**New Lower GI Cancer Pathway – South West**

**Background**

During the height of the Covid-19 first wave, many services were paused, including non-urgent endoscopy; many patients did not present to their GP, and of those who did, many were then not prepared to attend hospital for diagnostic tests for possible colorectal cancer due to concerns about Covid-19 risk.

At the same time, a number of innovative approaches to help better manage patients with possible cancer were being developed. One of these is the wider use of the FIT test in primary care, to cover all adult ages, prior to any suspected lower GI / colorectal cancer referral.

The FIT test is a highly sensitive and simple test that reduces the number of patients undergoing the unnecessary investigations and anxiety of the 2WW pathway. The Regional Medical Director SW and the four South cancer alliances have agreed a common pathway approach to use FIT in primary care in order to triage these patients into those who are referred on a 2ww referral / those who are safety-netted in primary care.

**What is being asked of GPs**

* Implement the new South West lower GI 2ww pathway

**Why**

The use of the FIT test for all suspect 2ww colorectal cancer adult patients, reduces the number of patients undergoing the unnecessary investigations and anxiety of the 2WW pathway for suspect colorectal cancer and ensures

(a) those referred on a 2ww pathway are those more likely to have colorectal cancer; (b) those not referred are very unlikely to have colorectal cancer (<0.3% likelihood).

**What do GPs need to do**

All practices and all GPs in BSW are asked to implement this pathway and process change as a priority.

* Before any Lower GI 2ww referral, primary care is asked to conduct a FIT test first.
* If the result is below 10, and no notable clinical concerns or key presentation factors, then do not refer but safety net in primary care, as the probability of Lower GI cancer is extremely low, c0.3%.
* In due course refer as 2ww if risk factors become evident/condition changes etc.
* If the result is 10 or above, refer as 2ww and ensure the FIT score is included in the referral (trusts will be amending their 2ww referral form). This is the same pathway that TVCA adopted in late June for our Swindon and N Wilts practices that refer 2ww to GWH; now with enhanced guidance on the safety-netting aspect. This action aligns all of BSW with the pan-South West Region agreed pathway.

**Learning opportunity**

SWAG Cancer Alliance has arranged two webinars to promote and explain the pathway and any associated concerns to primary care colleagues.  These are taking place 1pm – 2pm on Wednesday 9 September and Thursday 17 September and can be signed up to here: England.swagca@nhs.net – please ensure you specify which event, and you will be sent joining details.

**Further information**

[Read for full details of the pathway](https://bswccg.nhs.uk/for-clinicians/primary-care-documents/primary-care-bulletin-documents/1214-gp-bulletin-2-september-doc-11/file).