



COVID-19 – PRIMARY CARE UPDATE

Some of you may have colleagues working in Primary Care and already be aware of the huge pressure that our Community and Primary Care Colleagues are facing. With the recent coverage of the increase in the Delta variant COVID-19 infections in our area it is still absolutely vital that we protect all of our most vulnerable patients and our colleagues. This is why many practices continue to operate differently offering the majority of appointments either over the phone or via Near Me and reserving face-to-face appointments for those with the greatest need. After all, an outbreak in a GP practice could see Primary Care services hugely and adversely impacted, for an entire patient population.

To help support our Primary Care colleagues we have produced a short Q&A type guide to why things are not 'back to normal'.

- Primary Care: Why are GP practices still working differently?

Things are opening up, why not GP practices! The pandemic is not over yet and the modelling suggests there is a 3rd wave on its way. We must protect Primary Care Teams and vulnerable patients by keeping contact to a minimum.

- How are practices working now?

All appointments are being triaged - this means that people with the greatest need are being seen first.

- What is Triage?

The Duty medic will assess every eConsult and telephone query and decide who needs to be seen in person, who needs a telephone consultation, who needs to be seen via video and who can be directed to a community pharmacist, etc.

- How do we triage?

Duty clinicians will look at all the information available and make an assessment loosely based on:

- 'Hearit' - telephone consult.
- 'Seeit' - video consult (Near Me).
- 'Feelit' - face-to-face appointment.

- Why do receptionists ask personal questions?

Put simply, because they have been asked to! Anyone that is tasked with answering a call at a GP practice must maintain strict confidence and only ask questions to help you get the right treatment.

- eConsult?

eConsult is an online way of contacting your doctor to get help and support. There is lots of information that you can use to help yourself too.

- What about emergencies?

If it is a genuine medical emergency then you should call 999 and ask for an ambulance. If you need emergency care but are not in imminent danger then you should call 111.

- Where else can I get help?

NHS Inform has a wealth of information to help you help yourself:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/>

Community Pharmacists (chemists) can help with many common ailments and illnesses and can prescribe some medicines too.

Please be patient. Primary Care Teams have been working incredibly hard throughout the Pandemic. Many of our teams are exhausted and they really are doing their best to help you. We, just like you, want to get back to as close as normal as possible as soon as possible, but we are not there yet.

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