



Dear Colleague

Responding to media enquiries

The media is keen to publicise how health services are responding to the pandemic. The CCG wants to ensure that communications are consistent and do not cause patients to behave in such a way that destabilises healthcare provision. Practices are advised to ring 07825 844 666 for advice on how to respond to enquiries from the media.

The CCG would also like to share news of what PCNs and practices are doing locally via the media. If you would like to publicise what you are doing via the media the please email the communications team on accg.commscovid19@nhs.net, and they can provide you with support and work with you to highlight the hard work you are doing for your patients.

Requests for Med 3s/Fit notes for patients with long term conditions

Most of these patients are not 'unfit to work' and in the current crisis their issues are occupational health issues.

If they work for an employer with an occupational health department they should be signposted in that direction. This is especially true for colleagues working in NHS Acute trusts. Failing that a med 3 stating fit to work with the following adjustments that simply states the diagnosis and should be employed in accordance with current emergency guidelines will put the ball firmly back in the employer's court. Alternatively, you can use [this letter](#).

Universal Credit/Benefits link for patients

Contains information for employed, self-employed, zero-hour workers, link to NHS 111 Isolation Note if required by the employer and information regarding Universal Credit Health Assessments (which are essentially suspended)
<https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

GP ST3s in Primary Care Treatment Centres (hot hubs)

ST3s are normally only allowed to work in sites that have been inspected. We are waiting for definitive guidance, but the current suggestion is they should work no longer than 4 hours per shift a maximum of twice a week in these settings. They must be supervised and supported in the usual way.

Is participation contractual?

In short, the answer is no, but you do have a duty to meet the reasonable needs of your patients and this includes patients with COVID symptoms. Primary care treatment centres offer a means by which this group can be segregated in cohorts to minimise the risk of infection spread to other patients and to staff members. This can equally be achieved by zoning within the practice in some cases (with designated areas and workforce to maintain separation). It is imperative that you have adequate PPE and do not undertake face to face assessment of symptomatic or possible COVID-19 patients without this. If you have any concerns regarding the Hot hubs, please let us know and we can escalate these with the CCG.

Kent and Medway Primary Care SOP

This [Kent and Medway Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\)](#) and guidance document has been produced in response to the COVID 19 pandemic. The document sets out the methodology that will be used to ensure that contact between patients requiring primary care with COVID-19 symptoms, (including those who reside with others that have these symptoms), and those without COVID-19 symptoms is minimized, in order to reduce cross-contamination and spread.

Contract changes

Annual contract changes were made on 1 April. Whilst most of the requirements have been suspended, funding guarantees have been provided. Global sum will increase to £93.46, and the new value of a QOF point will be £194.83. Other measures will also come in, but practices will rightly be focussing on COVID-19 issues rather than contractual requirements.

Primary Care Network DES guidance

The revised PCN DES commenced on 1 April 2020. Given that the climate and the pressures have changed significantly since the original specifications were agreed, the focus of the PCN DES is now to mainly support practices to increase their workforce and deal with COVID-19 and many elements of the DES have been suspended. GPC England has produced this guidance: (<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/covid-19/practical-guidance/covid-19-primary-care-networks>) to support practices to work together locally by navigating the DES in a straight forward way. There will be a one-off payment of 27p per weighted patient referred to as **the PCN support payment** which is due to the suspension of the Impact and Investment Fund, this payment is for 6 months to the 31st September 2020. Not all activity has been suspended – the requirements of the Enhance Health in Care Homes remain in place. More detail can be found here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/cover-note-gps-commissioners-revised-network-contract-des.pdf>

The **extended hours access payment** will continue and should be passed on to practices, there is acknowledgement that capacity issues at practice level may mean this service does not operate as usual, if at all, over the coming months.

Bank Holiday working

NHSE finally released [guidance for Bank Holiday opening](#) yesterday evening. This is being treated as a normal working day for practices therefore patients should be able to access immediate and necessary treatment during core hours, as per the working model that practices are operating during the pandemic. The CCG has confirmed that reasonable costs will be covered, and practices are asked to keep a record of expenditure.

There is nothing to stop practices from exploring opening as a PCN but are asked to ensure that all points of patient contact are prepared to signpost patients to how they access care. This must not include 111 during core hours, unless it is for an appropriate reason such as covid-19 symptoms.

We have been informed there will be community pharmacy provision between 2 and 5pm on Good Friday and Bank Holiday Monday.

KCC Services

A helpful bulletin has been sent out already detailing what is happening with the various public health services commissioned and provided by KCC. It contains useful web addresses and links. In case you missed it we have it on our website and you can view it [here](#).

