

Primary Care Commissioning Committee

Questions received from the public with responses from the CCG

MEETING DATE: 16/04/2020

Question #1 from a member of the public in Lewisham

In relation to the Paper 2a Terms of Reference
Page 5 refers to the duty to reduce inequalities.

Can the committee indicate if steps are being taken to support Primary Care take action to mitigate the impact of inequalities in the current Covid 19 situation?

It is clear that there are different outcomes due to health inequalities.
Prof Ward and colleagues have shown that people in lowest income households are 6 times less likely to be able to work from home, and 3 times less likely to self isolate, as are BME groups.
We know that the uptake of digital services is less in areas of health inequality.
Is the CCG able to support Primary care to take action to mitigate this?

Response #1 From south east London CCG

The challenges being faced by those in the lowest income households during the current Covid-19 pandemic are well documented and the CCG has been working with GP practice teams across south east London to help maintain their access to NHS services.

Nationally campaigns are getting underway encouraging people to access services, such as the new [Health at Home initiative](#) from NHS England/Improvement. Locally the CCG is working with its council colleagues to remind residents that NHS services, especially those provided by GP practices, continue to be available, either by phone or online.

A key focus for the CCG during this period has been to support staff in GP practices to continue to be able to respond to the needs of their patients, even when they are working remotely. This includes new telephony solutions and the ability to access practices' IT services remotely and securely, thus ensuring that patients calling GP practices get answered. In addition, this technology also allows clinical staff to call these patients back, where that is the right course of action to follow.

To put this work in to context, 201 practices in south east London have now registered for the remote telephony solution, with over 5,000 licenses requested. Laptops have been issued to GP practices across the six boroughs, with most recently 350

being made ready for use by staff working remotely in Bexley, Greenwich and Lambeth. And in the last three weeks, staff in south east London have been issued with nearly 3,600 remote access tokens to allow them to access the secure IT systems they use normally.

Whilst from a patient perspective we are rolling out both online consultation and video consultation solutions so that practice staff can interact with patients digitally, the main default method of contacting patients across south east London remains as phone calls. This means that those who are not as familiar with, or do have access to, such digital services will not be disadvantaged.

One example of the CCG's approach to supporting people is the proactive care response, which seeks to optimise and support people's health needs as well as identify and respond to any unmet social needs (including carers' needs). This includes the ability to signpost people to community support and/or refer to a primary care network (PCN) social prescribing link worker, as well as to their local authority community hub where they would benefit from further support.

The CCG is also working closely with its local authority and voluntary care sector partners to ensure that the risk of people 'falling through gaps' between health and care is minimised, especially with respect to those seen as vulnerable and at risk. Access to services like interpreters is still available, which can be supported through both telephone and online consultations.