



**Important information for GP practices across Kent and Medway**  
**Thursday 10 September 2020**

## **Clinical advice and support**

### **Primary care coronavirus testing update**

The NHS test and trace team have made us aware of some disruption to Covid-19 testing capacity across England. While coronavirus tests are still available in Kent and Medway through the national programme, the number available has been reduced to allow the government to maximise testing resources available to tackle the areas currently more seriously affected by Covid-19 in the north of England.

To minimise the potential negative effects of these changes locally, we have opened up our hospital-based testing to symptomatic patient-facing NHS staff - including those in primary care - and a range of other key workers. This is being done on a temporary basis until we are able to pass this testing work back to the national portal once the current pressures have eased.

The details of how to access this, as well as suggested advice for patients, are detailed below. We will continue to keep you updated as the situation changes.

[Testing for primary care staff](#)

Patient-facing staff who are showing symptoms of a potential Covid-19 infection, or who are self-isolating due to a household member showing symptoms, can book an online test at a local hospital.

Your staff member (or the member of their household) should use the following links to book their test. They should use the link that relates to the area which they wish to be tested in, rather than necessarily where they live.

<https://itx.ekhuft.nhs.uk/swab/home> - East Kent

<https://medway.healthit.org.uk/home> - North Kent and Medway

<https://mtw.healthit.org.uk/home> - West Kent

Non-patient-facing staff should continue to use the national testing programme. Please note that these tests are for symptomatic staff (and household members) only. They should not be used for asymptomatic testing.

#### Testing for primary care patients

**These additional hospital-based appointments are not available for the general public;** primary care patients who need a Covid-19 test should not be directed to hospital for their tests.

Primary care patients who need testing should continue to be referred to the national testing portal. Testing slots for local centres are released onto the portal a number of times per day; if no test is immediately available locally, patients should be encouraged to check again on the portal later in the day and/or over the following days. Postal tests remain available, and can be obtained through the national portal.

Patients should also be reminded of the need to follow government guidance on self-isolation if they or one of their household is exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms, and to remain self-isolated until they obtain their test result. Should they be unable to get a test within five days of their symptoms starting, they should remain self-isolated for at least 10 days.

Patients who are attending hospital for inpatient care or day case surgery will

continue to be routinely tested for Covid-19 by the hospital providing their care.

---

## **Zoning guidance declaration reminder**

As previously communicated in the 6 August GP Update, the CCG [zoning guidance](#) has been refreshed to support you in your own assessment of your facilities to make sure you can care for patients in an environment which is safe and meets the Care Quality Commission's standards of expectations. The aim of this guidance is to make sure the facilities meet minimum requirements so that the safety of patients and staff are maintained, and facilities can be zoned so that patients with symptoms of Covid-19 can be consulted to minimize the risk of the spread of infection.

The CCG has only received a few declarations to date but the local and primary care transformation teams will be sharing assessments that were completed earlier with the infection prevention and control team and highlighting to practices any changes in the initial guidance. This is only for the CCG's information. If you have any questions please use the same email which is the generic email for the infection prevention and control team.

This assessment may be required as evidence to CQC for Revised Statement of Purpose so can practices please complete and return declarations of compliance to [kmccg.kmipc@nhs.net](mailto:kmccg.kmipc@nhs.net).

---

## **Immunisation and vaccination e-learning**

To support staff who are unable to get to face-to-face training, Skills for Health and Charles Bloe have partnered to develop this immunisation and vaccination e-learning and supporting webinar bundle.

Learners will get access to the Skills for Health Immunisation and Vaccination refresher course, and a supporting webinar delivered by Charles Bloe Training via Zoom this month. More [information and details on registering](#) are online.

---

## Primary Care Network early diagnosis DES webinars

There are essentially three elements to the Primary Care Network Early Diagnosis Directed Enhanced Services (DES) and in order to support our PCN colleagues, the Cancer Alliance is organising three webinars, each focused on a separate element. These webinars will take place towards the end of September, with each lasting about an hour. They will be fairly interactive, with about 25 minutes allocated to Q&A. Wed 23 Sept (7pm-8pm): Improving Referral Practice - Wed 30 Sept (7pm-8pm): Screening - Wed 7 October (1pm-2pm): System Partners and Community learning. All webinars will be held via MS Teams and will be recorded. The recordings will be made available to delegates and other NHS colleagues who were not able to join at the time. More [details online](#).

---

## Webinar: personalised care

NHS England and Improvement is hosting a webinar on 23 September to help understand what personalised care and personal health budgets can offer to people who intensively make use of health services. This webinar is intended for commissioners, designated personalised care and personal health budget leads, as well as managers and practitioners based in London and the South East of England. [More details online](#).

## Flu

### Flu DES

A new DES has been published on the NHS England website for flu and pneumonia. It can be [downloaded here](#).

# Local area updates

## East Kent

### Ear syringing/irrigation

Ear irrigation/syringing is not recognised by NHSE or ENT UK as an aerosol generating procedure (AGP) and is therefore safe to carry out in primary care, unless contraindicated, based on NICE guidance and clinical decision; and as required by the Primary Care Quality Standard (PCQS).

EKHUFT has seen a significant increase in referrals for patients for ear irrigation/syringing that is impacting significantly on capacity. There are currently very long waits for any ENT intervention. The waiting time for a patient to have a simple ear procedures is beyond six months so unless contraindicated this procedure should be carried out in the GP surgery by trained staff.

A referral will only be accepted by an acute or community provider if ear irrigation/syringing has been unsuccessful when carried out in general practice, following the NICE guidance.

NICE guidance:

- use pre-treatment wax softeners, either immediately before ear irrigation or for up to five days beforehand.
- if irrigation is unsuccessful:
  - repeat use of wax softeners, or
  - instil water into the ear canal 15 minutes before repeating ear irrigation.

If irrigation is unsuccessful after the second attempt, refer the person to a specialist ear care service or an ear, nose and throat service for removal of earwax.

## **New Suspected Cancer Pathway in east Kent – Lymphadenopathy Service**

As of 1 September, a new pathway is live for referral of patients with lymphadenopathy at East Kent Hospitals.

This pathway has been designed for those patients aged 18 and over with lymphadenopathy below the clavicle. Please follow the flow chart on the front page of the referral form to ensure that patients are referred using the most appropriate pathway.

Referrals must be submitted using ERS: Specialty = 2ww, Clinic Type = 2ww Haematology

The service is listed as “RAS 2WW Lymphadenopathy (KCH Canterbury)”

The associated referral form (attached in [PDF](#) template form and available as an EMIS template) must be completed and attached to each referral.

An EMIS template will be circulated to practices. Please download the EMIS template to your system to integrate with your EMIS.

Please take the time to read the form to understand the referral protocols and guidance.

Where the referral protocol advises contacting the oncologist/team rather than submitting a new referral, GPs will have to send a letter/email to the consultant's secretary or telephone to get advice and support or an alternative would be to liaise with patient's CNS. A [patient information leaflet](#) is also available.

## **West Kent**

### **West Kent MSK**

Please see this [information sheet](#) about the West Kent MSK physiotherapy service.

.....

Please share this update with colleagues who are [welcome to subscribe](#) to the mailing list.

Previous issues of the GP Practice Update [are available online](#).

If you have any feedback or ideas to make the updates more useful to you [please email](#).



[Facebook](#)



[Twitter](#)



[Website](#)



[Email](#)

## Useful links

- [Offers for NHS staff](#)
- [NHS England primary care bulletin](#)
- [Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation Newsletters](#)

Produced by the communications team, NHS Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group