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Dear parent/carer,

Advice to help young patients access the right care this winter

The A&E department at the Royal Hospital for Children has in recent weeks experienced an increase in the number of young patients presenting with respiratory conditions. That has added significantly to the pressures being faced by staff at the unit.

We are aware that, because of these additional challenges, some families are needing to wait longer than they would expect and we apologise for any distress this might cause.

As such, we would like to share some important advice to parents and carers, to help them and their children/young people access the care they need in the right place at the right time, while also helping to ensure that the young patients whose needs are most urgent, are seen at the RHC A&E department as quickly as possible.

If your child or the young person in your care is very ill or if you think their condition is particularly worrying, you should always take them to A&E at the RHC, or call 999. However, in other circumstances it might be more appropriate to access the wide range of alternatives to A&E.

When appropriate, using these services will be more convenient and will avoid a wait at A&E – and importantly they will allow your child or the young person in your care to access treatment more quickly.

If the child/young person in your care is unwell, NHSGGC encourages parents and carers to follow some simple suggestions and to think ABC before going to A&E:

Ask yourself: Do I need to go out? For information on keeping your child/young person well and treating minor illnesses and injuries from home, go to **NHS Inform** or download the **NHS24 app**.

Be aware: There is help for many conditions right on your doorstep. Your local **GP, pharmacy, dentist or optician** will offer your child/young person a range of services.

Call 111: If it's urgent, or you're not sure, call NHS24 on **111**. They'll make sure you get the help you need.

If your child/young person is particularly unwell, please attend A&E or call 999.

We would also like to remind you that flu infections are a particular issue among children and young people this winter, and one of the most important things you can do to protect your child or the young person in your care is to get them vaccinated.

The flu vaccine is being offered in the form of a nasal spray to all school-aged pupils, all children aged 2-5 not yet in school and children aged 6 months to 2 years old with a condition that puts them at increased risk of flu. Home-educated young people and young people not attending mainstream education are also eligible.

A wee scoosh up the nose is one of the most effective ways to avoid hospitalisation with flu for children and young people this winter.

It's easy, completely painless and, as well as protecting children and young people, it can also stop flu spreading to family, friends and others, especially those most at risk of becoming seriously ill with flu.

If you have received an appointment for your child/young person, please make sure they attend – however, if they have missed the appointment or you need to reschedule, please call the number on their appointment letter.

For more information about accessing the right care this winter, go to the NHSGGC website: [Right Care, Right Place - NHSGGC](#)

For more information about the child flu vaccine, visit NHS Inform: nhsinform.scot/childflu

Yours sincerely,



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