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**COVID-19 update**

**19 March 2020**

**In this edition**

Next steps on the general practice response to COVID-19

Public Health England – the latest guidance

COVID-19 and children

Community Pharmacies, Electronic Repeat Dispensing and Quantities on Prescription

Informing us of any changes

Diabetes Nurse / Consultant telephone support during weekends

Useful resources

**Next steps on the general practice response to COVID-19**

The third in a series of regular updates to general practice regarding the emerging COVID-19 situation is attached. An electronic copy of this letter, and all other relevant guidance from NHS England and NHS Improvement can be found at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/primary-care/>

**Public Health England – the latest guidance**

PHE has updated its primary care guidance – this is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wn-cov-guidance-for-primary-care/wn-cov-interim-guidance-for-primary-care>

**COVID-19 and children**

We need to ensure that children with serious bacterial illness are not missed if parents keep them home in isolation. **At this point** in time parents who are worried about their feverish child, the likelihood still is that they do **not** have COVID 19. Many of  them will have ear infections, tonsillitis and all the usual childhood ailments that GPs are so good at diagnosing and managing, reassuring  parents, and treating with antibiotics where needed.

All the data  from Italy and China suggests that children are not getting ill with COVID . Therefore for worried parents it is far more likely their child has a non COVID illness.

At this point  children with flu like symptoms or a fever (if their parents  call and are worried and call) should be clinically assessed and managed in  primary care.  A stepped approach in primary care which applies to both children and adults could be adopted:

* Direct parents to NHS111 online initially for advice
* If they need to get GP advice, stepped process of
	+ - screening triage for suspected symptoms
		- telephone or online consult (most illnesses can be dealt with over the phone);
		- video consult (if available)
		- face to face (with appropriate PPE as required)

Only the seriously unwell child should go up to hospital for paediatric assessment. Bear in mind hospital likely to be far more risky place to send a child who may just have an URTI and not COVID19, and we risk overwhelming acute services that are trying to deal with far sicker patients.

**Community Pharmacies, Electronic Repeat Dispensing and Quantities on Prescription**

We have been informed that Community Pharmacies are having to close to allow them to keep up with the unprecedented demand for medicines at this time. Patients are ordering their medicines ahead of the due date, are ordering medicines they haven’t had for some time ‘just in case’ and are attempting to stockpile medicines. We are asking all GP Practices to

Please DO NOT issue repeats ahead of the due date

Please DO NOT increase the quantities on prescriptions, i.e. the duration of supply.

Patients should not stockpile medicines.

Please DO change appropriate patients to electronic repeat dispensing, when you are issuing their repeats.

There is currently enough medicines in the supply chain if everyone orders their usual quantities and duration. We are starting to see stock shortages because demand is increasing, patients are panic ordering.

Community Pharmacies are currently swamped with demand for repeat prescriptions and over the counter medicines. Please DO NOT send any patients to the Community Pharmacy for any other non-essential services, we need Community Pharmacies to stay open and keep the medicines supply maintained.

We urge prescribers to mobilise eRD for suitable patients. Increasing the Rx period could exacerbate shortages.

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|   [**Guidance page from NHS Digital**](http://2gaur.r.ag.d.sendibm3.com/mk/cl/f/L5jabnRMobWnNdsMb7PgmSJOk2BE3q0j__HzL6Ps2jokeHZzCkRkSg3JcOouy_SAcDjdbdwh0FoVcnD5e7qbPXbdP15EMY2gEDKfh0D4IKX12lR9jojTibxVdznASDQxpgBXzuvbMjCwnRYwVO9qGvKo_V541wRHJY0J_-Ny9j-a2L-7dwsdV2G-tNTnHyb2R-OR23c62i4IYPsBmPFQRhm_PprdaoKaKbwpsCnMVV2CxBaAyMuewx7vK1pin88C_6tUEX2vnaMPgteb5babOFZW8Q) [**Short video explainer from@NHSDigital**](http://2gaur.r.ag.d.sendibm3.com/mk/cl/f/KtFyRqc0p7RXxifXUaOLK5c-X-GHMYU1-ox1p73o-E8_aoiNmYBFKRHoEcxscy0tHQNYVPJvw9aegovWcODcNFjKSnzByorlXzr5hgXCv5BvwGDN6IAOwCqG8i1jXHDQSyS9ym-C9Dpck7xecRFHoXPU5HrjRALcrSfpi5cutA)    |

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Also to reiterate that quantities on prescriptions must not be altered as a result of COVID-19 . There continue to be very strong reminders from national NHS leads that extending prescription length WILL adversely affect the supply chain and ultimately this will affect patient care.

The Medicines Management Team will be able to guide practices regarding electronic repeat dispensing – eRD. We will also provide updates on medicines shortages, as we receive them.

