

Briefing to GPs re: outpatient letters backlog

Supplied by Communications Department
Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust 11.11.20

28 October 2020

1. Background

This is an update to GPs in south east London about Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust's (LGT) action plan re: the backlog of outpatient clinic letters between 1 May and 15 September 2020. All these letters have now been delivered to GP practices by the Trust as of 20 October.

2. Dedicated GP enquiry line

Please contact the Trust's dedicated GP enquiry line or dedicated email address:

- If you have any general queries relating to the process, or a clinical concern regarding harm – this is to ensure that we have a record that can be audited
- If you want more detailed information relating to the backlog of patients to help your review

The contact details for the dedicated enquiry line and email address are:

- Call **020 8333 3332** - open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.
- Email lg.letters@nhs.net – for non-urgent queries and queries outside normal office hours.

All responses to GPs through the dedicated helpline and email address are monitored by LGT's Deputy Medical Director.

3. Dealing with complaints and correspondence

If patients raise concerns/complaints with your practice as a result of delayed treatment, please acknowledge their correspondence and direct them towards LGT's Patient, Advice and Liaison (PALS) service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital through tel: 020 8836 4592; email: pals.qeht@nhs.net.

LGT's PALS team will then manage the communications with the patient directly.

When filing letters into the patient record, where a concern has been identified, it is good practice to make a note on the patient record at the date of filing, that the letter was delayed due to the IT error at LGT.

4. Oversight group and harms review

SEL Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the Londonwide Local Medical Council and LGT have set up an oversight group to deal with this issue, chaired by the CCG's Chief Nurse. The group has been meeting weekly to ensure regular communication between the organisations on the processes that have been adopted to ensure they are robust and address concerns from all stakeholders. These meetings cover:

- IT - including LGT plans in addressing and future-proofing IT systems
- Update on LGT's review of letters and actions taken
- Update on the harms review being undertaken by LGT
- Agreeing regular communication across organisations

LGT's review of whether any of the patients have experienced some degree of harm a result of this as backlog is being carried out by over 30 consultants in the Trust, and overseen by LGT's Medical Director and Deputy Medical Director.

The harms review and oversight group are supported by Dr Angela Lennox, Deputy Medical Director for NHSE/I. Dr Lennox has been a GP for the past 35 years and has a wide range of experience in supporting and managing serious incident investigations and clinical harm reviews across primary, secondary and tertiary care settings.

LGT will be contacting patients and their GP practices individually, as part of the Trust's duty of candour, if harm has occurred.