

To: North Yorkshire GP practice managers

Date: 15th April 2020

Dear Colleague

Public Health GP and Pharmacy Services during the Coronavirus Outbreak

This briefing provides guidance and key information about changes to Public Health Commissioned GP services during the Coronavirus outbreak. These changes have been made in consultation with the Local Medical Committee and will be reviewed and amended as required to adhere to new guidance and the evolving situation.

The North Yorkshire Public Health team recognise the immense pressure that GP practices are facing and aim to reduce the workload as far as possible in relation to any Public Health commissioned services. At the same time, it is recognised that for some services patients are either part way through or will require a clinical pathway for example the provision of contraception which can only be accessed through primary care or specialist services.

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Sexual Health Services

[The Faculty of Reproductive and Sexual Health](#) (FRSH) and [British Association for Sexual Health and HIV](#) (BASHH) have issued guidance on the provision of sexual health services to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance has been informed through joint working with national reproductive health and HIV partner organisations.

The guidance reflects the unparalleled circumstances we are entering into and offers additional and extended options and strategies to services in their unstinting efforts to maintain access to the highest quality sexual and reproductive health and HIV care.

YorSexualHealth (YSH) and GP Targeted Primary Care Sexual Health Services

In response to the pandemic the integrated sexual health service provider (YSH) have ceased to operate a walk in model and have instead moved to one of booked appointments, intended to ensure timely care and treatment to those at most risk and in pain, to maintain safe staffing levels whilst reducing the virus spread by preventing COVID-19 positive individuals from attending services without appropriate precautions.

YSH have moved to telephone triage and consultations with online provision for high risk individuals.

All non-urgent LARC provision has ceased, POP will be the first line offer and can be issued to almost all service users who accept this as a temporary method plus advocating condom use in addition to use of POP. Exceptions to this are those in moderate or severe pain and emergency IUD.

All patients are asked to contact the central booking telephone line 01904 721111 to arrange a discussion.

We would ask that GP Practices who are providing the targeted primary care sexual health service take the same approach as YSH as outlined above.

The new FSRH guidance offers clinical advice to support ongoing provision of effective contraception. Provision of effective contraception (this may be a bridging method in the short term) and emergency contraception are considered priority services. The guidance provides useful recommendations for extended use of LARC methods.

For access to the FSRH guidance covering all contraceptive methods during this time please read [here](#).

LARC Removal

YSH are starting to receive a few requests from patients requesting LARC removal to conceive during the COVID 19 pandemic.

This is the [FSRH guidance](#) on this, please ensure patients are sufficiently counselled and understand as to why the removal of LARC at this time is not recommended as an urgent need to access face to face services.

Emergency Contraception (EC) in Community Pharmacy (13-24 years)

Across North Yorkshire a large number of community pharmacies deliver EC, this service is classed as a priority service. Community pharmacy will be following the guidance below.

The FSRH Clinical Effectiveness Unit recommends that remote assessment of requirement for EC is prioritised so that it can be made as soon as possible after unprotected intercourse. Insertion of a Cu-IUD for EC should continue to be offered first line, where this is possible, to qualifying individuals; if there is a delay prior to Cu-IUD insertion, immediate oral EC should be offered in addition.

To access insertion of an emergency Cu-IUD contact YorSexualHealth on 01904 721111.

Individuals who do not meet the criteria for emergency IUD insertion, or who decline an emergency IUD should be assessed remotely as to the most appropriate oral emergency contraception, receive oral EC and condoms and be given clear written/digital advice about additional contraception and follow up pregnancy testing. Where possible delay associated with postal delivery of oral EC should be avoided by facilitating collection by the individual.

Kind Regards

EJ Davis