

COVID-19

Lee Savarrio - Chief of Dentistry Update (2-09-2020)

Mask Safety

As I mentioned in my last update I fully appreciate the uncertainty from some parts of the service about using the 3M 1863 FFP3 masks currently being supplied to the NHS and most recently our dental services by NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) on behalf of Scottish Government.

You should now have all received a copy of the letter from Paul Cushley, Director of Dentistry for NSS and Gordon Beattie, Director of National Procurement at NSS about the FFP3 masks. I hope the information contained in this letter has provided a degree of comfort to those of you who have been using these masks for some time and any colleagues who have recently been issued with these particular masks that they are safe, independently tested and are valid for use.

As detailed in the letter from NSS, for GDS colleagues, you can if you wish, purchase your own alternatives. It will require you to make your own arrangements for face fit testing and as I explained previously in these circumstances the patients cannot be charged for these for NHS care. Nor, indeed should this be used in some way to transfer patients on to a non-NHS pathway. It should also be noted that using alternative masks means the safety of patients and staff resides directly with the dental practitioner concerned.

Can I remind you that if you do not want delivery of simple or enhanced PPE please let us know as quickly as possible by emailing Oral.Health3@ggc.scot.nhs.uk.

Face Fit Testing for NHS AGPs

We will continue to arrange face fit testing sessions over the coming weeks and are currently looking to expand this to locations outwith GDH.

We are still working with colleagues at NSS to look at options for those people who have failed face fit testing or who cannot be fitted to the current masks for other reasons. We will contact these people when an alternative is confirmed.

Current UDCC Activity

We continue to see reduced numbers of GDS volunteers supporting the UDCCs and also an increase in volunteers cancelling at short notice. As much as I appreciate that this is due to increased activity in practices, this does not seem to be offset by an equal reduction in referrals to the UDCCs and puts an additional strain on the PDS teams who have to see and treat patients who have been booked into a session cancelled by the GDP.

This is now having a detrimental effect on the ability of the PDS teams to resume care to patients attending their services. The impact of this will be longer waiting times for patients that may already have waited for long periods of time and who cannot access their care elsewhere. Please carefully consider this before cancelling your session.

We had already indicated that referrals from practices with no note of a nominated person to support the work in the UDCC, we will be made contact with to re-establish this commitment.

Within the near future where we continue to see referrals for AGPs from practices who have not yet indicated a date to provide this themselves, we will be contacting the practice and asking you to book a slot within a UDCC for the referrer or someone from the practice to come and treat their patient themselves. We will provide you with more information on this in due course.

We are continuing to engage with Scottish Government to establish a timeline for the end of Phase 3 of the GDS Remobilisation Plan, which should see all practices undertaking their own NHS AGPs for urgent dental care. This will allow us greater flexibility to commence our remobilisation plans for the Public Dental Service and Hospital Dental Service alike.

Flu Vaccination

Work has been underway to identify staff groups who may consider volunteering to support this year's flu vaccination programme within our own services. I understand the BDA have been involved at a national level in negotiations to enable GDS to assist in the delivery of the programme. We have engaged with our colleagues in the Health & Social Care Partnerships to consider how this might be facilitated. Further details to follow.

Everyone Matters Pulse Survey

For those employed staff within oral health, you will be receiving a National Survey over the next few days. The survey is designed to help understand how we are all feeling now and to find out about our experiences over recent months, both in the workplace and beyond. I would encourage you all to complete this.

Kind regards,
Lee Savarrio, Chief of Dentistry