FAQs for healthcare staff

What are the implications for GPs?

It is good practice for GPs to be notified if one of their patients has tested positive for COVID-19. Guidance and protocols for accessing COVID-19 testing, caring for a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection and minimising the risk of transmission through physical distancing and hygiene have not changed.

Primary care has put in place many mitigating strategies to reduce unnecessary face to face contact with patients including telephone triage, the use of telephone and video consultations and a new model of care through local hubs and Community COVID-19 Assessment Centres. In addition, primary care should be applying physical distancing advice in the workplace, excellent hand hygiene and the appropriate use of PPE.

The latest guidance, which is updated regularly, for Primary Care can be found on the HPS website.

What are the implications for other healthcare settings and other essential services?

Guidance and protocols for accessing COVID-19 testing, caring for a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection and minimising the risk of transmission through physical distancing and hygiene have not changed. All healthcare settings have put in place many mitigating strategies to reduce unnecessary face to face contact with patients. In addition, all settings should be applying physical distancing advice in the workplace, excellent hand hygiene and the appropriate use of PPE.
COVID-19 guidance for infection prevention and control in healthcare settings (including specific guidance for different settings) can be found on the HPS website.

This most up-to-date guidance for advising the general public is available on NHS Inform.

What are the arrangements for contact tracing in complex settings (e.g. healthcare, care home, prison, etc…)?

Each of these settings needs to be assessed on a case by case basis locally, taking into account local and national guidance for that setting. A problem assessment group or incident management team may be required.

What do I do if a member of staff becomes symptomatic and the rest of the practice are contacts?

All healthcare settings have put in place many mitigating strategies to reduce unnecessary face to face contact with patients. In addition, all settings should be applying physical distancing advice in the workplace, excellent hand hygiene and the appropriate use of PPE to reduce the risk of transmission between staff and between staff and patients.

Symptomatic healthcare staff should immediately seek a test via local arrangements. If the staff member tests positive for COVID-19 the local health protection team will work with the service or setting to put in place appropriate measures.

To get in touch with the PHS COVID-19 contact tracing team, email: phs.covid-19contacttracingprogramme@nhs.net
COVID-19 guidance for infection prevention and control in healthcare settings (including specific guidance for different settings) is available on the [HPS website](https://www.hps.gov.uk/) and is updated regularly.

**Will GPs be informed of their patients’ positive test results, and by whom?**

**How should this be coded?**

It is good practice for GPs to be notified if one of their patients has tested positive for COVID-19. This will likely be through existing local mechanisms and should be coded as usual for any PCR positive case of COVID-19.

**How can my patients get in touch with a contact tracer if they recall extra information? Is there a helpline?**

The local health protection team will advise contacts if and how they can get back in touch with the contact tracer.

**Should anyone who develops symptoms now be tested?**

The most up to date advice on testing for COVID-19 can be found on the [Scottish Government’s website](https://www.gov.scot/). Access to testing is subject to change as the full Test and Protect programme is developed and implemented.

**Will everyone be subject to contact tracing?**

Contact tracing teams will identify positive cases which require contact tracing based on current guidance.

To get in touch with the PHS COVID-19 contact tracing team, email: [phs.covid-19contacttracingprogramme@nhs.net](mailto:phs.covid-19contacttracingprogramme@nhs.net)
Can people opt out of contact tracing?

Although efforts should be made to set out the benefits to the individual and their community of participating in contact tracing, participation is voluntary. Local processes need to be put in place to escalate cases or contacts who do not wish to provide the requested information.

What happens if someone lives and works in different health board areas and needs to participate in contact tracing as a case or contact?

Health protection teams have agreed protocols for managing infectious diseases across health board boundaries, national and international boundaries.

How should someone who is a contact and is self-isolating seek medical help?

Patients will be advised to use the agreed routes for seeking medical help during self-isolation:

- All COVID related concerns through NHS Inform and, if required, NHS 24 by dialling 111
- Non-COVID concerns by contacting their GP and alerting their practice that they are an identified COVID-19 contact and self-isolating.
- In an emergency they should call 999 and tell the operator/call handler that they are a contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19.