

14 April 2020

**For general practice in Kent and Medway**

## COVID-19 Update 9

This is the ninth update provided by Kent and Medway CCG to provide information to help practices deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. If you have any feedback or ideas to make the Updates more useful to you please email [wkccg.gpscovid19@nhs.net](mailto:wkccg.gpscovid19@nhs.net).

### Highlight:

Please can one person from each practice complete this survey <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/VKB8ZP8> by Thursday at 11am. This provides crucial information for the weekly SitRep we produce to make sure we provide the support you need.

The information in these updates is up to date when sent out but it is always important to check that this reflects the most recent guidance by following links. The NHS guidance for primary care can be found [here](#).

### Primary Care Treatment Centres

A separate letter from Dr Navin Kumta, Clinical Chair and Paula Wilkins, Chief Nurse of Kent and Medway CCG has been sent this evening (14 April 2020) with the most recent information and guidance about Primary Care Treatment Centres.

### COVID-19 NHS staff testing

National [plans have been outlined](#) on widening testing of COVID-19 for NHS staff and household members including primary care staff. To complement this guidance and to explain how it will be followed locally we have issued local guidance that was distributed at the weekend – entitled “2020 04 09 Staff and key worker testing for Coronavirus v6”.

**Thank you to so many of you across primary care who worked over this bank holiday weekend.**

Caroline Selkirk



Navin Kumta



## IT

### **Progress Update**

Thanks to you for responding to requests for information and to our hard-working IT teams we have managed to make progress in a number of areas. Updating IT systems can be a challenging process for all involved and we would like to thank you for your co-operation and patience. If we carry on at this pace, we will have introduced some complex and major changes over the last few weeks in very difficult circumstances. Obviously, some of you will still be struggling with implementing the changes but please bear with us.

### **Away From My Desk**

After the weekend deployment 402 colleagues are already using Away From My Desk to work remotely. The IT team are now working with Away From My Desk support to resolve a small number of outstanding issues.

### **Online triage**

As of today, we have 41 of 66 (62%) East Kent practices live with eConsult. In the rest of the county 77 out of 140 (55%) are now using DoctorLink.

### **Laptops**

We will start distributing just under 500 laptops this week on the basis of one laptop per 1800 patients and we are initially prioritising Medway, Swale, west Kent, and DGS. There will also be a top up distribution in east Kent to those practices who did not receive the required number of laptops through earlier distribution. We will contact practices to arrange delivery.

### **Primary Care Treatment Centres**

All centres in west Kent had equipment delivered/deployed over the weekend. Five out of six had live IT with the last expected to go live today. IT equipment is also being distributed and set up across the rest of the county, but we have not, as we finalise content, had full updates about progress. We have also distributed 500 smart

card readers with the laptops for the centres to share with local practices and networks – as suits local need.

**Going live on GP Connect with information about Primary Care Treatment Centres – technical information for practice managers.**

EMIS Practices can be assured that they are live with GP Connect once the following is in place:

1. Practices have followed the configuration guidance, and
2. Practices have been advertised on the DOS as accepting GP Connect (please confirm if unsure with [les.posniak@nhs.net](mailto:les.posniak@nhs.net) )

For Vision Practices. To receive messages via Interoperability Toolkit (ITK), no action is necessary, but guidance will be coming out from NHS Digital around the COVID-19 codes being used.

For EMIS practices who have configured GP Connect, but receive ITK messages into their workflow, GP Connect may not be live. Please contact Phil or Dan in the first instance - [Dan.campbell@nhs.net](mailto:Dan.campbell@nhs.net) (west and north Kent) and [phil.scott4@nhs.net](mailto:phil.scott4@nhs.net) (east Kent).

**New privacy notice for publication on practice websites**

The NHS continues to work closely with the National Data Guardian (NDG) and Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to ensure a high level of transparency for patients during this period. As such, a supplementary privacy notice has been provided for use by organisations to inform patients about the ways information is being used as a result of Covid-19.

The attached privacy notice entitled "COVID 19 Privacy Notice GP practices websites 140420" has been reviewed and updated by the GP Data Protection Officers. It is now for publication by GPs in Kent and Medway on their websites.

## Clinical

### Local arrangements for the COVID-19 home management service

- East Kent – home visits are managed as part of an integrated primary care pathway with a number of different providers working across the locality. Providers are: Thanet CIC, Channel Health Alliance (SKC), Ashford Clinical Providers, Invicta Health (Canterbury) and IC24 for out of hours.
- Medway - Medway Federation
- Swale - Swale Federation
- DGS - home visits and active monitoring are managed and provided by DGS Health through the Covid Community Management Service.
- West Kent – home visits and active monitoring are managed through West Kent Health Triage Hub with home visiting being undertaken by both KCHFT complex care nurses / Home Treatment Service and GPs.

### End of life care resources

This information went out in an urgent bulletin on Good Friday, but we are repeating here to make sure the routine Updates have all the information we have sent out.

Kent and Medway End of Life Care COVID-19 Response Group has developed resources to support you in delivering the best possible end of life care in community and primary care settings.

The resources can be accessed here:

<http://ashford.referralsupport.co.uk/referral/ashford/>.

Although this is an east Kent referral support tool the end of life Covid-19 resources can be used Kent and Medway wide.

### Referral Advice

We are aware that the major changes to referral processes are making it very difficult for general practice to operate. We are seeking a better way of giving you access to this information but in the meantime, you will find updates below from providers who have notified us about changes.

