

Friday 3 April 2020

Dear General Practice colleagues

Doncaster is now seeing an increase in COVID-19 cases and it seems clear that our services will come under unprecedented strain in the coming weeks.

Through your hard work in General Practice you have successfully reduced all non-essential work and with the support of our patients we have freed up capacity to concentrate on our COVID-19 response for the coming weeks/months.

The solution that we have put in place to cope with COVID-19 patients in primary care, is the COVID Co-Ordination Hub (CCHUB). This central solution means that all general practices can remain clean sites, with all COVID patients requiring assessment being dealt with by the CCHUB. This is felt to be the safest, simplest and most rapidly implementable model, for all of Doncaster practices and patients alike.

As you will be aware, the CCHUB has already been operating, on a small scale so far, with 2 GPs working 8am-6pm, Monday-Friday, out of Devonshire House, doing telephone assessment and home visits for query COVID patients. Genuine and heartfelt thanks go out to all those clinicians who have volunteered to work in the CCHUB so far. Your willingness to test this approach, with limited information available to you about what to expect, has not gone unrecognised; and your invaluable feedback has paved the way for the next critical stage.

The modelling data we have unfortunately predicts a surge in activity despite all of our collective efforts to isolate as a nation. The peak locally is predicted to begin within the next 10-14 days, and last for anything up to twelve weeks. This will see a rapid increase in numbers of symptomatic patients and confirmed COVID cases, across all elements of health and social care.

Therefore we now need to urgently optimise the CCHUB to its maximum capacity.

In order to make this solution work for all of Doncaster patients, we need every practice's support. Only by everyone contributing will this solution work. Otherwise, it will not be possible to deliver a safe service for every practice in Doncaster

Attached to this letter is a CCHUB guide and flowchart depicting the service model. In these documents you will find all you need to know about what the CCHUB does and doesn't do, and what working for the CCHUB will entail.

Shift patterns:

- **Monday-Friday, 8am-6pm;** the core hours rota template is appended to this letter, showing the timings and shift patterns we need to fill, per clinician type. This element is managed by PCD; contact liz.leggott@nhs.net to book shifts.
- **Evenings & Weekends:** this element continues to be managed by FCMS; contact tracey.edwards3@nhs.net to book shifts.

To be clear – no member of staff will be expected to work outside their clinical competency, in doing the role they agree to take on. All the indemnity cover that is required is also assured. No staff will be financially disadvantaged. No staff will be expected to work without being fully provided with PPE (in line with NHSE guidelines). There will also be functions (ie telephone assessment) within the CCHUB that are non-patient facing, which could be undertaken by staff that have particular health restrictions of their own.

We cannot emphasise enough, we will only be able to provide an equitable Doncaster-wide service, if every practice contributes to making a central solution work.

We request that you to respond in one of two ways:

- a) Book shifts with Liz and Tracey, by close of play Tuesday 7th April 2020, for as many as you can

And/or

- b) Liaise with your PCN neighbour practices and arrange how your practice can contribute to releasing capacity within the network to devote to the CCHUB

These are unprecedented times and the challenge is not underestimated. We cannot pretend to eliminate all risk in the solutions we put in place; only to mitigate it, as much as possible. We believe that this centralised model is the one that will do this, by radically reducing the risk of infection spread across other sites and practices in Doncaster.

We do recognise however what we are asking of you, and we are hoping for the heroic response that we need, to get us all through this pandemic together.

Yours sincerely



Jackie Pederson
Chief Officer



Dr David Crichton
Chair



Laura Sherburn
Chief Executive



Dr Dean Eggitt
Doncaster LMC