



Addresses

For Action
GP Practices

For Information
Scottish General Practitioners Committee
Primary Care Leads NHS Boards

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Dear Colleague

Winter Respiratory Guidance – General Practice and other updates

You will be aware of the [Winter Respiratory Infections in Health and Care Settings IPC Addendum](#) published on Friday 26 November by ARHAI (part of NSS). This guidance will require to be implemented by all parts of health and social care including General Practice by **Monday 13 December** to minimise risk and harm to staff, service users and visitors during this winter period where it is anticipated there will be an increase in circulating respiratory virus whilst the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

We understand that there are concerns around the impact of implementing this guidance in General Practice, but it is important that general practice does what it can to protect its staff and patients from the risk of respiratory infections and COVID-19.

The majority of the guidance is unchanged from previous COVID-19 IPC guidance although the language used has changed: moving from Red/ Amber or High/ Medium risk COVID-19 patients to Respiratory/ Non-respiratory patients. The Covid screening questions have been expanded with two further questions added to include Respiratory Screening questions.

The attached document provides information and advice for practices on how to implement the guidance recognising that every practice is different.

The attached document includes:

- Frequently asked Questions to help to implement the guidance in your practice
- Annex A – Screening Questions
- Annex B – Summary of the guidance as it relates to General Practice
- Annex C – Training resources
- Poster to be used by practices to inform patients of the IPC guidance which practices are being asked to comply with (pdf and word versions)

At the recent NES/ Scottish Government Primary Care Teams Update on 23rd November, Charlotte Leggatt gave a very helpful summary of the changes which you may want to watch (@35 minutes) and Dr Scott Jamieson also described how he has operationalised the Respiratory

screening questions in his practice (@59 minutes). [Primary Care Team Learning Together on Vimeo](#)

Any questions relating to the **Respiratory Infections in Health and Care Settings Infections Prevent and Control (IPC) Addendum** should be sent to nss.hpsinfectioncontrol@nhs.scot and additional advice, support around risk assessment and guidance implementation can be accessed through local HSCP and board teams.

I also want to take this opportunity to mention a couple of other things which I hope you will find helpful. First I want to take this opportunity to remind you that there are now a number of public messaging resources available to Practices to use when communicating with the public. These are

1. General Practice is open Campaign
2. Healthcare Worker Respect Campaign (dealing with Violence and Aggression)
3. Right Care Right Place Campaign (December 2021 Door drop and trusted voices toolkit)
4. NHS24 Winter Campaign. [Healthy know how | NHS inform](#)

These resources can be accessed [Primary Care Communications Toolkit | NHS 24](#) and are available for you to use on your Practice Websites, social media (Facebook, Twitter etc), text messaging, waiting rooms etc. We are aware that some areas have difficulty downloading resources through WeTransfer and we are working with NHS24 to address this problem as a matter of urgency so please keep checking the NHS24 page. Please utilise these resources and also follow us on twitter @SG_PrimaryCare

Secondly the Scottish Government are continuing to work in partnership with National Services Scotland (NSS) and Public Health Scotland (PHS) to enable access to and reporting of General Practice In Hours Activity directly from GP IT systems. The letter at Annex A was distributed to all GP Practices by PHS on Friday 3 December outlining our plans, the progress to date and our intentions to obtain an initial extract later this month for analysis by PHS in January 2022.

Whilst we continue the work to obtain digital extracts, we acknowledged that this is just the first step in our journey. There will be variation in recording and the need for work in respect of data quality and consistency. Whilst this wider work progresses we would wish to remind Practices that PHS are continuing to support the weekly [General Practice Workload and Activity survey](#). This survey asks about the number and nature of encounters with patients that were scheduled and that took place in a practice in the previous week. It also asks about non-clinical hours, as well as any staff absences related to COVID-19, and provides useful local insights and data. For further details please visit the following website [General Practice | Home | Health Topics | ISD Scotland](#)

I hope you find all of the above information useful at this challenging and very busy time and thank you again for the amazing work you and your teams have done, and continue to do. Can I also take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Yours sincerely



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