Sent on behalf of Gillian Roberts – Rheumatology MCN Clinical Lead: **Please distribute to all relevant Primary Care Staff**

Dear All,

I am sure we are all receiving a lot of questions regarding the Covid vaccine, especially from high-risk patients. The British Society for Rheumatology have published guidance on their website and I have summarised this below:

**Covid-19 vaccine**

All the proposed Covid-19 vaccines at present are suitable for patients who are receiving immunosuppressive treatment and we would strongly recommend that patients on treatment for Rheumatic conditions accept the Covid-19 vaccine when offered (unless there are other contraindication)

Treatments do not need to be withheld or altered before or after the vaccine. The only exception to this is patients on treatment with Rituximab. The British Society for Rheumatology has recommended ideally a 4-week gap between receiving the vaccine and treatment with rituximab if clinically appropriate. Each rheumatology unit with discuss this with patients who fall into this category.

**Further information can be found on the BSR website:** [**https://www.rheumatology.org.uk/practice-quality/covid-19-guidance**](https://www.rheumatology.org.uk/practice-quality/covid-19-guidance)

**NPT guidance**

A reminder the Covid modified NPT guidance remains in place until further review in February 2021. If clinical ly indicated patients can and should have additional monitoring and this guidance only applies to patients whose blood monitoring is stable.

[**https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/media/259584/covid-modified-npt-monitoring-agreement\_26032020.pdf**](https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/media/259584/covid-modified-npt-monitoring-agreement_26032020.pdf)

**Previous shielding patients and those who are clinical extremely vulnerable**

Some patients attending Rheumatology clinics will fall into the above categories. There is information on the BSR website (link above) and Scottish Specific information can be found on the Health Protection Scotland Website- Process for identification of patients on immunosuppressive therapy at highest risk of Covid-19 exposure (page 17 appendix 4- Immunosuppression flowchart)

[**https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/3008/documents/1\_covid-19-search-criteria-highest-risk-patients.pdf**](https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/3008/documents/1_covid-19-search-criteria-highest-risk-patients.pdf)

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*\*Please note my working hours are Monday to Friday 8am-4pm\**