Our response to COVID-19

We have adapted our work to support health and social care services response to COVID-19, and released over 100 clinical and non-clinical staff to work in the service and other national agencies. This flash report sets our contributions to the national response.

We are continuing to deliver key functions in relation to regulation, responding to concerns/complaints and sharing intelligence. Our Death Certification Review Service (DCRS) and Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) functions continue to operate on a reduced basis.

You can find more about our response to COVID-19 on our website.

Near Me

Near Me is a Scottish Government-led programme that enables people to access clinical support through secure video consultations.

Since March we have actively supported over 640 GP practices in ten NHS boards to implement Near Me. We are also supporting mental health crisis teams and maternity services with Near Me implementation.

You can find out more about Near Me on the Near Me website.

Volunteering

We continue to work with the Scottish Government and NHS boards on practical steps to maximise the input of volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Training materials and induction guidance for volunteers and managers of volunteers within NHS Boards are now available on Turas Learn.

Evidence and guidelines

We are identifying reliable resources for NHSScotland in the COVID-19 pandemic and are supporting the Scottish Government national weekly COVID-19 guideline programme. Our publications include:

- Practical advice on antimicrobial stewardship during COVID-19 pandemic
- Temporary palliative care guidelines

Rapid reviews of evidence on:

- assessment of COVID-19 in primary care,
- aerosol generating procedures,
- essential cancer surgery,
- cardiopulmonary resuscitation aerosol generating procedures, and
- prevention of COVID-19 in 'care at home' and care homes.

“…significant increases in digital access for health services with around 60% of GPs now using “Near Me”, and weekly digital consultations increasing from around 300 to over 9,000.”

Cabinet Secretary parliamentary statement, 28th April 2020
HSCPs and inclusion

We are providing a range of locally-tailored support for Health and Social Care Partnerships to support business continuity planning, demand and capacity modelling, public protection and recovery from COVID-19.

This includes support to Scottish Government and SCVO’s Connecting Scotland initiative to ensure people are digitally connected to the support they need during the Covid-19 outbreak and beyond.

We are currently working to capture and synthesise learning about the HSCP response to COVID-19 to support spread and scale of the approaches which are indicating positive outcomes.

Dr Paul Baughan, a GP in Forth Valley and National Clinical Lead with Healthcare Improvement Scotland, made this short video explaining the importance of care planning conversations.

Click the play icon to view

Regulatory functions

We provide public assurance about the quality and safety of healthcare. Continuing activity includes:

- Ensuring that safety and quality of care concerns shared with us are assessed and there is a prompt, proportionate, co-ordinated and effective response across the organisation
- Carrying out ad hoc reviews where necessary and publishing findings
- Dealing with notifications and complaints relating to independent healthcare services and supporting these services in relation to COVID-19.

Resources

We have also worked with a range of partners to develop and share new resources, including:

- [Sharing Compassionate Practice](#) case studies with innovative approaches to delivering person centred acute care when the usual ways of interacting with patients, and their families, are not possible.
- A short [anticipatory care planning template and guidance for COVID-19](#).

“...Sharing Compassionate Practice: lots of fab examples across Scotland and UK.” Non-executive board member of NHS board

Medicines

Clinical leadership and capacity to support NHS resilience and develop Once for Scotland medicines guidance. This supports additional NHS capacity and, where appropriate, reduces direct patient contact and patient risks. It also enables service redesign, particularly in prisons, cancer, palliative care, primary care, critical care and rheumatology settings.

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