

Thames Valley Cancer Alliance COVID-19 Bulletin for Primary Care

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“Dear Colleagues, it is a very busy time in primary care as we progress through recovery and restoration. Colleagues are reminded that there is a wealth of [support available](#) to you including a wellbeing support helpline, a 24/7 text alternative, peer to peer, team and [personal resilience support](#), [free mindfulness apps](#) and the [#LookingAfterYouToo](#) coaching offer.

The latest cancer stats indicate that during week ending 12 July, the number of 2WW referrals received was 1,569, dipping slightly on the week before which saw 1,615 (-2.8%). Compared to the baseline of 1,987 before Covid-19, this is 79% across the Cancer Alliance footprint. There is variation in local referral activity across the different tumour types; urology is slow to return to baseline with a difference of 31% and breast symptomatic with a difference of 77%. Upper GI however is currently 10% above baseline. Referrals to endoscopy are recovering rapidly, indicating the urgency of ensuring diagnostic capacity in secondary care. Thames Valley Cancer Alliance are working closely with local endoscopy leads to maximise capacity/ensure access to services. Please continue to communicate and reassure patients, encouraging them to come forward, should they be concerned about their health needs. We hope that you find this bulletin a useful resource.” **Dr Anant Sachdev – Clinical Lead for Prevention & Early Diagnosis at Thames Valley Cancer Alliance, CRUK Strategic GP for Thames Valley and GP Partner at Ringmead Medical Practice, East Berkshire**

Remember all the latest Cancer related guidance/documentated information for Primary Care and referenced in this bulletin is hosted on the [Futures NHS Collaboration Platform](#), under the TVCA portal. The portal can be directly accessed [here](#).



You can also follow the TVCA on Twitter via [@ThamesV_Cancer](#)

Thames Valley Cancer Alliance



Thank you to those who attended the TVCA ‘Cancer Update: Lower GI Pathway Changes During Covid-19’ webinar on 2 July (recording of the event can be found [here](#)) As per the previous session, the presentations and questions raised from the webinar can be found on our portal to support Primary Care respond to the Covid-19 pandemic [here](#).

The updated Lower GI 2ww pathway guidance with safety-netting advice can be found [here](#). The guidance and measures outlined in this document have been introduced to the colorectal cancer pathway to support capacity during the Covid-19 pandemic and agreed by trust lead colorectal clinicians, commissioners and CCG GP Cancer leads in Thames Valley. The safety-netting guidance to support the Lower GI 2ww pathway during Covid-19 can be found [here](#).

NCPES Results; The 2019 National Cancer Patient Experience Survey (NCPES) were recently published on 25 June. The survey is an important part of the national NHS Cancer Programme, which places patient experience on a par with clinical effectiveness and safety as a key strategic priority. It has been designed to monitor national progress on cancer care, to drive local quality improvements, to assist commissioners and providers of cancer care and to inform the work of the various charities and stakeholder groups supporting cancer patients. The results of the survey reveal that the overall experience of care for Cancer patients across the **TVCA** was an average score of **8.8 out of 10**, from a scale of 0 (very poor) to 10 (very good). 2,965 patients responded out of total of 4,859 patients, resulting in a response rate of 61%, the same as the overall national response rate. This year’s overall score for the TVCA was slightly higher than in the previous year, which was 8.7 out of 10.



