

07 May 2020

For general practice in Kent and Medway

COVID-19 Update 16

This update is 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.

Highlight:

Each practice is offered the opportunity to complete a simple survey to contribute to a review of Kent and Medway CCG's response to COVID-19. The survey is accessed via <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/7TL2XX7>.

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](#).

Review of Kent and Medway CCG response to COVID-19 – an opportunity for primary care to give their views

NHS Kent and Medway CCG is managing and coordinating the NHS response to COVID-19 in the county. In light of the extended period of response management and coordination, it is important that we ask for views on the way we have performed. We need the thoughts of primary care to be part of this feedback so the CCG can 'learn and adapt as we go'.

Each practice is offered the opportunity to complete a simple survey which is accessed via <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/7TL2XX7>. There are five open questions to answer. We did consider adding this to the weekly sitrep survey to reduce the number of surveys but felt this needed to be a separate entity. It is an important opportunity for each practice to contribute to this review. Please take it.

All replies will be treated confidentially, collated, and recommended learning points considered for action to improve our responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. All submissions will also be recorded and will form part of the formal structured debrief process that will be conducted subsequent to 'stand down'.

Infection Protection & Control

Training in infection prevention and control

Paula Wilkins, the Chief Nurse of the Kent and Medway CCG, has been asked to support the local resilience forum in delivering training in infection prevention and control (IPC), personal protective equipment (PPE) and swabbing to all care homes across Kent and Medway.

There is a concern that there will be a second peak of COVID-19 cases in the next three weeks and that the hardest hit will be care homes with up to 90% of them reporting outbreaks. NHSE&I have, as part of mutual aid, developed a “train the trainer” package to make sure all homes are fully aware of best IPC practice, correct use of PPE including donning and doffing procedures and swabbing.

We are now looking to roll training out to local trainers, who will in turn deliver the training to care homes face to face. The training takes approximately 2 hours and is delivered remotely.

As well as seeking volunteers from the CCG we are contacting all partner organisations as part of mutual aid to seek help in identifying local trainers. It is anticipated we will need around 60 people trained up with each trainer delivering training to 10 care homes over the next two weeks.

We appreciate this is a really big ask, whilst you are all extremely busy with your own challenges, but if you can help, we would be most grateful. Staff do not need to be registrants, but care experience is required, if staff can only be released to undertake the training and deliver training into fewer homes, that too would be appreciated.

Please let us know if you can help by emailing kmccg.qualitycovid19@nhs.net as soon as possible. Thank you for considering this request.

Care homes

The number and percentage of care homes reporting a suspected or confirmed outbreak of COVID-19 to PHE by local authorities, regions and PHE centres is available [online here](#).

