

Guidance for Primary Care Professionals on the Isle of Man – 19th April 2021

All primary care practices are open as normal and this guidance updates previous guidance and sets out the processes that GPs, dentists and opticians should follow.

- Primary Care Practitioners should continue to be vigilant for potential cases of Covid-19
- Ensure that they work to the relevant SOP which details the specific ways in which Practices should work for each area of Primary Care.
- Consistently comply with the PPE guidance provided by the Department of Health and Social Care found here <https://covid19.gov.im/public-health-guidance/>
- Services to continue as normal and those with contractual obligations will be expected to deliver their contracted activity.

General Guidance

Social distancing, workplace hygiene and good hygiene practices

Practices will be expected, within their premises, to adhere to the guidelines currently in place. Guidance can be found here <https://covid19.gov.im/general-information/social-distancing-and-good-hygiene/>

Providing treatment to patients

General

Every patient within GP Practices, Optical Practices and Dental practices should contact their Practices initially by phone. Patients will need to be asked the Covid-19 questions, set out below, to identify whether the patient is high or low risk, and dealt with accordingly as below.

The approach for each of the profession is set out below:

Dental Services

- Practices should continue to telephone triage every patient prior to offering appointments.
- All services can continue but clinicians and nurses should wear the appropriate PPE for every patient contact as per the PPE guidance (linked above).

- Guidance to be followed and Covid-19 questions asked on initial triage and upon entering the dental practice for their planned appointment and for any parent/guardian also attending.
- The contractual obligations remain unchanged. In terms of units of dental activity each dental provider will be expected to continue to deliver on their contract.
- Each practice should follow the guidance and procedures for treating high risk patients.
- Usual cleaning schedules should be undertaken in line with Infection control guidance
- Service provision - Business as usual

Orthodontics (Hospital)

- Consultant Orthodontist will continue to travel to the Island on a monthly basis under exemption and conditions.
- Guidance to be followed and Covid-19 questions asked on initial triage and upon entering the practice for their planned appointment and for any parent/guardian also attending.
- Full PPE will be worn by Consultant, measures already in place and daily testing in place
- Administrator will be in attendance during clinics Parents/Guardians attending with children are encouraged to make use of the hand washing facilities available at the clinic before entering the surgery for their appointment.
- Usual cleaning schedules should be undertaken in line with infection control guidance
- Service provision - Business as Usual

Orthodontics (Primary Care)

- Orthodontic treatment will continue as normal. Practice should continue to telephone triage every patient prior to offering appointments.
- Guidance to be followed and Covid-19 questions asked on initial triage and upon entering the dental practice for their planned appointment and for any parent/guardian also attending.
- The appropriate PPE will be worn by the Specialist Orthodontist as per the PPE guidance (linked above).
- Usual cleaning schedules should be undertaken in line with infection control guidance
- Service provision - Business as Usual

Dental Laboratories

- Maintaining business as usual. Guidance to be followed and Covid-19 questions asked of any person prior to entering the dental laboratory to ensure they are low risk.
- Service provision - Business as Usual

Opticians

- Maintaining business as usual.
- Guidance to be followed and Covid-19 questions asked on initial triage and upon entering the optician practice for their planned appointment and for any parent/guardian also attending.
- High risk patients should not be seen but if a high risk patient has an emergency there is a route via Nobles Emergency Department and patients should be redirected accordingly.
- Patients to be encouraged to use the handwashing facilities available to them at the practice.
- Usual cleaning schedules should be undertaken in line with PPE guidance.
- Service provision - Business as Usual

MEDS

- Out of hours GP service will run as normal. .
- Guidance to be followed and Covid-19 questions asked on initial triage and upon entering the practice for their planned appointment and for any parent/guardian also attending.
- High risk patients should be treated by an AAA approach. When a high risk patient needs to be examined, facilities will be available at MEDS to do so.
- Service provision - Business as Usual

General Medical Services

- Maintain business as usual.
- Guidance to be followed and Covid-19 questions asked on initial triage and upon entering the GP practice for their planned appointment and for any parent/guardian also attending.
- Low risk patients should be seen either by phone, VC or in person in each of the individual GP Practices

