 'Right Care Right Place' message, building on the door drop in January ([Primary Care Digital Communication Toolkit](#)) to ensure patients access the care they need from the most appropriate service. Please continue to utilise these resources on your website, social media etc

Pharmacy First

One service which practices can navigate patients to is Pharmacy First which was launched in August 2020 and is available from all Community Pharmacies. Two further common clinical conditions, the treatment of shingles and skin infections have been added to the service with effect from 15th June 2021. Further information is available in [PCA \(P\)\(2021\)7](#). Further information on the scheme and information for practice teams is included in Section 7 of the [guidance](#).

Staff Wellbeing

Just a reminder that there are a number of national well-being services available to support staff well-being including general practice staff:

- **The [National Wellbeing Hub](http://www.nationalwellbeinghub.scot)** www.nationalwellbeinghub.scot – provides a range of self-care and wellbeing resources designed to support the health and social care workforce and signposts to relevant services. The Hub offers advice and evidence-based digital resources to help staff cope with issues such as stress, resilience and sleep. It also includes [Coaching for Wellbeing](#), a digital coaching service for all health and social care staff.
- **[National Wellbeing Helpline \(0800 111 4191\) - a compassionate listening service](#)** available on a 24/7 basis. If needed, and only with your consent, you can be referred to your local staff support services.
- **[Workforce Specialist Service \(for regulated staff\)](#)** – a confidential multidisciplinary mental health service with expertise in treating regulated health and social services professionals.

Recruitment Guide

We understand that an increasing number of practices are beginning to have staff vacancies for a wide range of staff including GPs, General Practice Nurses, Managers and Administrative staff and with the changes to the SHOW jobs website have struggled to know where and how to advertise vacancies. Our apologies for the confusion but we have been working closely with NSS and the Scottish Rural Medicine Collaborative (SRMC) to develop a robust and reliable system and guidance that will allow you to advertise your vacancies in a timely fashion going forward.

SRMC have developed a [Recruitment Good Practice Guide](#) which you may find useful when considering your vacancy, advert, job spec etc. SRMC have also worked with NSS to develop an [Advertising System Guide](#) for practices re how to place an advert which will appear at practice.jobs.nhs.scot. If the vacancy is for a GP it will also automatically appear on the [GP Jobs](#) website.

You will require a login in order to post vacancies on the system and if you do not have one then please contact nss.primarycare@nhs.scot. We understand that some practices have had difficulty in the past getting a response from NSS to queries but NSS have now developed a system to monitor this inbox in a pro-active way and have assured us that practices will get a response within 3 working days (if not sooner). Any issues or queries re the guidance then please contact NSS on the email above or Ian Blair at SRMC ian.blair@nhs.scot

General Practice Workload and Activity Survey

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank again all the GP practices who have taken the time to complete the activity survey and continue to do so. We wrote to you on 4th May 2021 with an update and continue to work with key stakeholders particularly SGPC and RCGP on a more sustainable long term solution to providing reliable activity data. However in the meantime we would like to ask those practices who have submitted data in the past to continue to do so as this data is vital to our understanding of the pressures you are under and it is vital that we continue to receive it. Attached is the most recent national aggregation of the data which we are providing to you as management information.

I hope you find all of the above information useful at this challenging and very busy time and apologies again for the length of this letter. Thank you again for the work you and your teams have done, and continue to do.

