



1st October 2021

### To All GPs and GP Practices

As we head into October, it is clear that the NHS is facing its most difficult winter in memory. All parts of the health service from primary to secondary care, community services, ambulances, and out of hours are under extreme pressure.

We want to thank all our colleagues not only in general practice but throughout the NHS for their work and dedication in delivering services to patients in these most challenging of times.

### Supporting General Practice

**Why are GP practices still working differently?**

**If the pandemic is over why can't I book a face to face GP appointment?**

The pandemic is not over. GP practices are open but are working differently in order to protect patients and staff. In order to protect the most clinically vulnerable people who are in contact with our health services, some physical distancing requirements remain in place.

**How are practices working now?**

Most practices are using a "Telephone First" service. This allows the team to assess patients over the phone and consider who needs to be seen in person and when a telephone consultation or video may be appropriate. This helps to ensure that everyone gets the type of appointment they need, and that people don't have to travel to the surgery if they don't need to. In many cases the issue can be as effectively managed with a telephone consultation rather than a face to face meeting. If you need to attend the practice for examination you will be given an appointment.

**Why do reception staff ask personal questions?**

GP reception staff are vital members of the practice team and treat all information as confidential. They ask questions to ensure that patients are directed to the best support, within and outside the practice. They are trained to ensure patients are seen by the most appropriate member of the practice team and ensure GPs can prioritise the patients with the greatest clinical need.

**Why am I seeing someone who is not my GP?**

Many GP practices have teams of specialists working alongside the GPs. These teams have widened and may include Nurses, Health Care Assistants, Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Pharmacists, Physiotherapists, Mental Health workers and Community Links workers. Your needs may be dealt with more effectively by one of these team members.

**Where else can I get help?**

NHS Inform ([www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)) has lots of information to help you to help yourself. Community Pharmacists can help with many common illnesses and can prescribe some medications. Community Optometrists will advise people with urgent eye complaints. Community Dentists will manage any dental problems.

**What about emergencies?**

If you have an urgent health issue please contact your GP practice during the day. If you have an urgent issue and think you need to go to the Emergency Department please call NHS 24 on 111, day or night. If you have a life-threatening emergency please call 999 or go to your local Emergency Department.

**Please be patient. Please be kind**

All our health services are under enormous pressure and our staff are working extremely hard. We are open and here if needed. Please work with us to help us ensure you get the right care, in the right place and at the right time by the appropriate health professional for your needs. Please treat those who are trying to help you with respect and kindness.

We have worked with the Board to produce this [digital flyer](#) explaining to the public the reasons why GP practices are operating differently. It has been featured in the Board's social media and communications.

Practices may wish to use the flyer in your own website or communications. The Board's messaging with the flyer-

**GP practices, and our staff, are very busy tackling the Covid-19 pandemic and giving care and advice to you.**

**To make sure we all stay safe, your healthcare may be provided in a different way than before. You may have a video or phone consultation, instead of a face to face one. You may need to call to order repeat prescriptions, instead of ordering in the practice.**

**Please respect our staff during this difficult time for everyone. Find out more at <https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/your-health/know-who-to-turn-to/gp/#>**

### GP Workload and Data

We know that GP practices are busier than ever before. The reasons are multifactorial-

- **Patient demand** has risen sharply compared to pre-pandemic levels. Unrealistic expectations with a rise in challenging behaviour have been reported by many practices.
- Covid-19 and other **respiratory cases** in the community continue to be prevalent and likely to rise into the winter months
- **Long hospital waiting times** means more patients seeking GP support whilst they wait for specialist care- creating an "intermediate" care level without the funding or workforce
- Significant negative impact on **mental health** rising from the pandemic on the population

- GP and practice **workforce crisis**- recruitment and retention difficulties were apparent pre-pandemic but now exacerbated by a tired and stretched workforce, and compounded by self isolation rules.

Whilst we know how busy we are in practices, we have little quantitative data on current GP practice workload. Therefore we are supporting the Board's invitation for practices to participate in the [national Workload Activity Survey](#). This was initially launched in December 2020 and a small number of practices took part. The Board has now agreed to fund participating practices [£85 per month for admin costs](#).

We hope that practices will be able to release some admin time to take part in this weekly survey which we hope will capture the true extent of GP workload and demand.

