

COVID-19 Update

Sheffield
LMC



25 June 2020

*****To All Represented Sheffield GPs and Practice Managers*****

Dear Colleagues

Holiday Travel

Thoughts may be turning to summer holidays, but there could* still be a sting in the tail for non-clinical staff.

As the pandemic lockdown continues to ease and more businesses, particularly in the service sector, open up we also head into summer holiday season. There are, however, restrictions that continue to apply to some more than others. These are likely to have implications for practices as registered Health and Care Professionals are exempt from foreign travel quarantine, but non-clinical staff are not. Quarantine rules for people arriving in the UK came into force on 8 June 2020.

The [Border Control](#) website notes:

If you're a resident or visitor travelling to the UK, you must:

- *provide your journey and contact details*
- *not leave the place you're staying for the first 14 days you're in the UK except in very limited situations (known as 'self-isolating')*

You do not need to complete the form or self-isolate if you're travelling from one of the following places, and you were there for 14 days or more:

- *Ireland*
- *the Channel Islands*
- *the Isle of Man*

Registered Health and Care Professionals will need to consider extra details to avoid quarantine:

- *You'll need to complete the Public Health passenger locator form before you travel to the UK.*
- *You will not need to self-isolate for 14 days if you are staying in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. You'll need to self-isolate for 14 days if you are staying in Scotland.*
- *You'll need to show:*
 - *you'll start work within 14 days of your arrival in the UK*
 - *proof of professional registration with a UK-based regulator*
 - *an employment contract or letter of confirmation from either an:*
 - *NHS Trust*
 - *independent healthcare provider*
 - *independent social care provider*

*We are aware of ongoing discussions regarding quarantine-free "air bridges" to some countries - details are expected to be published by Monday 29 June.

COVID Testing and Tracing

You will all be aware of the COVID antibody testing scheme that is up and running. Many practices will be providing the blood testing to their staff for this service. Please be aware that this is not part of NHS services and so is not covered by the CNSGP scheme. However, the General Practitioners Committee (GPC) has negotiated with NHS England (NHSE) that the delivery of this service to staff, which is on a voluntary basis, will be covered by the [Clinical Negligence Scheme for Coronavirus](#).

The government announced it was changing the focus of its tracing App to an Apple-Google model. Software updates have already been installed on phones to allow future contact tracing Apps to work. The software is not yet activated and will require both Bluetooth and location settings to be active to work. It can be found at:

- [Android](#) - Settings>Google settings>COVID 19 exposure notifications
- [Apple](#) - Settings App>Privacy menu>Health subsection

British Medical Association (BMA) Tracker Survey

The BMA has been performing surveys of GP opinions during the pandemic period. There have been significant changes to the way we have all had to work and the BMA has collected and collated these responses into a new report, [Trust GPs to lead: learning from the response to COVID-19 within general practice in England](#).

The key requests of commissioners so far are:

- Capitalise on the greater autonomy provided to general practice during the pandemic and incorporate the positive learning into new ways of working.
- There must be a significant reduction in the level of regulation within the system. The burden of regulation has previously fallen on all practices rather than focusing on appropriate support for the very small number of practices when this is required.
- There must be a significant reduction in the level of bureaucracy and duplication caused by information requests from government departments, national regulators, commissioners, local providers of health services and many other organisations.
- It is essential to increase the level of digital and technological support for practices, including a rapid rollout of appropriate, safe, reliable, robust and secure digital technology and consultation software (including video where appropriate) for practices to use.

Secondary Care Workload

The national press continues to highlight the “tsunami” of workload transferred from secondary care due to virtual consultations. We continue to collect examples at the LMC Office and will feed these back to Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (STHFT).

We also note that as routine operations recommence there will be a need for patients to self-isolate for 2 weeks prior to surgery. These patients are neither sick nor self-isolating due to COVID symptoms. There are, therefore, discussions nationally that it is for Secondary Care Trusts to issue a self-isolation note with the notification of operation date directly to the patient. If you receive requests to issue self-isolation notes please inform the LMC Office and we will discuss this with STHFT.

GP-S Mentoring Services

As you will be aware, Sheffield LMC’s GP-S Mentoring Service temporarily suspended access to new mentees while the implications of COVID-19 and the welfare of all mentors and mentees was assessed. We are now in a position to resume the service and invite new mentees. All mentoring sessions will be conducted virtually, via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Further information about the service and how to access it can be found [here](#).

DR ALASTAIR BRADLEY
Chair