- High risk patients should have a telephone or VC consultation with their individual GP Practice. Following that consultation, if there is still a requirement for a high risk patient to be physically examined the GP practice can ensure patients are offered an appointment at a time when there will be minimal patient crossover within the practice (see Appendix A for further information on GP consultations).
- Any patient who has been assessed as high risk and the clinician determines that their condition would be more appropriate to be seen in a hospital setting should refer to the Nobles Ambulatory Care Standard Operating procedure. This requires speaking with the 'on call' doctor in ED to ensure appropriate and to advise of the patient being referred there for assessment.
- Service provision - Business as Usual

GP Action follow up after covid questions

- GP's will be able to refer patients directly for swabbing if they fit the appropriate criteria. 111 will confirm that they've received the referral email. When a patient is referred for a swab by the GP the GP should request that the patient goes/stays home and isolates until further information from 111 regarding their swab.

Covid-19 Questions

To update the current guidance to reflect the above and update the Covid Questions – suggestion as follows:

- a) Do you have a new or continuous cough? (this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours – if the patient usually has a cough it may be worse than usual)
- b) Do you have a temperature of more than 37.8C?
- c) Do you have a loss of or a change in your normal sense of smell or taste?
- d) Do you have a new onset of shortness of breath?
- e) Have you travelled to the Isle of Man in the past 21 days, or travelled to the Isle of Man in the past 14 days and are awaiting a swab result at either day 1, 6 or 13?
- f) Have you been advised to isolate for any reason?
- g) Are you living in a household with someone awaiting a COVID-19 swab or result?

Risk Assessment

Each Practice will carry out and document their own risk assessments in line with their insurance and regulator guidance for all elements of the Practice.

PPE & Further General Guidance

Appropriate PPE will need to be used as per the Primary Care, Community and Social Care settings for PPE (linked above).

1. Make safe arrangements for patients to collect any prescriptions, or assisting with getting medications to a patient if they are unable to collect their prescription themselves (or have someone collect it on their behalf).
2. Keep appropriate records of all patient contacts, including care management and onward referrals.
3. Ensure any onward referrals are made via the appropriate electronic referral template. This will require patient details, medical history, medications and COVID-19 status plus the presenting complaint, diagnosis and treatment request.
4. Ensure, if face to face consultations take place at the practice, that strict decontamination policies have been followed and adhered to, before and after every patient has attended who has or is suspected to have (after examination) Covid symptoms (or in the case of dental services if a 'high risk' patient has been seen).
5. Ensure all staff are equipped with the appropriate and correct PPE if undertaking any face to face consultations with Covid symptomatic patients.

Primary Care Back Office Functions

Will continue unaffected with staff working a mixture of office and home working arrangements. Contact telephone numbers and email remain unchanged.

Issued by the Medical Director April 2020



Department of Health and Social Care

Position statement on visiting in primary care and when face to face consultations are needed.

The GMC Good medical practice describes what it means to be a good doctor.

It says that as a good doctor you will:

- make the care of your patient your first concern
- be competent and keep your professional knowledge and skills up to date
- take prompt action if you think patient safety is being compromised
- establish and maintain good partnerships with your patients and colleagues
- maintain trust in you and the profession by being open, honest and acting with integrity.

This guidance is split into four sections which describe the professional values and behaviours expected of any registered doctor. The expectation is that you will use your professional judgement and expertise to apply the principles in this guidance to the various situations you face.

GMC FAQ on remote consultations can be found here:

<https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-hub/covid-19-questions-and-answers#Remote-consultations>

The decision whether to visit and assess a patient in person, or to make a virtual assessment, is for the individual clinician to decide. This will involve a consideration of the risks associated with a virtual assessment balanced against the risks from a face to face assessment. Weighing these risks and benefits in the balance, will ultimately identify which course of action is required in the patient's best interests, which must always be the doctor's first concern. As virtual working continues in time, there is a longitudinal impact for individual patients or groups of patients, whereby repeated decisions to carry out virtual assessments increases the need for a face to face consultation.