

Chief Medical Officer

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Dear Colleague

## SIREN RESEARCH STUDY

I would like to update you on Scotland's involvement in the SIREN study and explain why widespread and rapid recruitment within Scotland is so important.

### What is SIREN?

SIREN is a UK study testing 100,000 health workers, which will provide information on immunity and prevalence of COVID19 infection.

The primary objective of the study is to determine whether the presence of COVID19 antibodies is associated with a reduction in the subsequent risk of re-infection over the next year.

The data will also be used to estimate the prevalence of COVID19 infection in healthcare workers by region, using baseline testing at study entry and symptom history from 1 February 2020 to date of study entry and estimate cumulative incidence of new infections in healthcare workers.

### Who will be included in SIREN?

Participants will be patient facing NHS healthcare workers working in secondary care facilities within the 14 Scottish Territorial Health Boards plus staff from the National Waiting Times Centre (NWTC) including doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, and support staff who have face-to-face contact with patients.

The study will aim to recruit 10,000 staff throughout Scotland, this equates to roughly 1 in every 7.5 patient facing NHS staff employed in the NHS Territorial Health Boards and the NWTC.

Sampling will be based on the size of Health Boards (number of staff employed), healthcare worker roles and latest evidence on healthcare worker exposure. To facilitate participant recruitment this will be conducted over 6 months with targets for the numbers to be recruited in each Health Board increased incrementally every 2 months (Breakdown of Board and staff type is attached at **Annex A**)

**From the Interim Chief Medical Officer**  
**Dr Gregor Smith**

Date: 3 September 2020

SGHD/CMO(2020)22

#### For action

Chief Executives NHS Boards  
Medical Directors NHS Boards  
Directors of Public Health  
Nurse Directors  
Directors of Dentistry  
NHS Boards Primary Care Leads  
NHS Boards Infectious Disease Consultants  
Consultant Physicians  
General Practitioners  
Practice Nurses  
CPHMs  
Accident and Emergency Departments  
Occupational Health Departments  
Virology Laboratories  
Travel Clinics  
Directors of Pharmacy  
Chief Executive  
Scottish Ambulance Service  
NHS 24  
Public Health Scotland

#### **Further Enquiries to:**

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## **When will Scottish SIREN start?**

It is anticipated that recruitment of Health Boards into the study will occur on an incremental basis and will be completed by the end of September.

## **What will SIREN tell us?**

SIREN will collect data from patient-facing healthcare workers regarding their previous history of infection, and new symptoms, current infection status from a nose and throat swab, and antibodies status by blood tests every two weeks for 12 months. Breakdown by characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity and staff type) will also be tracked. This will allow us to determine whether the presence of COVID19 antibodies is associated with a reduction in the subsequent risk of re-infection over the next year.

SIREN will also tell us the prevalence and incidence of COVID-19 in the healthcare workers which will allow us to:

- Estimate the prevalence of infection in the workforce through subsequent waves of the pandemic
- Estimate the incidence of symptomatic and asymptomatic Covid19 infection in healthcare workers and determine how this varies over time,
- Inform policy on infection control measures
- Help to inform healthcare workers in NHSScotland in understanding their own risk of exposure to and subsequent infection with COVID-19.

## **How can I get involved?**

Health Board Research and Development Directors will be contacted by Glasgow Caledonian University. Dr Lesley Price at Glasgow Caledonian University is coordinating the study, in partnership with Public Health Scotland and working closely with National Research Scotland and the Chief Scientist Office.

## **Resourcing**

Scottish Government has agreed to fund the costs associated with this work until 31 March 2021 on the basis that these costs are confirmed to be additional to existing funded services. You should work with your finance teams to ensure that any additional costs are reflected within the financial plans submitted regularly to Scottish Government supporting your local mobilisation process.

## **Conclusion**

This study is of huge importance as it provides us with an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of immunity to COVID19. It will also give us invaluable data on the level of infection amongst our staff and inform us how we can best protect them and our patients. Therefore I would like to strongly encourage your cooperation and involvement in this important study.

Yours sincerely

*Gregor Smith*

**DR GREGOR SMITH**  
Interim Chief Medical Officer

## Annex A

Table 1 Recruitment targets per Health Board and staff grouping

	Medical and Dental	Nursing and midwifery	AHP	Support services	Other	Total
National Waiting Times Centre	12	65	11	18	6	113
NHS Ayrshire & Arran	65	400	71	126	51	712
NHS Borders	23	115	19	35	17	209
NHS Dumfries & Galloway	27	173	28	48	21	297
NHS Fife	54	350	65	89	44	602
NHS Forth Valley	51	269	48	29	32	429
NHS Grampian	128	515	99	160	73	976
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	333	1403	261	348	182	2527
NHS Highland	58	308	58	89	107	620
NHS Lanarkshire	100	523	99	78	75	875
NHS Lothian	216	915	170	232	112	1646
NHS Orkney	3	20	5	8	6	42
NHS Shetland	5	20	4	8	7	44
NHS Tayside	112	468	84	115	64	843
NHS Western Isles	3	36	7	12	6	66
Total staff	1191	5579	1030	1396	804	10000
% of total staff	12%	56%	10%	14%	8%	100%