

COVID-19

Lee Savarrio - Chief of Dentistry Update (5-6-2020)

My updates have always been, and will continue to be, a genuine attempt to communicate clearly, widely and timeously to the Profession here in Glasgow. It appears that my previous update led to some anxiety and some follow on questions and I will answer some of them below in an attempt to provide clarity.

Unfortunately the general wording around urgent / emergency care is confusing and this has led to some ambiguity. The SDCEP guidance mentioned in the CDO letter refers to “Emergency Dental Care” as all the care that should be happening now in our UDCC’s (Phase 1) and in Phase 2a as practices take back non-AGP emergency care. In this SDCEP guidance Emergency Care is then also taken to mean the red pathway (to be seen within 1 hour). Urgent Care is specifically for patients to be seen within 24hrs and the term Routine Care is used for those to be seen within 7 days. Therefore we have ‘Emergency Emergency Care’, ‘Urgent Emergency Care’ and ‘Routine Emergency Care’. In the Chief of Dentistry update yesterday we referred to the red, amber and green pathways as Urgent Care leading some to question whether they should be delivering the green pathway. Can I clarify that treatments to be provided under CDO Phases 1 and 2a refer to all three of the SDCEP Emergency Dental Care pathways; red, amber and green.

1. What about my other deployments, where we already have dentists at PDS Hubs or NHS 24?

Dentists had been contacted following the initial offers of help to the PDS Hubs; this varied across practices. The landscape has since changed and we are looking to limit a practices' commitment to one named dentist only. This will allow continued support to the Hubs during Phase 1, rationalises PPE by for face fit testing for one individual whilst concurrently allowing practices to start planning for reopening during Phase 2.

We are in communication with other providers where redeployment has happened already to arrange release if this would be needed. The priority as we move forward into Phase 2a and remobilise HDS and PDS has to be GDS commitment to Emergency Dental Care in our Urgent Dental Care Centres.

2. Can we do private treatment on NHS patients or not. The wording of the CLO opinion is contradictory. There needs to be a clear distinction between ‘private patients’ and private treatments’.

The CLO guidance quoted in yesterday’s update makes it clear that private treatment can be undertaken for NHS patients as would always be the case. The CLO guidance does note though that the patient should be offered the option of NHS treatment even where this can only be provided in the NHS UDCC’s and the patient should feel fully involved in the decision making and not feel coerced into accepting private treatments. This would be especially important in patients where for example there has never been provision of private care in the past.

3. The mention of the police or referral to the GDC.

The section in my update where this is referred to is advice directly from Central Legal Office (CLO) to the Board and is merely advising options which could be open to the NHS Board. This is obviously only an option the Board would resort to in extreme circumstances where it was felt that there was a danger to patient safety.

I would hope that you would recognise that NHSGGC as a Board always pursues local negotiation where possible and would think on police involvement or GDC referral as a last stage in our internal governance procedures.

This section from the CLO merely suggests that anyone undertaking more than urgent dental care would be in breach of Lockdown legislation and, similar to any other person or establishment that breaches this, would be subject to this approach. Just to reiterate this would only be in cases where local negotiation and warnings have not been heeded.

4. Face fit testing for people with facial hair. Are there specific FFP masks suitable for people with facial hair?

FFP3 masks must be fit tested. When we get to Phase 2a we will be relying on GDS to provide AGP's for other GDS patients in our UDCC's. This will involve face fit testing and often involves a requirement to be clean shaven. We are currently looking at other methods of risk mitigation for those unable to be clean shaven for cultural / religious reasons.

5. The CDO has confirmed that the PPE is to support 10 patients per practice per day. Is this in the early phase 2 and can more patients be booked as stage 2 develops?

The current expectation is that you only book 10 patients per day. We will have to await further guidance from the CDO.

Any approval from the Board to increase to more than 1 dentist working per day will need to be backed up with assurances regarding patient and staff safety, availability of PPE from NSS (the Board will approach NSS) as well as contribution to our UDCC's AGP provision.

6. Availability of large size gloves.

We have not yet received a confirmed date for the supply of large size gloves. We will notify you as soon as they are available. I understand that you may also be able to get these from your regular supplier.

7. Enquiries have been made about key/essential worker status as some are unable to get childcare to return to work.

I believe BDA have raised this with CDO and he is looking to get a national agreement to underline the key role played by dental teams.

In the meantime you can contact your local authority for access to key worker childcare. If you are struggling with childcare provision, we suggest you liaise with your regular childcare provider or school or direct with your local council for any further advice and support that they may be able to provide, however, if no solution can be found there is a dedicated team within Scottish Government to help (keyworkers@gov.scot).

8. Who do I contact if I have issues with the generic practice email account?

We are aware that there was a technical glitch last night that delayed delivery of the update to practices. We are also aware the email appeared to go to junk mail for some practices so please also check there if you haven't received yesterday's so that you can relabel our address as valid.

It is vital that you continue to monitor your practice NHS mail account daily, this is the generic practice account. However we are also now also issuing all communications to individual NHS.net accounts via our LDC colleagues. If you have any issues please contact 0345 612 500 and log a call with the IT helpdesk.

Have a good weekend, Stay Safe
Lee Savarrio, Chief of Dentistry