Any queries – please email VOYCCG.Rxline@nhs.net

**Informing us of any changes**

Firstly the CCG would like to thank you once again for your efforts during this challenging time. We are well aware of the pressure you’re facing in delivering primary care services to patients, and in order to continue to do so safely there may be the need for Practices to temporarily close sites or branches in order to consolidate services. During the Coronavirus outbreak the CCG is fully supportive of Practices taking these measures when it’s necessary to do. We would however ask you where possible to inform the CCG of any significant change in services particularly site closures. This will help us support you by being able to respond to any queries or concerns raised by patients made directly to the CCG.

When contacting the CCG to inform us of any changes please could you confirm;

* Which sites are closing
* The closest alternative site patients can access
* For how long (e.g. one day / all week)
* The reason for the closure (e.g. staff shortage / closed for deep clean)
* Any associated comms / what have patients been advised
* Any other information that might be useful to the CCG

Please send your updates to Steph stephanie.porter@nhs.net with Qas q.nazir@nhs.net copied in. Please be assured this is not for contract management purposes but solely to understand the situation on the ground so we can continue to support you all as best we can.

**Diabetes Nurse / Consultant telephone support during weekends**

To continue to support primary care we are going to extend the Diabetes Nurse / Consultant  telephone support for the  Community helpline over weekends. It will be available both Saturday and Sunday from 08.30 – 17.00hrs and on bank holidays too. The numbers are:

