



Kent Local Medical Committee

Supporting list based personalised care, the partnership model and meaningful collaboration

Update 20th March 2020

Dear All

We are very proud of how rapidly General Practice is adapting to the COVID-19 situation. We know you are very busy, so this e-mail has several links to updates and to current information as well as some practical advice to assist you through the coming months.

Finances:

QOF – In response to the pressures and focus on COVID-19 and to avoid any financial destabilisation for practices, the practices' minimum earning in points for QOF 2019/20 is protected at the level of points earned in 2018/19. This will be paid at the value of a point in 19/20. If however a practice can evidence that they have achieved a higher number of points than they did in 2018/19 then the higher achievement will be used to calculate their QOF payment.

AQP providers/UTC/MIU/WIC – we have urgently sought clarification. Given the [NHSE/I letter 17th March](#) we are insistent that all payments will continue in a similar fashion to how payments to the acute trusts are being dealt with. We have assurance from the CCG that absolute clarity will be provided this Monday.

Extended hours/Improved Access – payments will continue, even if you have to suspend these appointments due to workforce issues. You should convert these appointments to telephone/remote consultation where possible.

PPE:

For those of you who received PPE which has a new expiry date sticker over a previously expired date, we have had national confirmation that these have been revalidated and remain safe to use.

In terms of the guidance for what PPE should be worn by whom and for what procedures the guidance is here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/872745/Infection_prevention_and_control_guidance_for_pandemic_coronavirus.pdf

As we all know there is no guarantee that as frontline GPs we will not have to deal with patients who are symptomatic of COVID-19 and may require resuscitation – we have raised this with local and national leads and have demanded that general practice be supplied with FFP3 masks and gowns as a matter of urgency.

If any general practice has concerns around the kit, please contact the National Supply and Disruption line on 0800 915 9964 or e-mail supplydisruptionservice@nhsbsa.nhs.uk. We are aware that the central stock has been released and that further supplies of gloves, aprons and surgical masks and hand sanitiser have been ordered and the logistics of delivery are currently being worked out.

Workforce:

Due to the current self-isolation guidance and imminent school closures workforce is already an issue for many.

- Refer to your Business Continuity Plans/Pandemic Flu plan
- Contact your buddy practice/PCN
- As per the [BMA letter](#) continue essential services as determined clinically relevant by the practice and based upon the available workforce, capacity and PPE. Including immunisations for children, influenza and pneumococcal infection.
- Activities to stop. See comprehensive list in [BMA Letter](#)
- Prioritise support for particular groups of patients at high risk – next week the NHS will be writing directly to all patients in this category, and practices will receive advice shortly. Consider groups on medication which requires monitoring, the immunosuppressed, wound care etc.
- Agree in your PCN or buddy system which practice premises and teams should be used to manage essential face to face services – this will likely have phases according to workforce and patient pressures over the next 12 weeks
- Move to a total triage system if you have not already done so:
 - Telephone all patients and assess need
 - Convert all appointments to telephone if not already done so, or alternative remote means – e-consult, accurx
 - Turn off your touch screen, increase cleaning, where able move staff to back office, minimize practice footfall
 - Remote working/IT solutions – the IT team will keep you updated, this is being worked on, tokens have been purchased, the information commissioner has issued guidance that tolerance will be shown
- Keep a record of additional costs incurred which are directly as a result of COVID-19, for example additional hours of staff covering staff absences, mobiles for telephone triage, headsets to assist with calls – large costs should be authorised by the CCG

Key Worker Guidance:

The government has now published its guidance regarding school closures for key workers, and this can be found [here](#). This will be relevant for all members of staff with school age children.

The definition for key worker includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector

Covid Home Visiting Service:

This is being set up as we write by the CCG teams and has just gone live in Medway and Swale. Further detail will follow.

Med 3:

NHS 111 has established a service for patients require certification because they are self-isolating in line with government advice. Patients should be directed to the following website: <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note>

For other patients who require a Med 3 in relation to another condition you can issue a Med 3 certificate remotely and send by post.

We will be updating the website to reflect these changes.

GP Appraisal, Performance Assessment Group (PAG), and Performer List Decision Panel (PLDP):

Revalidation – doctors whose revalidation date is before September 2020 will have their revalidation date postponed by one year.

Appraisal – the national directive is to suspend appraisal from the 19th March 2020 unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed between the appraiser and appraisee. These will be classed as 'approved missed appraisals' in other words, cancelled not postponed.

PAG – we have liaised with the NHSE Performers team who are taking a pragmatic approach of going through cases and only contacting performers at this time if they feel it is absolutely necessary.

PLDP – oversight of professional concerns will continue but be prioritised.

FP10 Requests:

Where possible use eRDS batch prescribing to minimise work and enable continuity. Where not possible, to further reduce footfall into the reception consider alternative methods to receive written requests – e.g. a letter box outside with a labelled collection time. Nationally there is an over the counter shortage of paracetamol. This is still available via a prescription.

Coroner and Death Certification:

1. COVID-19 as a natural cause of death – this is an acceptable direct or underlying cause of death for the purposes of the MCCD and this is **not** a reason on its own to refer the death to the coroner under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009
2. COVID-19 is now a notifiable disease under the Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010 does not mean referral to the coroner is required by virtue of its notifiable status. Notifiable has a very specific statutory meaning. A disease being in the statutory list of notifiable diseases is not the same as there being a statutory requirement for a doctor to report that death to the coroner, nor does it mean a coroner must open an investigation and inquest.
3. There is emergency legislation being put through which will provide further information.

Kent and Medway CCG contact for COVID-19:

Wkccg.gpsCovid19@nhs.net

Kent LMC:

The office is open to help. Please contact us if you need to on info@kentlmc.org or 01622 851197

Kent LMC Open Surgery:

We are setting up a series of virtual sessions and details will follow, we ask each practice who wishes to join to nominate one phone/login so that we can run these, they will be:

Medway and Swale – Monday 23rd March 1800-1900

Dartford, Gravesend and Swanley– Tuesday 24th March 1800-1900

West Kent – Wednesday 25th March 1800-1900


East Kent – Thursday 26th March 1800-1900

This will give you an opportunity to raise issues and us an opportunity to give you timely updates.

Best Wishes



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