

**COVID-19 – GP update**  
**Monday 16 March 2020**

To assist GP practices during the fast developments surrounding COVID-19, the CCG will look to issue regular updates which will summarise the key information that practice staff need to be aware of.

We want to assure practices that we are working to ensure that we provide a cohesive integrated response to this crisis, which will bring together primary care and community services, such as care homes, providers such as Virgin Care and the community, voluntary and faith sector.

In addition, we are in the process of setting up a daily Practice Managers call, which will take place every day at 10am. The CCG will circulate details to Practice Managers shortly.

**Latest national update**

- The UK Government is working closely with the Devolved Administrations, the World Health Organisation, and our international partners to keep the whole of the UK safe. The UK's approach is clinically led, based on the expert advice of the UK's Chief Medical Officer for England, the NHS and Public Health England.
- The latest NHS guidance for patients who think that they may have COVID-19 is:
  1. A new continuous cough
  2. And/or a fever
- For most people, COVID-19 will be a mild infection. Public are advised if they have symptoms of COVID-19, however mild, stay at home and do not leave their house for 7 days from when their symptoms started. This action is aimed to help protect others in the community whilst they are infectious.
- This Government is taking a **phased approach** to tackling the virus: to 'contain, delay, mitigate, and research'. This approach is the result of direct and continuous consultation with the Chief Medical Officer for England.
- We are now in the **delay** phase of our plan (our research and work to mitigate its impact is continuous). This is now not just an attempt to contain the disease, as far as possible, but to delay its spread.
- If we delay the peak even by a few weeks, then our NHS will be in a stronger state and we have more time for medical research. We can also act to stretch the peak of the disease over a longer period, so that our society is better able to cope.
- Our world-class **NHS** is at the front line of the UK's response to COVID-19. As the CMO has said, the NHS is will be coming under increased pressure from the virus. In line with what this Government has always said it will do, we are making sure the NHS is getting all the support it needs to continue its swift response.
- The **public** has a crucial role to play in containing the spread of the virus. Washing your hands more often. For 20 seconds. Use soap and water or a hand sanitiser

when you: get home or into work, blow your nose, sneeze or cough, eat or handle food. Protect yourself and others.

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**Primary care updated info** – Below is the latest **website, telephone, online booking** and **SMS** messaging that practices are authorised to use.

As COVID-19 has been identified as global pandemic, NHS England have established command and control to manage all communications that are issued, including social media.

What this means is that all NHS organisations including CCG's and GP practices are only to issue and use signed off/pre-agreed messaging and tools as created and signed off by NHS England.

With this in mind can we ask that practices do not issue messages that go off national guidance on any of your channels (website, social media, SMS etc...) if you have any queries regarding this, please contact the CCG's comms and engagement team – [wlcg.myview@nhs.net](mailto:wlcg.myview@nhs.net) / T: 01695 588 203

#### **Updated web text for healthcare settings:**

Important information about the coronavirus (COVID-19)

The NHS in **xxx** and Public Health England (PHE) are well prepared for outbreaks of new infectious diseases. The NHS has put in place measures to ensure the safety of all patients and NHS staff while also ensuring services are available to the public as normal.

The Chief Medical Officer has announced that the country is moving into the 'Delay' stage of the response to coronavirus from Friday, 13th March 2020.

The new advice issued by the Chief Medical Officer is as follows:

Stay at home for 7 days if you have either:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough

Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

You do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home.

Use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service if:

- you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home
- your condition gets worse
- your symptoms do not get better after 7 days

Only call 111 if you cannot get help online.

Stay At Home advice can be found [here](#)

Everyone is being reminded to follow Public Health England advice to:

- Always carry tissues with you and use them to catch your cough or sneeze. Then bin the tissue, and wash your hands, or use a sanitiser gel.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after using public transport. Use a sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell.

More information can be found on the NHS website [here](#)

### **Telephone message**

Please do not book a GP appointment or attend your GP Practice if you have symptoms associated with coronavirus including a new continuous cough and a high temperature. You are advised to stay at home for 7 days.

If your symptoms are serious, or get worse, NHS 111 has an online coronavirus service that can tell you if you need further medical help and advise you what to do.

