



T: 0131-244 2203
E: tim.mcdonnell@gov.scot

To: Chief Executives

Copied to:

Chief Officers
Medical Directors
Directors of planning
Primary Care Leads
Covid Pathway Leads
Out of Hours Leads

March 2022

Dear Chief Executive,

Closure of the Covid-19 Community Pathway

In my previous letter on the future of the Covid Community Pathway, dated 1 November 2021, I set out our expectation that the Pathway would be maintained over the festive period and that we would review the position in the New Year. That review has been completed, having sought clinical advice from the Deputy Chief Medical Officer to that effect, and we are now in a position to close the Pathway from 31st March 2022. From this date patients who contact NHS 24 with Covid symptoms during the in-hours period will be advised to contact their own GP practice.

For the out of hours period, the Out of Hours services will continue to manage Covid patients directed by NHS 24 as a matter of course, however we expect Boards to ensure they continue to support their OOH services in managing those patients.

Boards are also required to work with GP Sub-Committees to support the implementation of this decision and ensure that systems are in place to monitor the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on practice workload and to ensure that local public messaging is clear. The GP Escalation Framework will remain in place as we transition from the Covid Community Pathway. We will continue to monitor the impact on practices.



I would like to pass on my thanks to all your teams who worked on the development and implementation of the pathway. The delivery and maintenance of the pathway was a remarkable achievement for which they should be proud to have played a part. This was one of the significant responses to the pandemic and we will be endeavouring to learn lessons from the experience to help inform future planning. We will of course also be considering contingency planning if the need arises to re-establish the pathway rapidly as part of any wider NHS response to changing circumstances on Covid.

Yours faithfully

TIM MCDONNELL

Tim McDonnell
Director, Primary Care Directorate