### **Out of Hours GP Meeting**

The LMC held an online meeting with GPs working in the Out of Hours service on 22nd September. Sir Lewis Ritchie who led the Review of OOHs service was in attendance also.

We heard from GPs working in the service about the escalating workload and the pressures on GPs and other staff in the service. The LMC is due to meet with Sir Lewis and his team to explore the issues further, and we will be feeding back the concerns and experiences of GPs to the Health Board.

### **Staff Vaccinations Reminder**

All GPs and practice staff now have access to the [NHS Inform booking portal](#) for flu vaccination and Covid-19 booster. There are 18 community locations across GGC available for booking and staff can book clinics in other health board areas too. Appointments are being added weekly so if there aren't appointments for your preferred site, please go back into the website regularly to check for new availability.

For more information, please see this [Core Brief link from 22nd September](#).

### **COP26 Planning**

The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference is schedule to take place in Glasgow on **31 October to 12 November 2021**. It is expected that more than 25,000 people will attend the event and there will be a high level of disruption to normal travel before, during, and after the event.

We know that some practices will be impacted more than others especially those with patients in postcode areas- G3, G11 5 and G11 6. The LMC is represented in the Planning group overseeing the preparations and support for services for the event. We will be seeking assurance from the Board and HSCPs that practices that are affected are supported in the delivery of services over this period of time.

The [Get Ready Glasgow website](#) has accurate and up to date information about the event and the impact on roads, travel, and public services. We would encourage GPs and practice managers to go onto the website because the impact on travel will likely affect many practices even far outside the Conference zone.

## Backscanning Programme

The project to back scan all the paper records in GGC general practice has been finally completed. The project team digitised some 830,000 patient records amounting to over 83 million pages. A total of 32,000 boxes of records were taken out of GP practices. This has been a huge undertaking both by practices and the Board's project team and we thank everyone for their efforts in this task.

When patients in other areas move practices, if there are paper records, PSD will back scan the paper records and send the electronic documents to the new practice thus removing the paper record from circulation.

With warm regards and all best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr Alan McDevitt C.B.E.**  
Chair

**Dr John Ip**  
Medical Director

**Dr Patricia Moultrie**  
Medical Director

**Marco Florence**  
Business Coordinator

**Elaine McLaren**  
Administrative Assistant

## LMC Document Highlight List

Please be aware that this is NOT a comprehensive list of all the available guidance that has been sent to GPs. These are the current key documents which we feel are important to GP practices. Please make sure that your practice's generic NHS.SCOT box is monitored daily.

### From Week Beginning 13th September 2021

NHSGGC Covid Pathway Update

- [COVID pathway update Sept 21](#)

CMO Letter on Respiratory Viral Infections in Children

- [Chief Medical Officer - final version - SGHD\(2021\)20 - Respiratory Viral..](#)

National Guidance on Spirometry

- [Restarting Spirometry v2](#)

NHSGGC letter GP Hotline

- [GP Hotline](#)

Scottish Government- Minimum Earnings Expectation guidance

- [Minimum Earnings Expectation Guidance - 2021 - Final](#)

### From Week Beginning 20th September 2021

Core Brief – Staff Vaccinations

- [Core Brief - Staff Vaccinations 220921](#)

NHSGGC Graphic “Why are GP practices still working differently”

- [210903 GP Services digital flyer](#)

Sandyford Services update

- [Sandyford update for Primary Care Sept 2021](#)

CMO- Covid vaccinations for 12-15 year olds, Severely Immunosuppressed, and Boosters

- [COVID -19 Vaccination Programme 12-15yr olds](#)
- [SGHD\(2021\)27- COVID-19 Vaccination Programme - 21 September 2021](#)
- [COVID-19 Booster Vaccine Programme](#)

GP Data Collection

- [GP data Collection call for interest 200921](#)

**From Week Beginning 27th September 2021**

GGC Flu & Covid Booster Programme Information

- [Winter Vaccination Programme Email](#)
- [Winter Vaccination Programme - General Information](#)

GGC General Practice Escalation Framework Update

- [General Practice Escalation September 2021](#)
- [GGC GP Practice form - Reduction or Withdrawal of Services](#)
- [Extended Hours 240921](#)