

Primary Care: An Update on National Policy Changes 2020/21

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https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/primary-care/general-practice/

The screenshot shows the NHS website's 'Primary care' page for coronavirus. At the top, there is the NHS logo and the text 'NHS England and NHS Improvement coronavirus'. Below this is a search bar and a yellow banner with advice for clinicians and the public. The main heading is 'Primary care', with a breadcrumb trail: Home > Coronavirus > Primary care. A paragraph states that NICE is now the single point of advice for caring for people with coronavirus and the management of COVID-19 in different healthcare settings. Below this is a grid of 13 blue buttons, each with a white arrow pointing right, representing different topics: About Coronavirus (COVID-19), Testing, Prevention, Infection prevention and control (IPC), Assessment, Management - confirmed Coronavirus (COVID-19), Discharge, Isolation, Workforce, Finance, General practice, Dental practice, Community pharmacy, Optical settings, Mental health, learning disabilities and autism, Cancer, Clinical policies, Health and Justice, and Other resources.


The screenshot shows the NHS website's 'Updates and guidance for general practice' page for coronavirus. At the top, there is the NHS logo and the text 'NHS England and NHS Improvement coronavirus'. Below this is a search bar and a yellow banner with advice for clinicians and the public. The main heading is 'Updates and guidance for general practice', with a breadcrumb trail: Home > Coronavirus > Updates and guidance for general practice. A paragraph states that regular updates to general practice regarding COVID-19 are provided. Below this is a list of four documents, each with a PDF icon, a title, and a summary. The documents are: 1. 'Freeing up practices to support COVID vaccination - further details' (133 KB, 3 pages), published 3 February 2021. 2. 'Freeing up practices to support COVID vaccination' (102 KB, 4 pages), published 7 January 2021. 3. 'Urgent preparing for general practice to contribute to a potential COVID-19 vaccination programme' (102 KB, 7 pages), published 7 January 2021. 4. 'Urgent preparing for general practice to contribute to a potential COVID-19 vaccination programme: Annex A: Indicative Enhanced Service Specification: COVID-19 Vaccination Programme 2020/21 Reference Guide' (281 KB, 16 pages), published 7 January 2021.



Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Classification: Official

Publications approval reference: C1175
3 March 2021, Version 4.1



Guidance and standard operating procedures

General practice in the context of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Version 4.1

This guidance is correct at the time of publishing, but may be updated to reflect changes in advice in the context of COVID-19. Any changes since v4.0 (24 December 2020) are **highlighted in yellow**.

Please use the hyperlinks to confirm the information you are disseminating to the public is accurate. The document is intended to be used as a PDF and not printed: weblinks are hyperlinked and full addresses not given.

The latest version of this guidance is available [here](#).

To provide feedback about this SOP [please complete this email template](#).

Operational queries should be directed to your commissioner.

- First published 19th March 2020
- Withdrawn 19th July 2021 in line with step 4 of the covid recovery



Key operational changes – Part 1

- March 20 – move to total triage system; capacity freed up nationally & locally (e.g. QOF, DES)
- April 20 – Easter bank holiday GP provision
- May 20 – GP support to care homes
- July 20 – national services mostly reinstated
- September 20 – QOF income protection introduced
- October 20 – new contract requirements
- November 20 – workload prioritisation and additional funding to expand capacity in 7 priority areas
- January 21 – nationally stood back down QOF, DES
- March 21 – additional £120m funding nationally (Apr-Sep)



Covid vaccination programme Phase 1

- December 2020 – cohorts 1 & 2 (care homes and front line staff)
- January 2021 – cohorts 3 & 4 (over 75s and over 70s, plus CEV)
- February 2021 – cohort 5 & 6 (over 65s and all 18-64s with underlying health condition)
- March 2021 – cohort 7, 8 & 9 (over 60s, over 55s, over 50s)



Covid vaccination programme Phase 2

- April 2021 – cohorts 10 (over 40s)
- May 2021 – cohort 11 (over 30s)
- *May 2021 – 2nd doses for 1-9 accelerated*
- *June 2021 – 2nd dose for cohort 10 accelerated*
- June - August 2021 – cohort 12 (all over 16s)
- *July 2021 – 2nd dose for all cohorts accelerated*
- August 2021 – cohort 13 (12-15yrs at risk and household contacts of immunosuppression)



Covid vaccination programme Phase 3

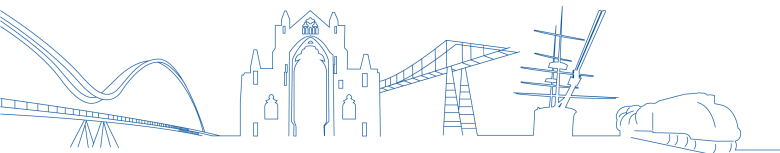
- September 2021 – all healthy 12-15yr olds
- September 2021 – booster for cohorts 1-9 (over 50s)
- *September 2021 – 3rd dose for immunosuppressed*
- November 2021 – booster for cohort 10 (over 40s) and 2nd dose for 16 & 17yr olds
- December 2021 – booster for cohorts 11 and 12 (over 30s and over 16s)



Key operational changes – Part 2



- 17th May 2021 – social distancing legislation changed; GPs encouraged to see patients face to face again
- 19th July 2021 - GPs to continue to offer a blended approach of face-to-face and remote appointments, with digital triage where possible
- 14th October 2021 – winter access fund published to improve access, in particular face to face appointments with a GP



Summary

Despite the challenges, GPs have been committed to maintaining vital primary care services and had to rapidly adapt to meet the demands of delivering these during a pandemic.

General Practice has evolved over the pandemic and this new way of working has many benefits although appreciate it can cause some frustrations for patients.

Please continue to support our practices and GPs positively.