Primary Care Updates

- A letter was published to GPs and their commissioners on 9 July detailing the [second phase of the general practice response to COVID-19](#). This letter confirms contractual arrangements from July and income protection arrangements. Some key points;
 - The need for general practice to continue its vital role in supporting high-risk patients with ongoing care needs, but to also resume services which may have been paused, managing pre-existing conditions and urgent demand.
 - Practices will need to re-prioritise aspects of care not related to COVID-19 and there is an intention to modify the QOF requirements for 2020/21 to support this.
 - Practices to resume new patient reviews, routine medication reviews, over-75 health checks and clinical reviews of frailty – but to prioritise these using their clinical judgement and a risk-based approach. The letter also describes how flexibilities under the GP contract may be reinstated to support with management of local outbreaks
- **Confused around the process of shielding?** As you are aware a [letter](#) was circulated nationally at the end of May to all NHS Trust Medical Directors, NHS Trust Chief Nursing Officers, GPs, CCG Accountable Officers, ICS/ STP CEOs regarding steps needing to be taken to shield vulnerable patients from Covid-19. An additional [letter](#) was published on 8 July by PPH and the [shielding guidance](#) updated on 14 July, following the latest government guidelines announced on 6 July. Please ensure you are aware of this latest advice. Please note that as from 1 August the government will pause shielding unless the transmission of Covid-19 in the community starts to rise significantly.
- NHSE & NHSI have produced guidance on how to **establish a remote ‘total triage’ model in general practice, using online consultations** [here](#). To compliment this, as part of Health Education England's (HEE) e-learning programme for COVID-19, a new animated [video](#) has been produced.
- [The 2020 GP Patient Survey results](#) are now available. The survey received 739,637 responses from patients aged 16 years and above who are registered with a GP practice in England. The results cover the period up to the end of March 2020.
- [GatewayC](#) is a free online cancer education platform developed for GPs, practice nurses, GPs in training, health care assistants, physician associates and other primary care professionals across NHS England. Its aim is to improve cancer outcomes by facilitating earlier diagnosis and improving patient experience. They play a large part in the Quality Improvement Scheme (QIS) toolkit for Primary Care and are soon to run a series of free education webinars. The first session will be streamed live on **5 August from 1.00pm to 2.00pm** and the topic is **‘Effective Telephone Consultations’**. In this webinar Dr Sarah Taylor (Cancer Research UK GP and Gateway C GP Lead) along with Alison Franklin (Senior Trainer at Maguire Communication Skills Training Unit) will explore the challenges of and suggestions for an effective telephone consultation. Registration to attend this webinar can be accessed [here](#).
- [Open for Business Campaign Resource Centre](#); Please continue to use the digital adverts, posters and social media featuring NHS staff, encouraging people to contact their GP or the 111 service, if they have urgent care needs, or 999 in emergencies and to attend hospital if they are told they should. Details of the campaign strategy can be found [here](#).

Secondary Care Updates

- On the back of the [Panorama](#) programme “**Britain’s Cancer Crisis**” aired on 6 July, Peter Johnson shared a [tweet](#) after the show, providing a compassionate response to comments/tweets made by viewers. The programme referenced fears that the pandemic has caused a crisis in cancer care, which could mean many thousands more people will die. In response a spokesperson for the NHS said “these hypothetical predictions ignore the reality of what is happening now, which is that cancer services are in fact continuing and expanding. Almost 30,000 people began treatment in March – the highest number on record, and after an entirely appropriate and necessary pausing of some cancer treatments during the outbreak, usually to protect cancer patients from immunocompromised infection, vital tests and treatments are going ahead in a safe way for thousands of patients, including by introducing Covid-19 protected cancer hubs.”
- **Cancer hubs** are now fully operational in 21 cancer alliances across all regions. Total treatment activity nationally for the week ending 12 Jul stood at 1,876 patients, a decrease of 57 patients (-2.9%) from the previous week. Treatment activity in the independent sector decreased for chemotherapy (-32%) and surgery (-10%). Radiotherapy treatment activity increased 2%. There were 495 chemotherapy sessions, 577 surgical treatments and 65 radiotherapy treatments (inclusive of both elective and outpatient treatment totals).
- The **62-day waiting list** (with or without a decision to treat) continues to decrease week-on-week. Nationally it reduced by 2,228 patients (-8.5%) to a total 23,848 patients. All regions saw a decrease in their >62-day backlog; -4.8% (210 patients) in the South East. There was a drop in the number of national 104 day-waits from 14,294 patients to 13,364 (-6.5%).

Charitable Partner Updates

- For those of who weren’t able to attend, here is a copy of the [interactive slide deck](#) from one of **Cancer Research UK**’s webinars on the PCN DES. Remember to look on the links as you go!
- Macmillan’s [quality toolkit for supporting cancer services in primary care](#) (Module Four) supports practices and primary care networks to undertake quality improvement in end of life care.
- **Macmillan**’s [Telephone Buddies](#) continues to support people living with cancer, who have needed to stay at home during Covid-19. They match people living with cancer with trained volunteers, who will give them a weekly call for up to 12 weeks. They provide a friendly voice and a listening ear to improve people’s emotional well-being and help reduce feelings of isolation.
- Latest guidance by [Cancer Research UK](#) and [Macmillan](#) to support people living with cancer, or those who think that they may have cancer, during COVID-19, can be found using the above links.

Useful Links and National Guidance

- HM Government has refreshed the coronavirus marketing materials to deliver a more impactful campaign based on reciprocity and the social contract shared. This new creative is shared between [NHS Test and Trace](#), [Stay Alert to Stay Safe](#), and [Symptoms](#). All materials can be found on the [Public Health England Campaign Resource Centre](#).

....and finally



NHS Volunteer Responders

People responding to the government’s appeal for help during Covid-19 have passed a significant milestone in completing more than half a million tasks.

The achievement was reached by the NHS army of volunteers who have been ‘on duty’ since downloading the app and signing up.

Contact Us

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