



## **UPDATE TO FAMILIES FROM THE SCOTTISH PAEDIATRIC CARDIAC SERVICE**

The last few weeks have seen unprecedented changes for everyone which understandably has caused anxiety and uncertainty. This will be especially true for children and young adults with congenital heart disease (CHD) and their families. A lot of you have been in contact with the Cardiac Liaison Team in Glasgow and also with your local liaison teams. We understand that it can be difficult to keep up with the latest recommendations so wanted to get in contact to let you know what is happening here at the Children's Hospital in Glasgow and what our advice is for you and your families.

### **Cardiac investigations, procedures and surgery**

At present we are still providing emergency and urgent procedures including cardiac catheter procedures and cardiac surgery. The waiting list is reviewed continually to ensure those most in need of procedures are prioritised. We will return to scheduling elective procedures and will be in contact with families to make plans for these as soon as we return to normal service.

### **Outpatient services at Royal Hospital for Children, Glasgow**

Routine outpatient clinics have been cancelled to minimise the number of children and their families that come to hospital. Arrangements have been made for appointments to be deferred or held by telephone and/or virtual clinics where possible. We will be in contact with those children and young people who can't wait for their heart tests to come to emergency clinics. Similar arrangements are being made in all the regional clinics through the link cardiologists. Please be reassured that if your child needs to be seen, they will be seen.

### **Guidance**

There is a lot of information out there. Some of it is not the same which causes confusion for professionals, patients and their families. For general advice about self-isolation we are continuing to refer to the NHS Scotland website, Health Protection Scotland (<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/>). This is constantly being updated. For advice specific to children and young adults we are following the advice from the British Congenital Cardiac Association (BCCA). These guidelines are developed by heart disease specialists like us from across the UK. The BCCA is the national body that supports all professionals who work with children and adults with CHD. These guidelines can be found on the BCCA website (<https://www.bcca-uk.org/pages/default.asp>).

For the majority of children who have minor or operated CHD, they are at no greater risk of being affected by COVID-19 than other children without heart problems. The BCCA have outlined a list of conditions which we as a profession would consider to be potentially more vulnerable than other children. Our service and the Scottish Government are directly contacting individual patients who we feel need to undertake a further level of protection referred to as "shielding". All other children and young adults with CHD should adhere strictly to the general advice of self-isolation and social distancing from the government.



There is always some uncertainty, as there is no patient data to support this, but the advice from BCCA has been developed and is being followed by heart specialists across the UK.

We strongly recommend that everyone follows the current guidelines to stay in the home and avoid contact with any family or friends that you don't live with. This is not only protecting you and your family, but it also helping to limit the spread of COVID-19 across the country.

### **Contact**

If you have additional questions then please get in contact with our Cardiac Liaison Team on 0141 452 4925 or [CardiacLiaison.NursesPaeds@ggc.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:CardiacLiaison.NursesPaeds@ggc.scot.nhs.uk) and we will do our best to answer them as soon as possible. There is an answer phone message and the Team will reply to your message between 8am and 4pm Monday to Friday. If you have an urgent query outside these hours then contact NHS 24 (Phone 111) for advice.

Best wishes and keep safe,

Patrick Noonan

Consultant Paediatric Cardiologist

On behalf of the Scottish Paediatric Cardiac Service