



Issue 63/Thursday, 7 January 2021

This is the latest round-up of information for GP practices, produced by South East London CCG. Should you have any questions or need advice, contact your local borough primary care team in the first instance; they will escalate anything they can't resolve to south east London's Coronavirus co-ordination centre

Please check for any borough-specific information, which will be attached to this bulletin by your borough primary care commissioning team.

Information from acute providers

Temporary changes to services at our acute hospitals

With the rapid rise in Covid-19 cases we have seen a massive increase in demand in our acute hospitals, where bed occupancy from patients with the virus is significantly higher than during the first wave.

This has meant our acute hospitals have been forced to think very carefully about what activity they need to temporarily step down, to ensure they are able to provide urgent care and care for the high numbers of Covid-19 patients. Much of their activity which is not deemed essential or clinically urgent (e.g. planned care such as routine operations) is currently postponed.

The three documents below outline changes to referrals. These have been reviewed and updated for all of our acute hospitals. The latest updates and key messages to practices are in red:

[NEW GSTT Acute \(updated 6 Jan 2021\)](#)

[NEW King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust \(updated 6 Jan 2021\)](#)

[NEW Lewisham and Greenwich Trust \(updated 6 Jan 2021\)](#)

NB The situation is being reviewed daily, with the aim of restarting activities currently stood down as soon as possible.

Covid-19 updates

Home Medicines Service update

Please find a link to the [5 January letter](#) from NHS England with vital new information about the Home Medicines Delivery Service in the context of latest national lockdown.

Funding for vaccination site security

New advice (31 December) from NHS England on [funding for vaccination site](#) security.

Long Covid 2021 update

A south east London working group, consisting of GPs, acute physicians and allied health professionals, is developing a pathway for long Covid. Community and secondary care clinics plan to launch it in the coming weeks, recognising the current pressures on primary care and how these could impact on mobilising a new service.

Further information will be sent to practices in due course.

In the meantime practices should keep patients under review in the community.

The following resource may also be useful to review and share with patients:

www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk

GP updates and reminders

IT, GPs and remote working

During this current lockdown many of you may be working away from your office or surgery.

In April, during the first national lockdown, South East London CCG issued practices a number of laptops to help support such remote working.

However, IT has mentioned that some of you have been unable to login to your laptops *'due to out of date patches, updates, encryption, forgotten VPN details, etc'*

To help, IT has asked us to remind everyone that all laptops should be turned on and logged in at least once a week, ideally within the practice to help ensure they continue to work when taken home.

GP updates and reminders

Advocacy and decision-making with vulnerable patients

Our Clinical Chair, Dr Jonty Heaversedge, has suggested we share this [leaflet](#) produced during the first wave of the pandemic to help promote and support good decision-making when caring for vulnerable patients during this current Covid wave.

New online counselling service from Kooth

South East London CCG and Integrated Care System has just commissioned [Qwell](#), a free, anonymous online counselling and emotional wellbeing service for adults from digital mental health pioneers [Kooth](#)

The site is accredited by the [British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy](#) (BACP) and offers early preventative care and support without any prior thresholds to meet. Adults aged 26 years of age can receive counselling sessions from qualified counsellors via an online chat-based platform.

Chats can either be accessed through a drop-in service, or pre-booked sessions from any connected device.

The site is open 24 hours a day; one-to-one counselling sessions with a qualified counsellor are available from 12-noon until 10pm on weekdays, and from 6pm until 10pm on weekends.

To learn more about the newly launched Qwell contract in your area you can attend a [webinar via this link](#)

Standing down governance

Due to the increasing pressures on the health system during this current wave of the pandemic, we're taking action to ensure resources are focussed in the right areas to ensure we have the capacity to deliver safe and effective clinical services to our residents.

Therefore the CCG senior team has made the decision to implement the following measures relating to CCG governance:

All of the CCGs prime committees and sub-committees will continue to be stood down.

- In addition to the committees and sub-committees originally stood down in October, the equalities committee and Borough Based Boards will be stood down with immediate effect.
- The CCGs Governing Body and Primary Care Commissioning Committee will continue to meet in public, as planned, in January 2021, but the agenda items for these meetings will be limited to urgent decisions only. The safeguarding committee and Engagement Assurance Committee also met this week as planned.

The Gold group will be reviewing these decisions on a weekly basis. Where urgent decisions are required - that would normally be made by a committee that has been stood down - colleagues should seek advice on options from the CCG governance team.

Virtual seminars and conferences

NEL IPC seminars

Please find attached a [link](#) to upcoming webinars from the NEL IPC team that provide advice, training and support on infection prevention and control to all staff working in GP surgeries and healthcare centres.

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

A [link](#) to a table of their forthcoming webinars for January 2021 which also has a YouTube page where you can catch up on previous South East Cancer Alliance webinars.

Cancer updates

South East London Cancer Alliance

[Cancer updates for GPs - \(21 December 2020\)](#)

FIT results

Across south east London we've noticed a worsening in the proportion of suspected LGI cancer referrals coming through with a FIT result, which is a critical part of the referral for the triage processes in place.

Having the FIT is extremely important to help ensure patients are referred to the most appropriate test as quickly as possible, as well as helping prioritise by clinical urgency.

In light of this, the South East London Cancer Alliance and borough cancer leads have developed [a one-page PDF](#) covering this for GPs and primary care colleagues.

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