

Oral Health Directorate
East Dunbartonshire HSCP Offices
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To all in General Dental Services,
in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Date: 21st December 2021

Our Ref: MMG/JF

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Enquiries to: As above

Dear Colleague,

As mentioned in our earlier communication, we have been working to ensure there are appropriate processes in place across all services to ensure continuity of services and delivery of urgent care to patients on a respiratory pathway for practices that are unable to provide direct patient care themselves. This at a time where there are continued pressures on all dental services.

This communication includes the following important information:

- **Winter Preparedness – GDS Continuity Arrangements; including RAG status for the provision of care**
 - **Associated attachment(s) – RAG Status for GDS Practices (Appendix 1)**
- **Revised ARHAI Guidance – Management of Urgent Care and Respiratory Patients**
 - **Associated attachment(s)**
 - **1. Key Points from the New ARHAI Guidance (Appendix 2);**
 - **2. Respiratory Screening Questions for use across all health and care settings (Appendix 3);**
 - **3. Respiratory Patient Pathway Flow Chart GDP Referrals to PDS (Appendix 4)**

Winter Preparedness – Continuity Arrangements for GDS; including RAG status for the provision of care

The coming weeks are likely to see increasing numbers of COVID cases in the population, which will undoubtedly impact upon staff across all services. It is important to ensure there are contingency arrangements in place in preparation for staff shortages and/or other challenges which may impact upon the ability to deliver safe patient care.

The CDO has circulated a revised national SOP for dental teams (<https://www.scottishdental.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/COVID-19-Moving-Towards-Routine-Dental-Care-Updated-SOP-December-2021.pdf>). The revised document provides guidance to services; incorporating updates to the evidence base and implementation in practice – including the recently published ARHAI Scotland guidance (Winter (21/22),

Respiratory Infections in Health and Care Settings Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Addendum).

The OHD have engaged with your Local Dental Committee to consider contingency arrangements and to develop guidance for GDS services around 'RAG' status to assist practices in prioritising and supporting patient care and to document GDS continuity arrangements, such as details of 'buddy practices'. A webropol survey will shortly be issued to collate these details.

The attachment 'RAG Status for GDS Practices' (Appendix 1) describes the parameters for service status and actions. This will be a dynamic situation for practices and the RAG status should be re-assessed periodically, as required.

Management of Urgent Care and Respiratory Patients

The revised ARHAI guidance was launched on the 29th November and was followed by letters from the CDO (7th and 20th December) along with the revised national SOP for dental services. Within the letters the CDO outlined the challenges faced by all dental services and *'wherever possible GDS-registered patients should be seen in GDS. It is in the best interests of patients to be seen at the practice where they are registered as far as safely possible'*.

The key points from the new ARHAI Guidance most relevant to dental settings are outlined in the attached document 'Key Points From new ARHAI Guidance' (Appendix 2). Practitioners should, however, familiarise themselves with the full Guidance and ensure they follow it in full.

The patient screening questions from the national SOP (and ARHAI guidance) have been attached as Appendix 3 for ease of reference.

Unless there are specific mitigating circumstances, i.e. your practice is at 'red status', it would be expected respiratory patients would be managed in your own practice.

Where care for respiratory patients in your practice cannot be deferred, and it is not practicable for these patients to be seen within your practice, please contact the helpline number 0141 291 3553 for assistance.

A flowchart (Respiratory Patient Pathway Flow Chart GDP Referrals to PDS) has been attached to inform this process.

Urgent referrals to secondary care must meet the criteria defined on SCI gateway guidance notes. Departmental contact numbers for triaging are as follows:

- Oral Surgery 0141 211 9660
- Paediatric Dentistry 0141 211 9671
- Adult Dental trauma 07870806319
- Oral Medicine 0141 211 9671

Yours sincerely



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