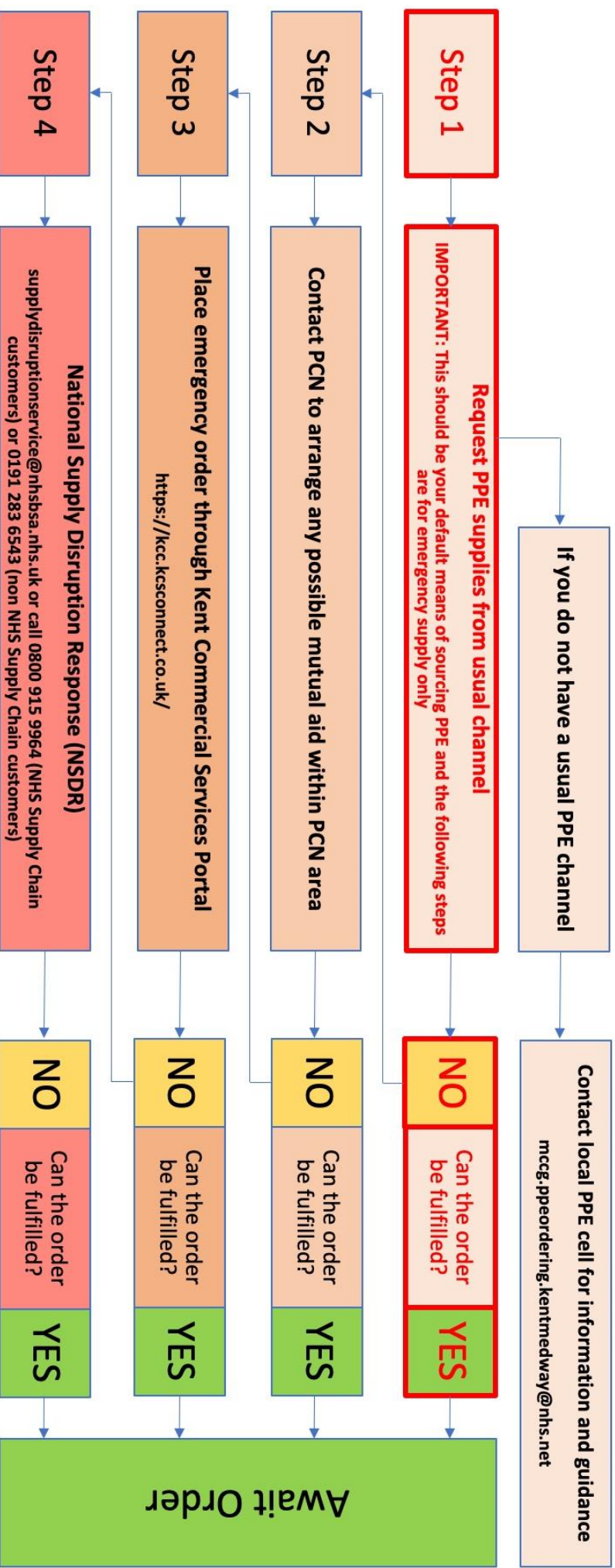
Mobile testing units

For information, there are now three or four mobile testing units routinely based in Kent and Medway. They are run by the military and part of the national testing services. They will tend to stay in a location for 3-4 days depending on demand. Unfortunately, there is no advanced schedule for where the units will be based. They are not offering drop in testing. All access for GP practice staff is through the [national online booking service](#), they will appear as options, if available, in the online booking at the point staff put their postcode into the system.

Ordering Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

You may be aware there has been a recent change to make sure the Local Resilience Forum supports primary care in the supply of PPE. Attached is an updated PPE ordering process to show how this affects how you can now order PPE.

Escalation process if care provider has less than 48 hrs of PPE remaining



Information required when escalating a PPE requirement		Customer name		Organisation address		Dealing with confirmed COVID-19 case(s) – Y/N Dealing with suspected COVID-19 case(s) – Y/N Dealing with 'shielded' people – Y/N	
		Contact e-mail		Order reference			
		Contact telephone		Delivery address			
		Organisation name		Special delivery instructions			

Safeguarding

Guidance on how to respond to domestic abuse

The government's stay at home advice in response to the COVID-19 pandemic can create new challenges for people subjected to domestic abuse and for those who support them. Survivors may be at home with their perpetrator and unable to escape from the abuse. Professionals may be required to adapt how they support survivors due to COVID-19 response measures. During this period, it is likely that most of your communication with patients subjected to domestic abuse will take place over the phone. When discussing domestic abuse over the phone, considerations need to be made to ensure safe and clear communication. Some key points to consider:

Ask

- When speaking to survivors on the phone, find out their location, check that they are alone and safe to talk and that you are not on loudspeaker.
- Do not enquire if the patient is not alone and advise the patient to say that it was the wrong number and let them know that you will call them on a later date and tell them to call 999 if they are in immediate danger and hang up. Consider an alternative plan of action. Think family – are there children in family who could be at risk.
- Confirm whether you speak the same language, if not use a professional interpreter, do not use family members or friends to translate.
- If it is safe to talk to the patient, establish a code word or sentence, which they can say to indicate that it's no longer safe to talk and they can then end the call.

Action

- If you are concerned for your patient's immediate safety call 999.
- Remind them that they should call the police or leave their home to access a place of safety if needed regardless of COVID-19 isolation measures in place.
- If survivors feel afraid of further danger or escalation of harm if they are overheard calling 999, they can access emergency services using Silent Solutions. When calling 999, if you do not respond to the operator, the call will be put through to Silent Solutions, dial 55 you will be transferred to the police.
- Specialist domestic abuse services are continuing to deliver services, some with adapted measures

Full guidance available [here](#).

Clinical Advice & Support

COVID and End of Life Care in Practice

Webinar 4: Tuesday 12th May 7pm – 8:45pm

Following the last three successful webinars, we have been asked to share with you an opportunity to join an interactive webinar about: COVID-19 Acute Assessments in A&E, Management and Complications.

These webinars offer a chance to share expertise from across all areas to help resolve issues and share learning in relation to End of Life Care at the current time of COVID-19 challenges.

