Dear Dentist,

 As you are aware the Scottish Government has announced that from the start of November that NHS dental service are being remobilised. Whilst this message signals a further step towards a return towards the position prior to the pandemic the detail outlined made it clear this is not a return to “business as normal”.

“The Government is clear that this is not business as usual but by making available a full range of treatments for NHS patients, this enables dentists and dental teams to provide a wider range of NHS care for their patients, prioritised by clinical judgement and in line with wider public health protection measures.”

 As a result of the pandemic increased reliance on PPE has resulted in the both increase in demand and price and a concomitant reduced availability of items. The strain on the supply chain for PPE locally, nationally and internationally continues. PPE should be considered a valuable resource and Nation Procurement are required to manage this finite resource. As part of the measures that Scottish Government have put in place to support the continued delivery of primary care services, PPE had been distributed to NHS Boards to support the medical practices, community pharmacies, NHS optometrists and the NHS dental practices. This PPE was made available at no cost to the primary care contractors from May until August 2020 when a ministerial decision was made to extend the process (currently until the end of the financial year).

As you can imagine the quantities of PPE required across Health and Social Care are enormous. Of all the sectors dentistry particularly NHS primary care dental practices places the single biggest demand on quantities from National Procurement by far.

In NHS Lothian National Procurement initiated direct deliveries to the dental practices as pilot and have now unscaled this four other large territorial boards. We are now about to pilot a direct online ordering system for the dental practices to order PPE from National Procurement. (Further details will be sent to your practice about the practicalities, this needs engagement as the process is not passive without your engagement you will not receive the PPE).

The provision of PPE is a partnership between your dental practice the Health Board and National Procurement, with responsibilities placed on the parties. The full details around the PPE will be published on scottishdental.org and signposted from the PCA from the CDO later but can I bring to your attention what we need and expect from the practices.

The process is based around trust. We will do our utmost to make the process as simple as possible and deliver to you the PPE appropriately ordered. We expect you to only order the PPE within your allocation and order what you need for the specific period of the order. Mechanisms to monitor usage are used to identify outliers.

An intrinsic allocation is set out as to the amounts of PPE you can order, that is for “agreed stood up surgeries within practices to deal with a total of 10 patients per day shared between aerosol and non-aerosol procedures. (Enough simple PPE for 10 patients per day for non-aerosol procedures and the addition of FFP3 masks and gowns for 5 patients.) This is based on a 5 day working week allocation and is per surgery that is stood up within the practice not per dentist.

NSS are in dialogue with your Board. It is the Board who agree what surgery capacity can be “stood up” not NSS.

Practices are reminded that the SDCEP guidelines, fallow time and social distancing requirements and all other related requirements are still in place and continue after the dental practices are remobilised.

The PPE provided is for NHS provision. Practices are at liberty to, and encouraged to source any additional PPE from commercial supply where the provision or delivery exceeds 10 patients per day routes to ensure a reservoir of PPE in case of supply chain interruptions.

PPE will only be delivered if its ordered and specific deadlines are in place. Failure to meet deadlines will inevitably delay any planned PPE delivery by a week.

We ask that you remember these points when ordering PPE from National Procurement.

Regards



Dental Director

National Services Scotland