

COVID-19

Lee Savarrio - Chief of Dentistry Update (25-3-2020)

As I said yesterday our working together as a team, will be in a way that is untested and unprecedented, but this will be paramount to us being able to provide an emergency dental service for patients.

GDS

Availability of supplies is vital as the situation progresses, particularly PPE.

Any practices with PPE and implant kits including surgical gowns please contact GDSadmin@ggc.scot.nhs.uk with the subject as PPE

As per the CDO letter issued on 23.3.2020 routine dental care can no longer be provided and GDPs should be adopting the Advice, Analgesia, Anti-microbials (“Triple A”) approach. This advice should be used to help patients manage their dental pain as far as possible. As a profession we need to have a change in mind set during these difficult times.

It is important that dental practices have made arrangements to ensure dentists are available to give phone advice between 9am and 6pm. Outwith these hours access to the normal emergency dental service via NHS 24 remains the same.

A suggested telephone message is:

“Please listen to the complete message. Due to the coronavirus outbreak and in accordance with instructions from Scottish Government and the Chief Dental Officer, only patients with severe symptoms of infection, bleeding or trauma will be seen for emergency dental treatment at the present time. This will be provided at a designated Health Board premises. Between the hours of 9am and 6pm you should phone (insert your mobile contact number) and after 6pm and at weekends contact NHS24 on 111.”

Urgent dental referrals that cannot be managed with this approach should be referred to the PDS Special Care Hub by phoning: **0141 314 6669 - Please note that this number should not be given to patients, added to answer machine messages and should only be used by dentists to arrange a referral.**

You may want a dental nurse to take the initial phone call to filter out potential emergency patients. However a **dentist** must carry out the clinical triage with subsequent Advice, Analgesia and/or Anti-microbials being prescribed.

I think it is important to highlight there have been a few issues highlighted by the PDS Special Care Hub today:

- The PDS Special Care Hub have received several phone calls directly from patients as GDPs have simply left that number on their answer phone rather than triaging patients themselves.
- Patients have been referred by GDPs for routine dental care rather than emergency care only.
- A referral was received from a dental nurse against our wish that this must be from a dentist after appropriate triaging.

It is clear colleagues in general dental practice will need to play a very large part in meeting the challenges ahead. Good telephone triaging and delaying care (where it is safe to do so) will help reduce the burden on PDS and HDS services and therefore on our medical teams in Acute. Please refer to the triaging guidance that was issued yesterday.

As I had already indicated we would expect colleagues within GDS to be deployed to help support PDS to deliver emergency care. We have already had all members of the dental team contacting us to volunteer their services, for which I am extremely grateful.

Today we will be issuing a questionnaire via a link to all GDPs and practices to complete a short survey to identify any staff within the practice who can support us. Can I urge you to complete this to allow us to form a database of prospective volunteers.

Can I remind you of the importance of returning the weekly activity sheet we issued on 23-3-2020 as soon as possible, but no later than 31 March 2020.

Please continue to monitor your practice NHS mail account daily. We are now also issuing all communications to individual NHS.net accounts via our LDC colleagues.

PDS

I want to thank all the staff within PDS for their continued commitment to the service, allowing us to establish pathways for emergency care of all patients.

This is an ever changing situation from a planning perspective and as such we will endeavour to get information to you as soon as we can. If you have any questions/queries please contact either Tracey.Welbury@ggc.scot.nhs.uk or taradunseith@nhs.net and they will respond as soon as they can.

We are currently finalising staff rotas for PDS dental teams to work across our PDS hubs, GDH or from home / redeployment into Acute medical Services and these will be notified to you as soon as possible, again please bear with us.

We continue to work on the option of 'Attend Anywhere' and would hope we can have this operational soon to help support effective triage, reduce risk and ensure only those most in need attend for hands on care.

HDS

- Working to complete barrier nurse training within departments.
- Collecting additional staff info regarding working from home to inform an in house rota and a second on call rota from home and list of potential redeployment candidates.
- SOPs regarding classification of emergencies for each speciality are being completed.
- Signage to identify “Hot” and “Cold” physical pathways being put in place.
- Admin hub, triage forms and associated pathways are being drawn up.

Many thanks for reading this communication. It is my hope to reduce this down to a more concise description of the current situation in the coming days but you will understand the pace of change and the need to balance brevity with sufficient information. Any comment as to missing information very welcome.

Keep safe.

Lee Savarrio
Chief of Dentistry