

HELLO

April 2020



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This is my second Whittington Health GP Connect COVID-19 update, following the first pandemic-focussed newsletter that was [sent out in March](#).

In this edition there are further important changes that will be useful for you to be aware of as we continue to work in different ways during this time. In addition to this, I am attaching a **Rapid Response** flowchart, **patient discharge information** and information from NCL around **GP referrals** which you may find useful.

Referrals to Ambulatory Care

I'm pleased to let you know that GPs can call a **new mobile number** to refer directly to Adult Ambulatory Care or get advice.

Please call **07775 117 679** to speak to the **Ambulatory Care Consultant** (weekdays 9am until 5pm). If there is no response, please wait a little while and try the number again after 10 minutes as they maybe with a patient. If accepted you will usually be asked to send the patient on the day to the Ambulatory Care Centre.

Out of hours, please call the hospital switchboard on 020 7272 3070 and ask to speak to the Ambulatory Care Consultant. When you are put through, you will speak to the duty medical registrar. If clinically appropriate you may be asked to get the patient to attend the next day. The Ambulatory Care Centre is open 8am until 8pm on weekdays and 9am-5pm on weekends and bank holidays.

Changes to the ICAT Service

As a result of COVID-19, the Integrated Community Ageing Team (ICAT) service has been repurposed to decrease the risks of visiting this vulnerable group of patients at home for long term conditions. The ICAT service can now provide specialist frailty assessments to Islington patients as part of the Rapid Response and Virtual Ward Teams at the Whittington. The patients will not get the full Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment, but they will receive a holistic assessment, including nurse therapy and a pharmacist assessment if needed. Patients will be under the care of a consultant geriatrician. If you have frail older patients with acute medical problems and would

like their input, then please refer to **Rapid Response on 020 7288 3670 and ask for ICAT input.**

Rapid Response Team

The Rapid Response Team (RRT) continue to provide a fantastic service supporting patients to stay at home and avoid admission. We have increased capacity within the team. The staff have found they are seeing and managing increasingly sicker patients in the community, both due to COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 conditions. The team would like to feed back that, where possible, conversations documenting the patient's wishes should their condition deteriorate and their DNAR status being added to CMC (Coordinate My Care) would be invaluable as part of the patient's care.

The **exclusions** for patients the RRT cannot see are:

- Sudden acute medical problems such as abdominal pain, chest pain, DVT, PE or severe DIB
- Acute, severe asthma
- Patients needing help of 2 to transfer
- Mental health problems as primary presentation
- Patients who trigger specialist pathways (e.g. HASU/MTC/HAC)
- Alcohol, substance abuse or intoxication
- Acute mental health conditions
- Long term conditions such as constipation
- Patients who are not at risk of hospital attendance or admission

Support for our patients, their relatives and staff during COVID-19

I wanted to share some of the inspiring initiatives that our amazing Patient Experience Team is using to support patients, their relatives and colleagues at this time.

- Essential pack of toiletries and food – UHT milk/tea/coffee provided and prepared for discharge team to give out
- Video messaging for patients and relatives, including setting up iPads provided to wards for patients and relatives to connect via social media e.g. Zoom
- Pastoral Support team support and volunteer programme.
- A new 'Thinking of You' service where friends and relatives of your patients will be able to send a message and photos to their loved one. The message will be printed out and then delivered safely to the patient. Check Whittington's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) feeds where the service will be launched in the next few days.

Discharging patients and the new Coordination Centre

Please see the attached guidance for the pathways to discharge positive COVID-19 patients. We will update any new advice when it is available.

We have established a Coordination Centre to optimise the discharge of our more complex patients during this challenging time. Our social care and reablement colleagues are based in the Centre, along with hospital and community colleagues.

The Centre is open 8am-8pm. If there are any problems with the discharges of your complex patients do contact them directly:

Email: whh-tr.dcc@nhs.net

Bleep: 3351 (duty manager)

Tel: 0203 074 2472 / 2466 / 2467

Phlebotomy Clinics

These are currently limited to only urgent and very necessary bloods at the Whittington Hospital blood test room. For community clinic times, visit the webpage below. Please note, this link may not work on Internet Explorer, so please use an alternative if possible: <https://gps.islingtonccg.nhs.uk/service/community-phlebotomy>

Current guidance for Imaging at Whittington by GPs

All routine imaging work is on hold. However, any clinically urgent imaging is still available. Any cancer/ 2WW imaging is still happening as per usual.

X-ray requests for clinically urgent cases are being accepted at our Walk-In Clinic on weekdays: Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm. The X-ray request form can be emailed to whh-tr.ImagingEnquiries-WhittHealth@nhs.net so the patient **does not** have to bring form with them or collect it from the practice, which is safer.

District Nursing

A request from the district nursing teams: the teams do not have the capacity to visit patients who are shielding who would normally be able to attend the practice (i.e. not housebound). If these patients require nursing tasks such as dressings or injections, the practice nurse or HCA should provide this. We are monitoring this and exploring other options should capacity become more challenging both for Primary Care and Community.

Islington INC meetings

The Integrated Network Coordination (INC) service has been temporarily suspended and staff have been redeployed to better support the COVID-19 pandemic. We do not currently know when the service will resume. If there are any urgent queries, please email whh-tr.INC@nhs.net and the INC team will try their best to respond as soon as possible. Alternatively, INC can be contacted on 020 3316 8609. All patients that are currently still on for discussion on the INC caseload have been outcomed for 6 weeks from the week starting 23/03/2020. The INC team will review the situation and possibly extend the review date if this is required after the 6-week period.

GP Referrals during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Please see the attached North London Partners referral advice agreed by local Trusts. We will continue to keep you updated should anything change.

STOOL FIT Tests

Pan London revised guidelines for Lower GI two-week wait referrals now require the results of a stool FIT test on your referral when it has been indicated. If it is not available, or less than 10, the referral will be rejected with a letter and explanation sent to the practice. Whittington Health is vetting and offering a telephone consultation (or face to face where necessary) to those with FIT tests above 10 and

appropriate investigation, with a pathway for colorectal cancer surgery where appropriate at the Princess Grace Hospital (clean site).

Thank You

I would like to say a big thank you to all the volunteers from the local community for their help and support and for the very generous donations and gifts for staff.

Well done to everyone for their adaptability and creativity during this challenging time.

Keep well and do look after yourselves.

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