

# Covid-19 Newsletter

## Issue. 46

11 June 2020

Welcome to the latest edition of the Covid-19 newsletter. We will be issuing this newsletter to general practice on a regular basis to give you the latest updates and guidance. This is in place of the Weekly Inbox, publication of which has been suspended.

**Previous issues** – with attachments and [other useful links and resources](#) can be found [here](#). Clicking this link will not just give you access to archived newsletters but enable to access all the past resources and separate attachments plus a wealth of other resources that may not be in the newsletters. So please give it a go!

<p><b>Front line staff antibody testing</b></p>	<p>Practices have a number of options to enable their staff to be tested, either they do it themselves or they can utilise a service being put in place for the benefit of local practices and their staff. Practices can mix and match the two approaches. It is important to underline that testing is voluntary.</p> <p>The Suffolk GP Federation are asking for your help to ask the staff in your practice who undertake phlebotomy if they would like to undertake some additional shifts in the GP Federation service.</p> <p>Suffolk GP Federation plan to offer bookable appointments for GP practice, Hospice &amp; Pharmacy staff who want the COVID antibody test from 27 June to 10 July.</p> <p>These will be scheduled on weekdays in the evenings (6.30pm – 9.00pm) and at weekends (9am – 9pm) at the GP+ sites in Suffolk.</p> <p>To do that they need to recruit people to take the bloods i.e. Phlebotomists, HCAs and Practice/Community Nurses and they will be fast track onboarded to the Fed and paid x 1.25 of their usual hourly rate.</p> <p>Weekday evenings are a 2.5 hour shift, at weekends the shifts are 4 hours long but can be worked back to back to make 8 or 12 hour shifts if preferred.</p> <p>If you are interested in working please can you contact <a href="mailto:julie.smith@suffolkfed.org.uk">julie.smith@suffolkfed.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Covid Antibody Testing - patients</b></p>	<p>Practices have asked for some guidance about what they should say to patients seeking an antibody test. Please see the text below, which you can use to guide your care navigators or receptionists.</p> <p>The Government recently announced the introduction of a test to detect the presence of the Covid 19 antibody. It is not fully understood what a positive antibody test means in terms of immunity and future risk from COVID-19. At the moment, tests are only available for the purpose of increasing understanding of who has (or has not) had an immune response. There is little clinical benefit in knowing this information as the evidence so far does not show that having had the virus once provides immunity to prevent a patient getting the virus a second time. Hence it is extremely important that we all continue with the current approach of social distancing, hand washing, infection control procedures and so on. The test may be offered, if deemed appropriate, to those patients who are having a blood test for another clinical reason.</p> <p>The antibody test is not currently being offered to the general population. Some patients have said that their employer has asked for the test to be undertaken before they return to work. This is not in line with current government guidance.</p>

<p><b>Medicines Shortages</b></p>	<p>The medicines supply system has seen an unprecedented amount of shortages over the last few years. This has understandably lead to a growing concern across the health economy with a number of drug shortages and difficulty in obtaining medicines which are critical and in some cases difficult to switch.</p> <p>As a result, patients who require these medicines to ensure that they remain otherwise healthy, are faced with the prospect to contact multiple pharmacies to try and get access to their medicines. In some cases they are forced to return to the prescriber.</p> <p>We have been notified of cases of patient being asked to contact their specialist in secondary care in order to switch to an alternative medication or obtain stock. It is imperative that this process is reviewed as the patient should not be left to manage medicines stock shortages by themselves. Their clinical care is still the responsibility of the healthcare professional such as the GP and their community pharmacist. In addition to this, it would be difficult for the specialist team to source the medicines themselves and it has been noted that in most cases when this is raised with the hospital teams, the medication is needed urgently (i.e. the same day).</p> <p>Therefore, it is essential that the conversation between the community pharmacy and GP surgery supports the patient obtaining their medicines in a timely manner. Where this does need to be discussed with the specialist, it is advised that the GP surgery contact the CCG Medicines Management Team for support. We will be working towards developing some information to help with this process.</p>
<p><b>ME/CFS Referrals</b></p>	<p>East Coast Community Healthcare's ME/CFS service is fully operational and has continued to take referrals throughout the coronavirus pandemic. All consultations are being carried out by telephone with home visits for essential support only. We have also launched a new website with comprehensive advice and self-management suggestions:  <a href="https://me.ecch.org/">https://me.ecch.org/</a></p> <p>Please continue to refer patients into the service by calling via East Coast Community Access on 01493 809977</p>
<p><b>Interim Report of The Hub, from St Elizabeth Hospice</b></p>	<p>Since the beginning of April, St Elizabeth Hospice has been working in partnership with the CCG, GPs, district nurses and other health partners to co-ordinate end of life care in the community via <a href="#">The Hub</a>.</p> <p>An Interim Report has been produced to provide a summary of delivery and impact during April and May, with a <a href="#">summary infographic</a>.</p> <p><b>The Hub remains open to support end of life care and logistics throughout Ipswich and East Suffolk via our OneCall phone line: 0800 567 0111.</b></p> <p>If you would like a copy of the full Interim Report, please email <a href="mailto:Katrina.robertson@stelizabethhospice.org.uk">Katrina.robertson@stelizabethhospice.org.uk</a>.</p> <p><a href="#">St Elizabeth Hospice 2020 Pandemic Response</a></p>
<p><b>EAU video consultations with care homes following GP referral</b></p>	<p>EAU are now able to offer video consultations with care homes following a GP referral. This is being offered to enhance the process that is currently in place for GP referrals to EAU and to help facilitate admission avoidance for care home residents during the Covid-19 pandemic. If a video consultation between EAU and the care home is clinically appropriate, the care home will be able to access the virtual EAU clinic using a weblink to the Attend Anywhere platform. The weblink will be provided to the care home by EAU.</p> <p>Should you have any queries regarding this, please contact <a href="mailto:Caroline.Wells@suffolk.nhs.uk">Caroline.Wells@suffolk.nhs.uk</a>.</p>
<p><b>Wellbeing</b></p>	<p>Please see <i>attached</i> an update for GP practices from <b>Wellbeing Suffolk</b>.</p> <p><a href="#">Wellbeing Suffolk Update</a></p>

<b>Heatwave planning</b>	Please see <i>attached</i> the Public Health England/NHSE heatwave plan and preparedness slide deck, which have both been updated in light of the coronavirus pandemic.  <a href="#">PHE Heatwave And Summer Preparedness 2020 COVID19 slide deck</a> <a href="#">Heatwave plan for England 2020</a>
<b>RCGP support for Late Career and returning GPs</b>	The East Anglia RCGP Faculty is holding a webinar <b>tomorrow at 1pm</b> for late career and returning members (LCARMs). The webinar aims to support those GPs at the end of their careers plus those who have returned to practice to assist with the COVID-19 pandemic response or are planning to do so in the future. The event is now live on the <a href="#">RCGP website</a> .
<b>CCG stakeholder update</b>	Please see <i>attached</i> the latest stakeholders update from Dr Ed Garratt, Chief Executive of the NHS Ipswich & East Suffolk, NHS West Suffolk and NHS North East Essex CCGs and Executive Lead for the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care System.  <a href="#">Ed Garratt Update 10 June</a>

If have any questions or important information to share in the next edition, please contact [Caroline Procter](#).

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