

26 May 2020

For general practice in Kent and Medway

COVID-19 Update 21

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 kmccg.gpscovid19@nhs.net

Highlight:

Please can one person from each practice fill in this week's sitrep survey
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/62MD2B7>

Thank you very much for continuing to complete the weekly sitrep.

The addition of your IT call reference numbers has meant that the CCG has followed up a significant number of outstanding calls and they are now resolved. You can see this from the attached summary report. If you do still have an IT issue, then please make sure you include the reference number so we can follow it up for you.

As a reminder to the few practices who did not complete the sitrep last week, it needs to be completed each and every week to create a continuing picture of the situation. In addition, some questions do change to help collect any new information needed.

So we can use the information supplied all returns will need to be made by 11am each Thursday: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/62MD2B7> . Thank you.

Clinical Advice & Support

NHS Primary Care Bulletin

From next week, the nationally produced bulletin will not be sent out daily. It will still be sent out regularly and carry essential information and enable sharing of [best practice](#) widely. This could benefit patients across K&M and beyond as well as improve inter-professional support and morale. See what Thanet [Acute Response Team \(ART\)](#) shared. To subscribe click [here](#)

Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) action plan

There is evidence of disproportionate mortality and morbidity amongst BAME people, including NHS staff, who contract COVID-19. The NHS has published a plan setting out how it will address the impact of COVID-19 on BAME staff in the NHS and the protection of all staff (including returning staff). This can be found [here](#).

NHS Coronavirus updates for the armed forces community

The NHS is now producing regular [coronavirus updates](#) for the Armed Forces Community, relevant for service personnel, families and veterans. The most recent version was dated 22 May.

NHS Diabetes Advice helpline

The NHS has launched a new helpline in response to disruption to normal diabetes services due to the COVID-19 pandemic and response. The helpline is available for immediate advice to help patients understand how to effectively manage their diabetes.

Patients can access NHS Diabetes Advice via Diabetes UK's support line on 0345 123 2399 Monday-Friday from 9am-6pm.

Attached are some frequently asked questions about this helpline. It includes some templated letters for practices to use to send out to patients with diabetes.

Patients being redirected to NHS 111

There are reports at the national level that some unwell patients are being redirected to NHS 111 by their GP practice when calling for advice in hours. The GP Standard Operating Procedure will be amended to make it clear that this should not happen and if patients with symptoms of COVID-19 contact their GP practice, they should be assessed rather than directed to NHS 111. This is to prevent unwell patients deteriorating due to delays in accessing medical help.

Referral Advice

Sexual and reproductive health support

Specialised sexual health clinics remain open.

They have reduced their face to face appointments to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection but will be able to triage and consult by phone and, where needed, see urgent, priority or vulnerable clients in person. They are also able to post out or arrange for collection of sexually transmitted infection test kits and/or contraception (pills, condoms).

Get-It Young Person Condom Programme

Under 25s can still receive free condoms posted to their home.

Details of local services

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/sexual-health> with sexual health clinics contactable via the below numbers.

- 0300 790 0245 (East Kent)
- 01622 225713 (Maidstone)
- 01474 360833 (Gravesend)
- 01322 948026 (Dartford)

Information for the public

Information about contraception, emergency contraception, abortion, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and sexual assault during Covid-19 is on [Sexwise](#). This includes links to other organisations providing information and support.

Making Every Contact Count (MECC)

To help ensure any sexual or reproductive health needs are identified, we recommend practitioners proactively offer support to clients following the MECC approach of Ask, Assist, Act.

- **Ask:** Do you need any help with contraception, emergency contraception, pregnancy support or sexually transmitted infections?
- **Assist:** You can find more information on [Sexwise](#) and these are the local services you can make contact with.
- **Act:** Find the nearest relevant service and refer. As some service users may not have access to a private phone for a telephone consultation, if you are able to make one available safely, this could be very helpful.

Referral of Deaths to the Coroner

Can GPs please note that in cases of death where the deceased has not been attended (physically or by video) by a doctor in the preceding 28 days, nor seen after death, there is a legal duty to refer to the Coroner.

It may be that a Form 100a can then be issued allowing you as a GP to issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. This form is issued to the Registrar by the Coroner where such a death has been referred and the Coroner is satisfied that there is no duty to investigate on the basis of the medical cause of death and the circumstances connected with the death so reported. Recently Registrars have had to make these referrals late on in the process. This has in turn caused delay for families at an already distressing time which has been complicated by the effects of COVID-19. Early action by GPs could prevent this.

Workforce

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The CCG has introduced a new EAP for GPs, all staff at their practices, and their families, provided by Health Assured.

The programme is a confidential employee benefit designed to help people deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home life or work life, health and general wellbeing.

We are receiving reports that many staff and family members are beginning to feel the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their mental wellbeing and this EAP gives everyone access to 24/7 confidential help and support, allowing us to help support staff and their families in their wellbeing, resilience, physical and mental health.

Primary care staff can access the support here: <https://healthassureddeap.co.uk/>

Please use the following log-in details:

- Your username: *Kent Medway*
- Your password: *CCG*

If you are making a phone call to access the service, you will need to state which GP practice you work for. If you have any difficulties in accessing this service, please contact nadine.adams@nhs.net or beth.hill5@nhs.net at the CCG.

Communications

Answerphone messages

It has come to our attention that some practice answerphone messages are out of date, particularly as some encourage patients to not contact the practice for routine or non-urgent issues. Please can we ask you all to review your messages to make sure that they are not still dissuading patients from contacting you for routine care.

Help us Help you – focus on Primary Care

This week the national Help Us Help You campaign focuses on primary care – in particular the ways in which GPs and practices have changed the way they work in order to continue to meet patients' needs during the pandemic.

The key messages are:

- Primary care has remained open for business in some form throughout the period seeing patients with or without coronavirus
- Primary care has changed, adapting to deliver services in a different and safe way with roll out of technology to support online consultation.
- If you need help with a health care issue, please contact your GP - #helpushelpyou

To encourage people in Kent and Medway to contact primary care if they need help, the communications team would like to speak to any GPs or practice staff happy to share their experience of working during the COVID-19 pandemic.

You will be asked some questions either by email or by telephone interview with a member of the communications team. The article will then be shared widely with a range of audiences, including the general public. It would be helpful also if you would be willing to supply any photos to support the article.

Please contact kmccg.commscovid19@nhs.net as soon as possible if you are happy to be involved.