Diabetes Consultant: (01904) 724942

Diabetes Nurse: (01904) 724938

**Useful resources**

* The CCG publishes public facing information on its website and social media channels.  The web link is <https://www.valeofyorkccg.nhs.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-information/>
* The link to the CCG’s clinical updates is available on RSS at <https://www.valeofyorkccg.nhs.uk/rss/home/infections-and-microbiology/covid-19/>
* If you use Twitter [@drstephcoughlin](https://twitter.com/drstephcoughlin?s=11) is tweeting some useful information (thank you to Dr Paula Evans for this top tip)
* The RCGP website has links to useful resources: <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/policy/rcgp-policy-areas/covid-19-coronavirus.aspx>
* Hints and tips from Liverpool CAMHS <https://wakelet.com/wake/564d7bc8-4bc9-462f-a9e1-2deb03150c3f>
* National Autistic Society – guidance and helpline for parents’, young people and staff: [https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/coronavirus-(covid-19)-advice.aspx](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.autism.org.uk%2Fservices%2Fnas-schools%2Fvanguard%2Fnews%2F2020%2Fmarch%2Fcoronavirus-(covid-19)-advice.aspx&data=02%7C01%7CAAllard%40ncb.org.uk%7C7d078078e21d4611dba808d7cb45bcbd%7Cadc87355e29c4519954f95e35c776178%7C0%7C0%7C637201372684920098&sdata=X0p0IpfwmQXowcaQVRflamskU%2FNmdKpAYqUIn6RYxjI%3D&reserved=0)
* Mencap - Easy Read guide to Coronavirus: [https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/Information%20about%20Coronavirus%20ER%20SS2.pdf](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mencap.org.uk%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2020-03%2FInformation%2520about%2520Coronavirus%2520ER%2520SS2.pdf&data=02%7C01%7CAAllard%40ncb.org.uk%7C7d078078e21d4611dba808d7cb45bcbd%7Cadc87355e29c4519954f95e35c776178%7C0%7C0%7C637201372684920098&sdata=S5Q3Tzb8p6P6AOsa%2BeDPP8PQceazwG2xEK6T65DQ%2Fng%3D&reserved=0)
* Place2Be – Guide to helping parents answer questions from their children and to support family wellbeing: [https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-information-for-children/](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.place2be.org.uk%2Fabout-us%2Fnews-and-blogs%2F2020%2Fmarch%2Fcoronavirus-information-for-children%2F&data=02%7C01%7CAAllard%40ncb.org.uk%7C7d078078e21d4611dba808d7cb45bcbd%7Cadc87355e29c4519954f95e35c776178%7C0%7C0%7C637201372684930090&sdata=AWZKF3H5NwjfSE9gcCUoshSrOC0crBlLr%2FKLPTtGpTo%3D&reserved=0)
* Young Minds - Talking to your child about Coronavirus and 10 tips from their Parents Helpline to support family wellbeing: [https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoungminds.org.uk%2Fblog%2Ftalking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus%2F&data=02%7C01%7CAAllard%40ncb.org.uk%7C7d078078e21d4611dba808d7cb45bcbd%7Cadc87355e29c4519954f95e35c776178%7C0%7C0%7C637201372684930090&sdata=hCT6wVcFSacio7qNOvk6eX8YRRm0uKSOa4QvPTitEMg%3D&reserved=0)
* Carers UK - Guidance for carers: [https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/coronavirus-covid-19](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.carersuk.org%2Fhelp-and-advice%2Fhealth%2Flooking-after-your-health%2Fcoronavirus-covid-19&data=02%7C01%7CAAllard%40ncb.org.uk%7C7d078078e21d4611dba808d7cb45bcbd%7Cadc87355e29c4519954f95e35c776178%7C0%7C0%7C637201372684940084&sdata=RPeTq3k0bpsI1zGIjDqchzAvM%2F7CO2FZ16o%2BrlK4Kns%3D&reserved=0)
* Covibook – an interactive resource designed to support and reassure children aged 7 and under, designed to help children explain and draw the emotions that they might be experiencing during the pandemic: [https://www.mindheart.co/descargables](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mindheart.co%2Fdescargables&data=02%7C01%7CAAllard%40ncb.org.uk%7C7d078078e21d4611dba808d7cb45bcbd%7Cadc87355e29c4519954f95e35c776178%7C0%7C0%7C637201372684940084&sdata=H2glY%2Bfie1Tk3b6lnXcKEmKtZs%2Bf%2BCSQIydH2LaaCgI%3D&reserved=0)
* Amaze - information pack for parents [https://amazesussex.org.uk/faqs-about-the-coronavirus-for-parent-carers-of-children-with-send-brighton-hove/](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Famazesussex.org.uk%2Ffaqs-about-the-coronavirus-for-parent-carers-of-children-with-send-brighton-hove%2F&data=02%7C01%7CAAllard%40ncb.org.uk%7C92a7a8384aa149ae85e808d7cb487833%7Cadc87355e29c4519954f95e35c776178%7C0%7C0%7C637201384417448135&sdata=vNjEFd%2F0%2BTMSMYvl2HRnHO02RnJpLmMDUdkpu2oDS8w%3D&reserved=0)
* [Public Health England](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Feasy-read-online.us15.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3D6d563f7f763a0cf7e70c9cfe1%26id%3D0c04c35bc0%26e%3D1a4a54ea5e&data=02%7C01%7CAAllard%40ncb.org.uk%7Caf891cc0fed7420ba55608d7ca566849%7Cadc87355e29c4519954f95e35c776178%7C0%7C0%7C637200344772988297&sdata=9mh8m8DKfQVNX9GPfAMXq57s5ykCLVm7PE6%2BPiCAKUc%3D&reserved=0) has produced an easy read version of their [Advice on the coronavirus for places of education](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Feasy-read-online.us15.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3D6d563f7f763a0cf7e70c9cfe1%26id%3D6efa277046%26e%3D1a4a54ea5e&data=02%7C01%7CAAllard%40ncb.org.uk%7Caf891cc0fed7420ba55608d7ca566849%7Cadc87355e29c4519954f95e35c776178%7C0%7C0%7C637200344772978298&sdata=blVpFcNZEHqif7ytPfFwrpGNY2Mmmw4leeRFvWPiT4o%3D&reserved=0).  You can download it [here](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Feasy-read-online.us15.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3D6d563f7f763a0cf7e70c9cfe1%26id%3D1effe5e60d%26e%3D1a4a54ea5e&data=02%7C01%7CAAllard%40ncb.org.uk%7Caf891cc0fed7420ba55608d7ca566849%7Cadc87355e29c4519954f95e35c776178%7C0%7C0%7C637200344772998287&sdata=DH8G1k44HQBwG65sot3pyRMJglcUAc5zawtq4%2FOgtkM%3D&reserved=0)
* BPS guidance - <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/talking-children-about-coronavirus>
* BACP guidance around managing anxiety - <https://www.bacp.co.uk/news/news-from-bacp/2020/28-february-coronavirus-anxiety-how-to-cope-if-you-re-feeling-anxious-about-the-outbreak/>
* Anna Freud links - [Supporting schools & colleges: A guide to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and students during periods of disruption](https://annafreud.us13.list-manage.com/track/click?u=aa2c9f8b722440e7e05bedb82&id=b6a9958dd5&e=58f0e0f449) There are also three videos, one for [school staff](https://annafreud.us13.list-manage.com/track/click?u=aa2c9f8b722440e7e05bedb82&id=3936df136b&e=58f0e0f449), one for [parents](https://annafreud.us13.list-manage.com/track/click?u=aa2c9f8b722440e7e05bedb82&id=12ffbbb354&e=58f0e0f449) and one for [children and young people](https://annafreud.us13.list-manage.com/track/click?u=aa2c9f8b722440e7e05bedb82&id=bfeb6149a3&e=58f0e0f449) which may be useful.

Thank you

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**My emails are written in Arial, point 12 font and in black. Where possible I use plain English. I also work flexibly and send emails out of hours – either early in the morning or late at night. Unless an urgent response is specified please reply at a time that suits you.**