

02 June 2020

For general practice in Kent and Medway

COVID-19 Update 23

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 make sure that one person from each practice completes the weekly sitrep is here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/62MD2B7> by 11am on Thursday 4 June.

Weekly sitrep survey

Many thanks for continuing to complete the weekly sitrep survey. Please see attached last week's summary so you can see what practices across Kent and Medway are reporting.

It is really encouraging to see that the number of practices experiencing IT issues continue to fall. If you are one of the few practices with outstanding IT issues to resolve you can use the sitrep to get action taken by the CCG. You will need the IT Help desk reference number you are given when you report issues so we can make sure it is actioned. Many of your colleagues have seen this approach work which is why the number of practices experiencing IT issues are shrinking.

As we begin to restart services that may have been suspended during the pandemic, we will be asking additional questions regarding key activities. This week we would like to know the status of your childhood immunisation activity so that we can contact practices that may need support to reach targets.

Please make sure that one person from each practice completes the weekly sitrep is here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/62MD2B7> by 11am on Thursday 4 June.

Clinical Advice & Support

GP standard operating procedure version 3

Standard operating procedure (SOP) for general practice in the context of coronavirus (COVID-19) was updated on Friday May 29. Version 3 is available here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/managing-coronavirus-covid-19-in-general-practice-sop/>

Verification of Expected Death

Please see the attached flowchart for Verification of Expected Death in the community including remote verification. This has been agreed across Kent and Medway with the CCG, LMC and Kent Community Health (KCHFT) and has the approval of the local coroner's service.

Note that remote verification is expected to be performed by a healthcare professional who has been through suitable training. Ensuring verification happens within the limits of this process significantly reduces the risk of unnecessary referral of the death to the coroner and subsequent delay in registering and arranging the funeral whilst protecting the healthcare professionals involved.

Online support for young people in Medway

A mental health and wellbeing online platform is now also available for young people aged 11 to 25 in Medway. It was already live in 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 is available in Medway from 1 June.

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

- Calling the Single Point of Access (SPA) for Medway's Young People Wellbeing Service on 0300 300 1981 if you are not sure what help is needed or to make a referral.
- Calling [Emerge](#) helpline for help with processing feelings of anxiety, self-harm or suicidal thoughts on 07983 136 215, which is available 7-11pm on

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. A referral form is available at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lblrEU0h5io2A_mg_v99FkestCfO3Vsw/view?usp=sharing and should be sent to fiona@emergeadvocacy.com

- 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, they should just text the word “Medway” to 85258. This is a 24/7 text service provided by SHOUT and the Crisis Text Line as part of the Kent and Medway Release the Pressure campaign.

NHS healthcare for veterans and the Armed Forces community

The Association of ex-Service Drop-In Centres represents drop-ins that support veterans in local communities across the UK through a membership framework. They offer a variety of social, welfare and mental health support to ex-military personnel and their families. During the current COVID-19 outbreak, these drop-ins have changed their ways of working and many new arrangements are emerging to help those needing support, especially those of a clinical nature. To find out more, check their [website](#).

Dental Practices

It has been announced that dental practices will begin to reopen from Monday 8 June. Patients should telephone their practice to discuss their issues, rather than attending in person without an appointment.

Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) updates on COVID-19 tests and testing kits

[Guidance](#) has been produced by MHRA for members of the public, patients, professionals and industry around the COVID-19 tests and testing kits. This includes information on how they work, the different types of tests and the specifications manufacturers need to follow.

They have updated the following sections: 'for patients, the public and professional users' and 'for industry and manufacturers' with new information on temporarily stopping the sale of COVID-19 antibody tests for members of the public until the regulatory and safety concerns are resolved.

Update to guidance for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable (shielding)

The government has updated [the guidance](#) for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 and have been advised to shield. The update from government came into effect from Monday 1 June. In summary the changes are:

- The advice for people identified as clinically extremely vulnerable is that they should continue to shield until at least the 30 June but from 1 June, they can spend a short period of time outdoors each day with members of their household, still maintaining 2m distance from others.
- If the shielded person lives alone, the government is advising they can meet one other person from a different household, maintaining strict social distancing. The advice is that this be the same person each time.
- Important aspects of government's policy and guidance remain the same. Apart from going outside once per day, a shielded person should continue to avoid all non-essential face to face contact. This means they should still not go shopping or to pharmacies.
- The support for shielded people remains in place and unchanged.