There is an expert guest panel and the discussion will be around key issues and areas of focus, such as

- How are the acutely ill, with or without COVID-19, managed in A&E?
- Are you aware of the complications such as thrombotic status with ischaemic strokes and others?
- What are the effects of being in hospital and/or ITU with COVID-19 and any likely MH and PTSD issues?
- What are the palliative challenges in hospital settings and how can we help these pre and post discharge?

The webinar will include case and situational based discussions and gives all attendees the opportunity to ask questions and raise discussion points using interactive chat forum.

To see more detailed information on the event and to register for a place please use this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/covid-and-eolc-assessment-in-ae-management-complications-12-may-tickets-104411192688>

ZOOM details will be sent on confirmation of booking a place and will be found towards the bottom of the confirmation email.

For any other queries please contact Rakesh Korla on r.korla@nhs.net

GP resource to support cancer patients

The attached resource entitled “Kent and Medway Cancer Alliance GP Resources” has been created to support you to deliver cancer care reviews and to signpost patients to wellbeing and advice services, including mental health support and financial advice.

Online support for young people in Kent

A mental health and wellbeing online platform is now available for young people aged 10 to 16 across Kent. The service is free and can be accessed at www.kooth.com. It's a place to get advice, information and support 24/7. You may wish to signpost young people to this service – where they can chat to a friendly qualified counsellor Monday to Friday between 12 noon and 10pm and Saturday and Sunday between 6pm and 10pm.

This service will be available in Medway from 1 June and more details will be released through this GP Update at the end of May.

Young people in Kent can also continue to access advice, information and support by:

- Accessing www.moodspark.org.uk or www.kentresiliencehub.org.uk to learn about mental health and find tips and resources to keep emotionally healthy
- Texting ChatHealth for support around physical and mental health on 07520 618850. The number is monitored Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.
- Completing a form for the Children and Young People's Counselling Service at www.kentcht.nhs.uk/forms/school-health-service-referral-form
- Calling the Single Point of Access (SPA) on 0300 123 4496 if you are not sure what help is needed.
- Accessing the Big White Wall if aged 16+ for anonymous support through <https://www.bigwhitewall.com/>

For people of all ages needing immediate mental health support, just text the word “Kent” or “Medway” to 85258. This is a new 24/7 text service provided by SHOUT and the Crisis Text Line as part of the Kent and Medway Release the Pressure campaign.

Verification of death in a period of emergency

This guidance is designed to clarify existing practice for the verification of death outside of hospitals and to provide a framework for safe verification of death in this

coronavirus emergency period. It is to be applied in all cases outside hospital when verification of death may be completed by people who have been trained to do so in line with their employer's policies.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-verification-of-death-in-times-of-emergency>

An update on Shielding Patients for Primary Care

The latest update of the Shielded Patient List, based on the NHS Digital GP Extraction Service, has identified a small number of patients who will be advised to shield via a centrally generated letter and text message. Flags will be added to the GP records for these patients along with patients identified by hospital clinicians this week. The addition of flags and distribution of central letters is expected to be complete by Thursday 7 May. You may also receive information relating to this from your system supplier.

Any patients you locally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable prior to 28 April should now be recognised by the Government support website. Thank you for informing all of these patients, using the standard letter previously provided (. If you have not done so, please ensure that you write to these patients as soon as possible. Please use the attached updated version of the letter. This contains the same information but confirms that the government is currently advising people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to shield until 30 June, subject to ongoing review.

People who you have identified locally and added to the registry will be sent text messages later this week and contacted early next week by the government support service call centre if they have not yet registered online or by phone. It is therefore important that you have contacted them to confirm that they have been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable.

We are aware that some people who believe they have registered for support on the website have not received it. We have fed this back to the government service and are working with them to resolve issues with the website and call centre. Please advise people to re-register ensuring they have entered the correct NHS number on the website and their name and address as used in their NHS records.

As a reminder, the websites below may contain helpful information about these patients / process:

- Highest clinical risk being advised to shield identification methodology:
<https://digital.nhs.uk/coronavirus/shielded-patient-list/methodology>
- Shielded patient list guidance for general practice:
<https://digital.nhs.uk/coronavirus/shielded-patient-list/guidance-for-general-practice>
- Summary of support offers available to those shielding and other vulnerable groups – slide deck attached
- Government's shielding guidance:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Please note: hospital clinicians have also been asked, if they have not already done so, to review their patient lists and identify anyone who should be added to the clinically highest risk registry and advised to shield. We have asked them to speak to any such patients, and to send them a copy of the standard NHS letter, as well as to notify the patient's GP that they have been added to the list, and to submit a list of additional patients to NHS Digital.

