

## National Lockdown

This evening the Prime Minister announced a renewed national lockdown of indefinite duration

People are advised not to leave, or be outside of their home except where necessary. You may leave the home to:

- shop for basic necessities, for you or a vulnerable person
- go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot reasonably do so from home
- exercise with your household (or support bubble) or one other person, this should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area.
- meet your support bubble or childcare bubble where necessary, but only if you are legally permitted to form one
- seek medical assistance or avoid injury, illness or risk of harm (including domestic abuse)
- attend education or childcare - for those eligible

Colleges, primary and secondary schools will remain open only for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. All other children will learn remotely until February half term. Early Years settings remain open.

Higher Education provision will remain online until mid-February for all except for future critical worker courses.

The Prime Minister's announcement was immediately followed by an email from Sara Hurley, the Chief Dental Officer saying dental practices must remain open. In this she said

*"As during the last period of national restrictions, **dental services are to remain open and see patients.***

*This should be in line with the standard operating procedure and the national dental infection prevention control appendix.*

*The Government guidance on the national lock down says, "The majority of public services will continue and you will be able to leave home to visit them. These include the NHS and medical services like GPs and dentists".*

*Remote consultation, triage and risk assessment remain key prior to patient attendance for face to face dental care. Social distancing measures remain in place. And PPE levels as stated for low, medium and high risk assessed patients remain.*

*In line with the standard operating procedure, within the available capacity, when recommencing deferred courses of treatment, recall and re-assessments practices will need to prioritise groups with the greatest need, such as children.*

*Dentistry is an essential medical service. It is a priority for the NHS. Patients are entitled to travel for medical appointments, include dental. I have included some useful resources in this bulletin for NHS practices to spread the word that dental services are open and seeing patients, please use them.*

As a reminder, **dental professionals are defined by the Government as critical workers**. The Government website says "This includes, but is not limited to, doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers". **Front line health staff includes dental professionals and their teams.**

England's over 650 urgent dental centres continue to receive patients and are accessible either through referral from a dental practice or NHS 111.

Testing is also available for NHS dental teams, I encourage you to use this service to maximise patient access.

We have the PPE, we have access to lateral flow testing, we have a strong network of urgent dental centres and we are spreading the message that practices are open.

This is a difficult time but I trust in your professionalism to offer the outstanding care the NHS provides and to continue to restore NHS dentistry."

Regrettably, the CDO has made no mention of the new UDA targets being imposed by NHS England. These targets now seem even less tenable than before, however, and we hope that NHSE will see sense and cancel these targets forthwith.

Leicestershire & Rutland LDC