The Government has also confirmed that it will be reviewing shielding guidance alongside wider changes to social distancing, including plans to write to those on the shielding patients list with information about next steps on shielding after the next review on 15 June.

Safeguarding

Do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation (DNACPR)

During this time of increased mortality and morbidity around COVID-19 we need to make sure that it is business as usual as far as consent and DNACPR is concerned.

Please see the 7-minute safeguarding briefing attached that we have been asked to send out as a reminder of the process.

Infection Protection & Control

Covid-19 antibody testing

Last week saw the first phase of the national roll-out of testing for COVID-19 antibodies.

Antibody testing is a key part of the government's testing programme and will play an increasingly important role as we move into the next phase of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. As you know, antibody testing can tell someone whether they have had the virus that causes COVID-19 in the past, by analysing a blood sample. It differs from virus testing, which can tell someone whether they have the virus currently.

Research is continuing into the nature of COVID-19 antibodies. Unlike more established diseases, we are not currently able to say whether having caught COVID-19 once and developed antibodies will protect people from catching it again.

For now, antibody testing is being undertaken to better understand the spread of the virus and help develop ways of working to minimise exposure and provide more targeted support for the most vulnerable and at-risk groups of people.

It should be stressed that PPE procedures, social distancing and other established processes should continue to be followed at all times as they would be for any individual – patient or staff member – who is not currently COVID-19 positive and at this time should **not** be relaxed due to a positive antibody result.

Testing for patients

Patients who are being seen in primary care settings and who are already having blood samples taken as part of their care should be offered a test for COVID-19 antibodies; separate consent for this test must be taken.

Patients without capacity to consent – such as those with dementia – should only be tested in line with the MCA 2005 processes of making a 'best interests' decision. As part of this process, clinicians should consider the clinical value of this test to their patient's care, in line with current scientific opinion on the clinical implications of being positive for COVID-19 antibodies.

At this current time (2 June 2020), knowledge of the presence of COVID-19 antibodies has limited clinical value for individual patient care.

The processes for sending this sample for testing, and receiving results, will vary according to the specific system that your area uses. Information on when these

systems are up and running in east Kent, north Kent & Medway and west Kent – and how to access them - will be provided by your local primary care team.

Testing for staff

NHS organisations across the country have been asked to begin antibody testing of health and care staff. To make most effective use of the current limited capacity, they have been asked to prioritise antibody testing for those health and care staff who work within the most high-risk areas (such as hospital ICU), as well as those who have underlying health issues.

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff will also be prioritised, as BAME individuals have been found both nationally and internationally to be more at risk of serious complications from COVID-19.

Other health and care staff, including those who work in primary care, will receive antibody testing as testing capacity increases, but are unlikely to be tested in these initial stages of the testing programme. We will keep you updated as this programme continues to develop.

Cooling and Fans in Primary Care

Please find below additional information regarding the use of fans in Primary Care in relation to COVID-19.

The MHRA alert was issued in January 19 and although it states it is not specifically for Primary Care when NHSE were asked for further advice on this they stated that although there is less risk in a Primary Care area, the principles would still apply so all are aware of the risks associated with the use of portable fans.

It has always been advised that individual providers should risk assess prior to use or removal of fans to include proper maintenance, cleaning and IPC advice and this has not changed. The risk assessment may show that fans should not be used in areas where PPE is used i.e. clinics, treatment rooms, minor op rooms but may be used in areas where non- invasive care is carried out and in administration area. NHSE advise is that fans do not cool staff who are wearing fluid repellent PPE.

This will also be included in future Heatwave planning which is currently being reviewed across Kent & Medway.

Safer Working Guidance for offices has a section which addresses ventilation, stating that where possible workplaces should be encouraged to open doors and windows to increase ventilation. [This may be of use.](#)

IT

GP Connect

EMIS and 111

NHS Digital has asked all surgeries using EMIS to update it so all 111 practices across England are added into EMIS' GP Connect settings and provide a consistent patient experience.

Practices can access the guidance to complete the update and self-certify they've completed via this online work-book : <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/W734UU/>

The changes should take around 15 minutes to make, and if you get stuck you can raise a call with NEL's IT support on 03000 424242 for a trainer to assist. They will make an appointment to access remotely onto the surgery system and talk you through the changes as they make them.

We are asking all EMIS practices to complete this by Friday 12 June.