Referral Advice

Kent and Medway radiology update

Please can we draw your attention to the GP Referral Update of Friday 1 May that clarified arrangements for routine elective referrals and access to radiology.

As stated in the referral update, trusts across Kent and Medway are not currently accepting new requests for routine imaging. The national guidance issued in a [letter from Simon Stevens](#) on 29 April states that cancer and urgent diagnostics should be given priority. Only when there is sufficient capacity to undertake routine imaging safely should it be undertaken. We will provide regular updates as this situation changes.

Just to clarify that urgent diagnostics and suspected cancer diagnostics are still available at all Trusts in Kent and Medway.

Phlebotomy at Medway Community Healthcare – booked appointments only

Due to COVID-19, the phlebotomy clinics are no longer providing a walk-in blood test service. They are only open for pre-booked appointments.

All blood tests need to be booked by telephoning 01634 471098. Details of open clinics here:

https://www.medwaycommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/application/files/1715/8591/4963/Blood_test_clinics_3.4.PNG

Consultant Connect Update (Medway & Swale only)

Trauma and Orthopaedics will be going live on the national platform for advice and guidance this week.

Consultant Connect is also now available 9am – 5pm on Saturday and Sundays, when calls will be answered by the national team. These can be accessed in the normal way either by calling the unique number assigned to your practice, or via the mobile app.

East Kent specific update

Further work has been taking place with EKHUFT to clarify the position with regards to routine imaging and particularly radiology requests that have been returned to practices in east Kent. We apologise for the delay in resolving this and appreciate the concern that this is causing.

To clarify the position, any routine referrals for imaging made to EKHUFT in the last 3 months have been added to the trust's patient tracker list (PTL), triaged for urgency and if not deemed urgent returned to GPs as routine imaging is not being undertaken. Therefore, referrals have not been lost as they remain on the PTL, but patients are not on an active waiting list.

The majority of the returned referrals are for MRI for MSK conditions and non-obstetric ultrasound. Rather than immediately reinstate these imaging referrals to a very long waiting list we are working with our community MSK triage providers to consider the options for reviewing the MRI requests, determining clinical urgency and alternative treatment plans.

For non-obstetric ultrasound we are working with our community providers to agree that the patients, where appropriate are transferred to the community for imaging.

For any referrals that fall outside of those categories we will be working with EKHUFT to reinstate them to the waiting list.

We will update east Kent practices next week with regards to the process for moving these referrals to MSK triage or to NOUS providers. We will ensure that this does not require any additional paperwork or referral processes.

IT

Support over bank holiday weekend

In addition to the information about IT help available on bank holiday provided in Update 15, we have been informed that the NEL Standard Desk Service will now also be available 8am to 8pm Saturday and Sunday this weekend, so for clarity here is what support is available:

Computer issues? Computers, log-ins, devices etc The NEL Standard Desk Service is available on 03000 424242 8am-8pm Monday to Friday (including bank holidays) and 8am-8pm on Saturday and Sunday for all users.

Connectivity Issues? Network problems If there are issues with connectivity with the Health and Social Care Network (HSCN) please call 0344 573 4695 with your postcode and full site details. If you can advise if there are any specific issues such as power loss or an issue with the connection to HSCN, an application or the internet it will help us diagnose your issue. This number will be answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by someone who can help address your connectivity issue.

Away From My Desk: remote working solution, registration and activation issues If you have any issues you can contact Away From My Desk helpline on 01173250060 option 1 for tech support (see below for out of hours support) or by emailing support@awayfrommydesk.com

Additional support and queries on Bank Holiday Friday For additional advice and support that cannot be resolved by the help desks the CCG lead for Bank Holiday Friday will be phil.scott4@nhs.net

Medicines, Prescribing & Pharmacies

Bank Holiday Pharmacy Opening Times

We attach a list of pharmacies in Kent and Medway with bank holiday opening times. National guidance states that pharmacies are permitted to close for specified reasons, provided they notify their regional NHS team. All opening times have been agreed by NHSE&I.

Electronic Prescription Service Phase 4

The roll out of Phase 4 to GP practices in **England** started in November 2019, making EPS the default method for prescribing, dispensing and reimbursement of prescriptions in primary care. NHS Digital published a handy guide for practices about EPS4 in January. This two-page fact sheet is designed to inform practice staff of the key things they need to know before Phase 4 is switched on at your practice. <https://digital.nhs.uk/binaries/content/assets/website-assets/services/electronic-prescription-service/eps-phase-4---information-for-gp-practice-staff.pdf>.