KCC also have a 24hr service linking vulnerable people with volunteers for issues like prescription collection or dog walking. Accessed at: www.kentcc-self.achieveservice.com/service/Kent_Together or by telephone 03000 419292

PPE update

The national guidance was updated again last week the link to the summary is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>

This supports eye protection for patient contacts (apart from when in the home of a patient who is shielding), Fluid Resistant Surgical Masks, Apron, and gloves. The agreed Kent and Medway SOP for Primary Care Treatment centres goes above the government guidance to recommend the use of fluid resistant surgical gowns. This is in line with the WHO 's guidance and is a result of Kent LMC's work with the CCG. Kent and Medway CCG have assured the LMC that they still support this and have been exploring every avenue to purchase the Fluid Resistant Surgical Gowns, however, there is a national shortage. What stock they can get is having to be prioritised to areas such as ITU. The LMC and CCG are exploring the purchase of polypropylene fabric disposable gowns which can be worn on a sessional basis with an apron over the top to be changed on a per patient basis. Even the supply of these gowns is proving difficult. As soon as they find a supplier the order will be placed to make these available to primary care. If you have been able to source your own PPE as an interim measure please let the CCG know so they can check it is safe for you. There are quite a few scams at the moment, do not be caught out.

What to do if you have run out of the basic PPE (Fluid resistant surgical masks, aprons, gloves, eye protection) – firstly see if you can source any provision from neighbouring practices, look within you PCN, if not close the doors and continue working remotely, the safety of you and your staff is paramount. Alert the CCG via wkccg.gpscovid19@nhs.net that you have been forced to take this action. Then to order further supply do two things:

1. Contact the National Supply Disruption Response on 0800 915 9964 or e-mail supplydisruptionservice@nhsbsa.nhs.uk. Before calling you must be able to provide the following to the call handler:
 - Name/e-mail/phone no. of requestor
 - Name/email/phone of contact for the next 24 hours
 - Delivery address including postcode for receiving deliveries
 - Confirmation that your organisation can receive the deliver out of hours
 - Number of COVID-19 patients being treated (confirmed and suspected)
 - Number of beds in your organisation (if appropriate)
 - How long your current PPE stock provides cover for
 - Which products you are requesting and in what quantity
2. Contact Mccg.ppeordering.kentmedway@nhs.net
This is the local point of contact for delivery of a short emergency supply.

What can happen is that a 'push' drop is delivered, and this may be a large number of one item. If you discuss with other GP practices in the area you may find that have had a large number of another item and that between you that you have enough.

Reporting to the National Supply Disruption Response is crucial as this raises the flag at a national level that Kent and Medway need more of the central stock.

GP Preparedness letter BMA

Link below to the 7 page summary of where practices should be now and what to think about for the coming weeks.

<https://www.kentlmc.org/attachments/downloadS3/1105648>

NHSE & I Covid-19 Primary Care Bulletin

Practices are advised to subscribe to this regular bulletin [here](#). It has been reported that the confirmation email needed to activate subscription has been delivered to users' junk mail so please check there if you have any problems.

CCG Covid-19 Primary Care Bulletin

Previous editions are held on the [Kent LMC website](#). If you are not receiving these directly we recommend that you contact the CCG via wkccg.gpscovid19@nhs.net.

Clinical resources

BMJ Remote Working Guide

<https://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/suppl/2020/03/24/bmj.m1182.DC1/gret055914.fi.pdf>

RCPCH/BPAIIG: advice for suspected tonsillitis on clinical history, do not examine throat unless absolutely necessary, this advice is on page 4:

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/generated-pdf/document/COVID-19---guidance-for-paediatric-services.pdf>

Clinical Pathways and advice for children:

Remote assessment

<https://what0-18.nhs.uk/professionals/gp-primary-care-staff/clinical-pathways/clinical-pathways-remote-assessment>

General Advice for parents <https://www.what0-18.nhs.uk/national>

NICE Coronavirus guidance <https://www.nice.org.uk/covid-19>

Retired GP Returning to Practice Information for how returners return:

<https://www.kentlmc.org/attachments/downloadS3/1105730>

Indemnity Reassurance

If you are being asked to work outside of your usual site or practice to respond to the COVID-19 here is the letter of national reassurance that you are still covered under the Clinical Negligence Scheme for GP

https://resolution.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/20200402-Tripartite_Indemnity_letter.pdf

Admission and care of patients during a COVID-19 incident in a care home

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878099/Admission_and_Care_of_Residents_during_COVID-19_Incident_in_a_Care_Home.pdf

Kind regards

The Kent Local Medical Committee