



2nd June 2020

Dear Colleagues

Please see below for your information our latest updates during the Covid-19 pandemic:

NHS England's Standard operating procedure (SOP) for general practice in the context of coronavirus (COVID-19)

The [Standing Operation Procedure for general practice](#) was updated on 29 May. It recommends total triage arrangements should continue with remote consultations used whenever possible, provides guidance on the management of patients who are shielding, advises that staff should be risk assessed to identify those at increased risk of COVID-19 and, as capacity allows, suggests practices should be focused on the restoration of routine chronic condition management and prevention wherever possible, including vaccination and immunisation, contraception and health checks.

NHS Test and Trace services across the UK

The DHSC announced its [NHS Test and Trace](#) local outbreak control plans for England designed to help control the COVID-19 virus. The plans involve rapid testing at scale, integrated tracing to identify, alert and support, and using data to target approaches to flare ups, at a local and national level.

Anyone who tests positive for coronavirus will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and will need to share information about their recent interactions. This could include household members, people with whom they have been in direct contact, or within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes. If those in isolation develop symptoms, they can book a test at nhs.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119. If they test positive, they must continue to stay at home for 7 days or until their symptoms have passed. If they test negative, they must complete the 14-day isolation period. Members of their household will not have to stay at home unless the person identified becomes symptomatic, at which point they must also self-isolate for 14 days to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus.

The GPC England Exec team have raised with NHSE/I the need for much greater clarity on the any implications for health care professionals of the Test and Trace system. They have now said that if someone who works in, or has recently visited, a health or social care setting such as a practice tests positive for coronavirus, their case will be escalated to local public health experts, who will liaise with the relevant setting to agree on the most appropriate action. If they were wearing PPE at the time of the contact, this will not count as a contact. An FAQ document has been produced and is attached.

The NHS Test and Trace service, including 25,000 dedicated contact tracing staff working with Public Health England, will have the capacity to trace the contacts of 10,000 people who test positive for coronavirus per day and can be scaled up if needed. The system is expected to have the capacity to carry out 200,000 tests a day. This includes 50 drive-through sites, more than 100 mobile testing units and 3 mega laboratories.

NHS Employers risk assessment guidance for BAME and other staff

[NHS Employers has now published guidance](#) on risk assessment for NHS organisations on how to enhance their existing risk assessments particularly for at risk and vulnerable groups within their workforce due to COVID-19. This includes staff returning to work for the NHS, and existing team members who are potentially more at risk due to their race and ethnicity, age, weight, underlying health conditions, disability, or pregnancy. NHS Employers have advised that employers take an inclusive approach and have described that the guidance is applicable, with appropriate local adaptations, in all healthcare settings. The guidance includes further resources to provide advice on supporting health and wellbeing, mitigating strategies and risk assessment discussions.

[Guidance has also been produced by the Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#) that is intended to help organisations identify who is at risk of harm. It includes templates and examples that organisations can adopt, along with specific guidance. This guidance emphasises the legal obligation of employers to do a workplace assessment.

The [BMA has been lobbying government to take urgent steps to address the need to protect Black, Asian and minority ethnic \(BAME\) communities from COVID-19](#). The BMA had previously [written to Sir Simon Stevens](#) on the need for more practical advice, to practices, on risk assessment. The [BMA guidance on risk assessments](#) may also be of assistance.

This follows on from the publication of [FOM Risk Reduction Framework for NHS staff at risk of COVID-19](#) that is now included in the further reference section of the NHS Employers guidance.

Principles of safe video consulting in general practice

NHSEI have published updated guidance on the [principles of safe video consulting in general practice during COVID-19](#).

GP and practice COVID-19 toolkit

The BMA continues to update the [toolkit for GPs and practices](#), which should help to answer many questions on a large range of topics relating to COVID-19. In the last week some information on [home working and distribution of high-risk work](#) was added to the service provision section of the toolkit.

Other COVID 19 resources

[BMJ – news and resources](#)
[RCGP COVID-19 information](#)
[NHSE/I daily primary care bulletins on COVID-19](#)
[NHSE/I COVID-19 webinars](#)
[COVID-19 Google Drive resource](#)
[Primary Care Pathways COVID-19 resource centre](#)
[NICE resources on COVID-19](#)

Kind regards
The Kent Local Medical Committee