Only call 111 direct if you cannot go online or are advised to do so by the online service.

For the latest Covid-19 advice please visit [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus).

### **Online booking**

If you have symptoms associated with coronavirus including a new continuous cough and a high temperature, you are advised to stay at home for 7 days. Do not book a GP appointment or attend your GP Practice.

If your symptoms are serious, or get worse, NHS 111 has an online coronavirus service that can tell you if you need further medical help and advise you what to do.

Only call 111 direct if you cannot go online or are advised to do so by the online service.

For the latest Covid-19 advice please visit [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus).

### **SMS**

For the latest Covid-19 advice please visit [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus).

Coronavirus advice: if you have a new continuous cough and/or a high temperature, please stay at home for 7 days. Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. If your symptoms are serious, or get worse, visit the NHS111 online service.

### **Posters**

The attached updated poster which focusses around clean hand hygiene is being circulated through the internal mail today and will be with practices tomorrow. We are providing two posters per practice. Can these please be displayed prominently in your waiting areas/entrance.

There will also be further updated materials that will be released over the coming days and weeks, which we will circulate as they become available.

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## Cleaning

- Practices are responsible for arranging if their premises need to be cleaned and there is specific guidance on how this needs to be completed.
  - If a practice is a customer of NHS Property Services, they should have received a communication and can log a cleaning request with the helpdesk.
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**New guidance regarding online appointments** - NHS England has published new guidance regarding GP practice requests to suspend online booking of appointments. **A national suspension of online booking is not in place.**

- Read the guidance in full at: [https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/Commissioner-guidance-local-requests-to-suspend-online-booking\\_050320.pdf](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/Commissioner-guidance-local-requests-to-suspend-online-booking_050320.pdf)
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**Death certification** - Prior to more detailed guidance being released for the death certification process in an emergency scenario, please follow these recommendations:

- Covid-19 is an acceptable direct or underlying cause of death for the purposes of completing the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death.
  - Covid-19 is not a reason on its own to refer a death to a coroner under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.
  - Covid-19 is a notifiable disease under the Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010; however this does not mean referral to a coroner is required by virtue of its notifiable status.
  - Where next of kin/informant are following self-isolation procedures, please arrange for an alternative informant who has not been in contact with the patient to collect the Medical Certificate Cause of Death and deliver to the registrar for registration purposes.
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## Guidance for Infection and pregnancy

- The Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists have released COVID-19 guidance for ***infection and pregnancy***, which is [available here](#).
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## Media enquiries

- Communications and media enquiries will be managed centrally. If you receive any media enquiries please redirect these to the CCG communications and engagement team at [wlccg.myview@nhs.net](mailto:wlccg.myview@nhs.net) or telephone 01695 588 203. This number will be manned between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. For queries outside these times, please see 'Contact out of hours' above.
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### Local and Mayoral Elections

- The government has announced that May's local and mayoral elections in England will be postponed for a year due to the coronavirus outbreak. Full details are available on the [BBC News website](#).
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### Events

- The Diabetes UK 2020 Conference, which was due to take place from Wednesday 18 March 2020 has now been cancelled as a precaution. Full details are [available here](#).
  - The [Hate Crime Conference](#) which was due to take place on Wednesday 25 March 2020 has now been postponed as a precautionary measure.
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### Useful links and guidance

- The NHS England website has a repository of all published information at: [www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/epr/coronavirus](http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/epr/coronavirus)
  - The second in a series of regular updates to general practice from Dr Nikita Kanani, medical director for primary care, and Ed Waller, director of primary care strategy and NHS contracts at NHS England, was sent on 11 March 2020 and is [available here](#).
  - Updates will be posted onto the CCG's website. This dedicated page on our website not only provides the latest information but also links to all resources available, including the three posters that posters have been asked to display within their practices: <https://www.westlancashireccg.nhs.uk/coronavirus/>
  - We continue to share and retweet posts by NHS England and Public Health England. Can all practices ensure that if you have social media accounts that you follow the CCG's channels – Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WestLancsCCG> and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NHSWestLancsCCG/>
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