### **Diagnostics in Medway**

There has been a significant reduction in demand for diagnostics at Sittingbourne and Sheppey Community Hospitals. To help the Medway Foundation Trust (MFT) staff that provide the service there focus on providing a 24/7 imaging service at Medway Hospital it has been decided (in liaison with MFT and the respective community hospitals) to cease provision of the imaging service at Sittingbourne and Sheppey during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will mean that patients will not be able to access imaging services at these sites until further notice.

MFT will image any patient that after being seen at MIU requires a plain film. These patients will be fast tracked, and MFT will ensure the amount of time and contact that the patient has in the acute setting is kept to a minimum.

As GPs will be aware, patients should only be referred for urgent scans. Any patient requiring an urgent scan will need to be referred to Medway Hospital and the scan will take place at the main Medway Maritime Hospital site until further notice.

### **Ambulatory Emergency Care team at Darent Valley Hospital**

The Ambulatory Emergency Care (AEC) team remains open between 8am and 8pm. They are still accepting referrals as normal via the AEC Coordinator 07925 173747.

Please refer non-COVID-19 patients directly to AEC for treatment. Please call the AEC Coordinator with a clinical handover. They will assess all cases individually and book patients to be seen within 0-72 hours of referral, dependant on clinical presentation.

AEC has one isolation room for patients who have already tested positive for COVID-19 and have completed the 7-day isolation period but whom present with another acute health condition. Please confirm the patient's status at time of referral.

AEC are happy for one relative or friend to accompany the patient and will provide you with a password for the patient to be able to access the hospital via the main entrance. Please ensure the patient is aware of the password to gain entrance to the hospital.

If you are unsure about your referral, please contact the AEC Coordinator on 07925 173747 for advice.

### **East Kent hospitals**

EKHUFT have confirmed that if you need consultant advice with regard to a specific patient please call the relevant hospital switch board as below. If you are unsure of the speciality hospital base, please call one of the main switch boards who will direct you to the consultant.

- Kent and Canterbury Hospital: 01227 766877
- William Harvey Hospital: 01233 633331
- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital: 01843 225544

### **General Paediatric Advice and Guidance for Darent Valley Hospital.**

For General Advice & Guidance please ring: 07405 021012 - Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays) from 9am to 5pm

If the mobile phone is not answered promptly, please leave a text message on WhatsApp with your direct number/mobile to call back as the consultancy may be attending to another call.

Out of hours / weekends / bank holidays:

- On-call Paediatric Consultant via hospital switchboard: 01322 428100
- On-call Paediatric Registrar via hospital switchboard: 01322 428100 – *bleep 316*

For acute cases and safeguarding advice – 24/7 service:

- 'Hot week' Paediatric Consultant via hospital switchboard: 01322 428100 – *bleep 128 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)*
- Out of hours: *see above*

For e-Advice and Guidance: [dgn-tr.paediatricsecretaries@nhs.net](mailto:dgn-tr.paediatricsecretaries@nhs.net) (response within one working day).

## Medicines & Prescribing Guidance

### Change in rules for dispensing practices

Legislation has been passed enabling NHS England to authorise dispensing practices in England to dispense to all patients (including formerly non-dispensing patients) during a pharmacy closure and until Wednesday, 1 July 2020.

NHS England advice is:

- implementation of this legislation would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis
- [this advice](#) recommends judicious use of the regulation
- the legislation would only apply if a pharmacy is closed and there are no other local options for non-dispensing patients. At this point NHS England and the CCG will require a dispensing practice to dispense for non-dispensing patients.

### Supporting your community pharmacies.

When speaking to patients, please can practices let them know that their prescription may not be ready immediately when they go to the pharmacy and that due to social distancing, they may have to wait longer than usual for their medication.

The reason for this message is because a local pharmacist was assaulted on Good Friday by a patient so any support you can give to lessen patient expectations would be much appreciated. Of course some people will still act in an unacceptable way and to deal with this it has now been confirmed that pharmacists are covered by the provisions of the [Assaults on Emergency Workers Act 2018](#).



## Administration

### SITREP Update

Thank you for continuing to complete the weekly SitRep, the results of which are shared with the Primary Care COVID-19 Cell and the Executive Team for upward reporting to NHS England. Along with ensuring that the SitRep is completed weekly, could we please ask that only one member of the practice team complete and submit the report to avoid practice duplication.

This link to the SitRep <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/VKB8ZP8> will be circulated in the Tuesday bulletin but needs to be completed by Thursday 11am.

### Patient identification and shielding

On Saturday we sent out a special bulletin that with a copy of a letter that was published by NHS on 9 April - <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/SPL-Letter-to-GPs-09042020.pdf>. It asked all practices to complete a patient identification process, as soon as possible, and by no later than 5pm Tuesday 14 April (today). This was to make sure that all relevant patients have been given essential shielding advice and support.

We understand that if you did not manage to complete this task today, due to the short notice available, you are asked to complete it as soon as possible. It is important that all patients who should receive a shielding letter and have access to the other services (such as food deliveries) which will be available to them.

More information available from Digital NHS here:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/coronavirus/shielded-patient-list>

### The optical workforce

The optical workforce in England constitutes around 27,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, students and businesses. With the COVID-19 pandemic and the suspension of routine eye care, this multi-skilled workforce can be called upon for increased NHS capacity. New guidance has been published on [deploying the clinical and non-clinical optical workforce](#). It sets out the principles of safe redeployment and healthcare delivery in various settings, including at GP practice level.



### **The dental workforce**

The dental workforce in the United Kingdom constitutes over 33,000 dentists and almost 58,000 Dental Care Professionals registrants in England. With the COVID-19 pandemic and the postponement of elective dental care, this multi-skilled workforce could be utilised for increasing capacity and the NHS has provided [guidance about redeployment of the clinical dental workforce](#).