Keeping Your Patients Informed about Online Services - a webinar on Thursday 4 June from 4:30pm – 5:00pm

This webinar provided by NHSE/I South Region Implementation Team is to help you make the most out of your digital services during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect your staff and patients.

The 30-minute webinar will consist of a 10-minute presentation with 20 minutes of questions and answers to a panel.

This webinar is designed to help GP practices to:

- Reduce footfall in practice
- Feel more confident in talking to patients about online services

This webinar will provide you with useful resource and hints and tips on the following:

- Social Media
- SMS
- Website guidance
- NHS app
- Online Consultations

You can [register here](#) for the webinar and if you have any questions you would like to submit prior to the webinar taking place, please email england.empowertheperson@nhs.net quoting 'EtP Webinar 04/06'

New guidance for safe video consulting

There is new guidance available on the [Principles of safe video consulting in general practice during COVID-19](#) provided by the Royal College of General Practitioners.

Finance

DES/LES/AQP Financial arrangements – Q1 2021

Building on the content of the last update, there is a meeting this week between the CCG, a group of GP representatives from each ICP area and the LMC to work through the principles and terms of the support with the aim of creating a useable framework to describe the detail of the process for doing this.

We will update on progress in coming Updates.

£1 Practice COVID-19 support funding

Thank you to all of the many practices who have submitted their templates that set out COVID-19 related cost incurred within primary care.

As of Monday 1 June, we have received 157 out of 205 templates - some 77% of practices. This material provides the CCG with two key things.

Firstly of course, it provides valuable insights into the financial implications of COVID-19 across our practices. When we have received the totality of returns from practices, we will be able to provide a categorised analysis for inclusions in the Primary Care bulletin.

Secondly, the receipt of this data from practices will support a claim for reimbursement of funds from national COVID-19 resources. NHSE has made it clear that CCGs need to maintain a clear audit trail to support such requests, and the data that practices have submitted provide a good basis to do so.

At this stage, practices who have submitted returns so far have identified cost of £912,458 out of the total sum provided to them in March of £1.536m. The total payment to ALL Kent & Medway practices was £1.9m, so at this stage, we do not have sufficient data to back up a claim to recover the entirety of funds deployed by the CCG for this purpose.

We will be in contact with those practices who have yet to respond with a view to ensuring we can clearly articulate costs that practices have incurred as part of the primary care COVID response.

In terms of returns for both outstanding April and May COVID costs, could all practices send in the details by 10th June to Martin Kayes martin.kayes@nhs.net

Workforce

Free NHS Staff Car Parking – Local Authority Car Parks

On 25 March the Local Government Secretary announced that local councils will offer free on-street and off-street car parking in local authority car parks to all NHS staff members, health or social care workers, and NHS Volunteer Responders during the COVID-19 emergency response.

The attached pass can be used as evidence that a motorist is on official duty, giving them access to free council car parking as outlined in [the accompanying guidance](#) on how and where to park when using the concession. Please note, this does not apply to privately owned car parks. Please make sure all users of passes read the accompanying guidance.

Organisations will be responsible for how the pass and guidance are distributed. We advise that you keep a record, if possible, of the Vehicle Registration Numbers of workers using the concession in case of allegations of fraud or misuse.

Attached is a digital copy of the pass which allows a user to fill in the fields with a computer before printing.

Communications

Opportunity for PPG members to meet the Clinical Commissioning Group

On Wednesday 3 June at 2pm Wilf Williams, Accountable Officer Kent and Medway CCG and Cathy Finnis, Lay member for Patient and Public Engagement, Kent and Medway CCG, will host the first of a series of interactive online public meetings. This has been publicised widely so the public can have the opportunity to meet Wilf and Cathy and hear how they can get involved/give their views about the services the CCG commissions.

You may wish to check if your PPG chair is already aware – to join the meeting they should click [here](#). The meeting is hosted through Teams Live and some devices will require people to download Microsoft Teams. If they have any questions they should email: kmccg.engagekm@nhs.net.

Updated materials for NHS facilities including hospitals, GP practices, pharmacies and other NHS settings are available to download.

These new assets carry the updated 'Stay Alert' message and symptoms. Posters include: Do not enter this building if you have symptoms of coronavirus; ways to access GP practice (for things other than coronavirus); pharmacy opening hours; keeping a safe 2m distance. Posters are in various formats including versions optimised for on-site printing. Additionally, social media assets for pharmacies promoting access to services and ways to order medicines are also available. The items can be downloaded via the [Campaign Resource Centre](#).