

## PRIMARY CARE SUPPORT

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To all GP Practices NHSGGC  
31 January 2022

### **NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde COVID-19 Community Pathway Update**

Dear Colleagues,

We wrote to you before Christmas with the latest update on the Covid19 Community Pathway including changes to the home visiting pathway and referral criteria. Thank you again for your ongoing support and flexibility in continuing to adapt to a changing situation. The telephone hub and CACs were busy over Christmas and New Year and we are grateful to those who worked additional sessions in the CACs and Out of Hours over this period.

The Covid19 pathway was established in March 2020 at the outset of the pandemic, and has been kept under review on a regular basis since then. Last year NHSGGC committed to the continuation of the pathway provisionally until March 2022, with operational change on an ongoing basis in response to changing demand and advice on the management of Covid19, and with a clear aspiration to move towards a position where Covid19 was managed through core services rather than continuing to sustain a separate, standalone pathway.

Throughout January, referrals to the Covid19 community pathway from both GP practices and NHS24 have continued to decline and demand is now at its lowest since the pathway began. In recent weeks, fewer than 40 patients a day (200 a week) have been seen in the CACs, and telephone hub calls have likewise continued to reduce. With 234 practices across GGC, this is less than one patient per practice per week. We recognise that this will partly reflect the changing nature and prevalence of Covid19 in the community, and also the fact that practices are managing more of this workload directly including through telephone assessment and as part of wider respiratory pathways.

The Covid19 pathway currently operates through the telephone hub at Cardonald and Covid19 Assessment Centres at Barr Street, Linwood and Renton/Clydebank. At current levels of demand, it is increasingly not viable, cost effective or a good use of the time of skilled staff to maintain a separate pathway. This adds to the ongoing challenge of staffing a separate service and the impact on other services of staff being redeployed to the Covid19 pathway and availability of premises.

**It is therefore our current intention to decommission the Covid19 pathway through the CACs and hub by the end of March 2022.**

Over the next few weeks we will be working on the details of the exit strategy for the current pathway, with particular consideration of:

- Any support required by practices. There will also be an opportunity for practices to discuss this at the meeting arranged by the LMC on 2 February and we will work with the LMC to take account of any issues raised there.
- Sharing of the lessons learned and expertise and good practice in the management of Covid19 developed over nearly 2 years of running the pathway.
- Alternative arrangements for identifying and managing peaks in demand and surge capacity in practices, should there be future waves of Covid19. This would link to the existing escalation framework.
- Enabling the CAC resource including space and workforce where applicable to return to core service provision including PCIP delivery in support of practices.
- Ongoing work with NHS24 on arrangements for any patients calling 111.

Thank you again for your ongoing support of the changing Covid19 pathway, and we will continue to work with practices and LMC and GP subcommittee representatives to ensure this is a managed change over the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely



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For Primary Care

**Lorna Kelly**  
Interim Director of Primary Care