

This is the first of a series of bulletins designed to sign post those working in primary care to relevant guidance and educational resources intended to help through the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been collated by a team at NES, with the assistance of primary care colleagues in Public Health Scotland. It should be read in conjunction with the [risk assessment tools and FAQ on the NES website](#).

## Public Health Primary Care Guidance

The Primary Care Guidance has been updated and was published on the HPS website on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and can be found [here](#). The following pages may be of interest and highlight the main changes:

- Page 6 – patients are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering within a primary care setting. One practice's response when patients do not wear masks can be found [here](#).
- Page 10 – guidance on the removal of essential items within the waiting rooms such as toys and magazines. Questions have arisen regarding the displaying of posters and leaflets. The guidance suggests that all non-essential clutter should be removed so the practice would need to assess whether the poster or leaflet to be displayed was essential or not, assessing the potential risk of contamination (which may be more of a risk with patients handling leaflets than displaying posters). The reduced foot fall in practices may mean that not many patients are attending in person to collect leaflets. It is understood that COVID-9 may contaminate/be active on paper for up to 72 hours and this should also be a consideration.
- Page 11 – the UK is still in sustained transmission, therefore, the use of PPE for staff and clinicians undertaking face to face reviews with patients is still recommended - mask and visor (which can be sessional), gloves and apron.
- Page 13 – updated guidance on physical distancing by staff whereby it is suggested that staff wear a surgical mask where 2 metre distancing cannot be maintained. There is also further guidance around managing staff breaks.
- Page 14 – further guidance on cleaning of premises.
- Pages 20 and 21 – for optometry and pharmacy, where clinical waste bins are not normally in use, there is guidance on the bagging and disposal of PPE following safe storage for 72 hours.

## Allied Health Professionals

Other health care professionals (such as physiotherapists, mental health practitioners, students and locums) may now be returning to Primary Care buildings. They will require induction to any new building layout or measures you have introduced, such as those to reduce infection transmission risk. Although PPE is being supplied primarily for the use of Practice employed staff (with NHS patients) there should be enough for visiting staff who may not have been provided with PPE by their own employers (although they should encourage their own employers to do so). Additional PPE requests for GP, dentistry and optometry, where stocks run low, should still be made to your local Health Board teams.

## Sharing good practice

Future bulletins will publicise webinars that will focus on specific areas of primary care work, utilising the risk assessment tools to provide examples to help practices to manage the ongoing challenges associated with COVID-19.

There is variability around the country and NES are keen to understand and share how practices are developing innovative practice to support delivery in areas such as Long Term Condition management, cervical screening and the upcoming flu vaccination programmes. If you wish to share your experience and plans, please contact [patientsafety@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:patientsafety@nes.scot.nhs.uk).

## Other resources

- For staff in practices interested in learning more about resilience and coaching to improve the wellbeing of staff, you may be interested in the tools available on this website: [Coaching for Wellbeing](#)
- The report: "[Learning from the community link worker early adopters](#)" has been published which outlines the key learning points to enhance the impact of Community Link Workers.

We would welcome your suggestions for future articles, any further questions for the FAQ paper and your feedback.