Yours sincerely

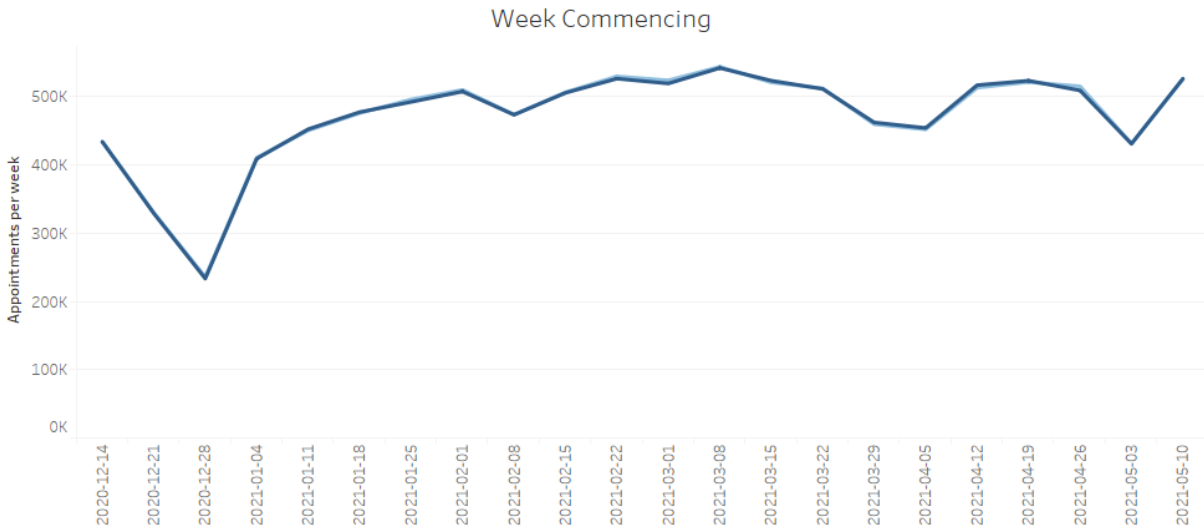


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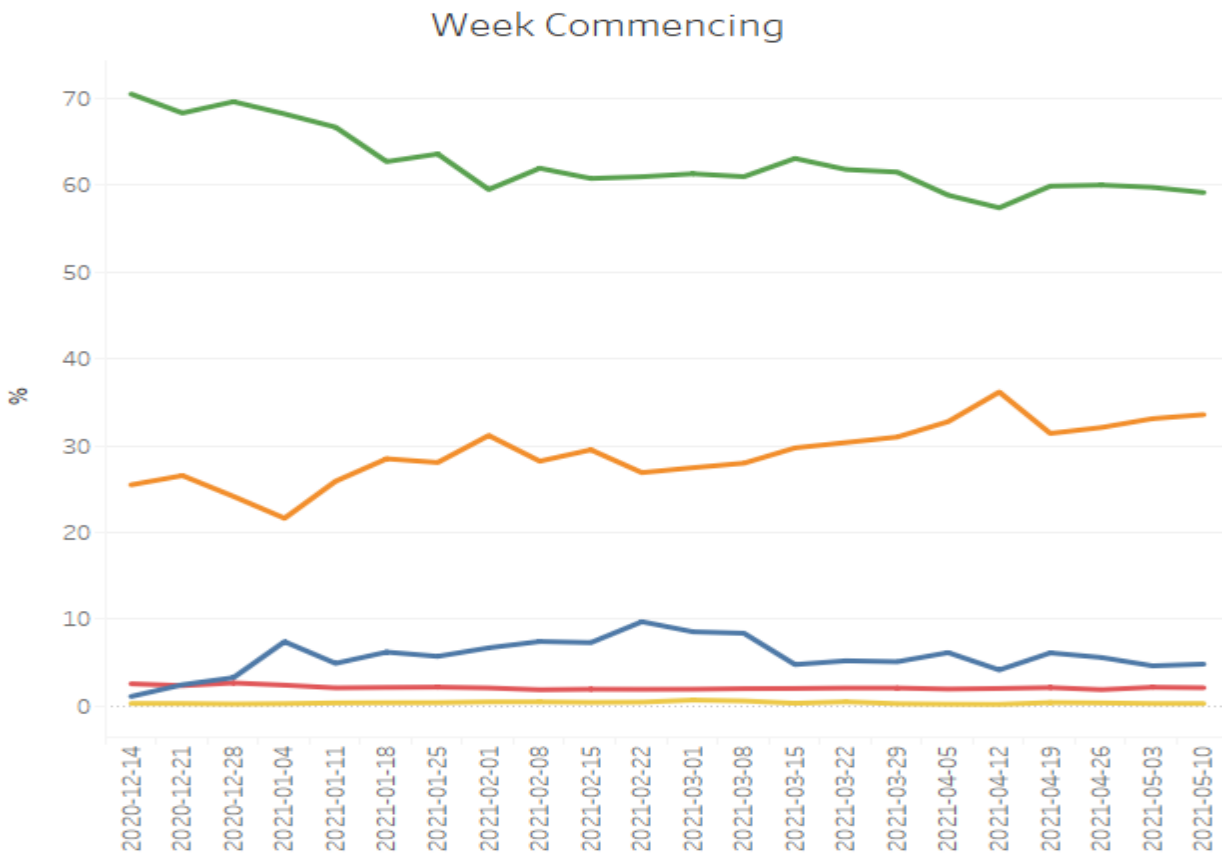
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GP Activity Survey Estimated number* of appointments in Scotland



* Note that the estimated number of appointments over the Christmas, Easter and May Bank holiday periods are impacted by the reduced number of days the practices were open.



Appointment Types

- Asynchronous
- Face To Face
- Home Visit
- Telephone
- Video