

15th December 2021

Letter to general practice

Dear Colleague

Following the announcement by the Prime Minister on Sunday evening and the publication of the letter yesterday (attached for ease) we thought it might be helpful to summarise the ask that has been made of primary care and specifically general practice.

In South East London we have hugely benefited from the commitment that has been given by primary care colleagues to the vaccination programme so far. Primary Care Networks and Community Pharmacies have delivered the majority of our vaccinations to date – however we have been asked to do more and in a very quick time.

The NHS has been asked to ensure that all those over 18 are invited to have their booster vaccination by the 1st January. For South East London this means that an additional 723K booster slots are needed plus 30k for primary doses between now and the 1st January.

We are expecting to receive some BMA and RCGP operational guidance in the next day but in the meantime we are asking all of general practice to step down the clinically appropriate routine work and prioritise three main areas:

- Cancer
- Urgent and emergency care
- Vaccinations – especially covid and flu

All capacity that these actions releases in general practice we ask that you make available to the PCN or federation so that the current sites can maximise their potential capacity as we are being asked to ensure all sites run for 12 hours a day 7 days a week as a minimum. You may also want to discuss with them satellite site arrangements for your practice.

We are also making arrangements across the 6 boroughs to stand up oximetry at home services and covid community services which will require general practice support though may be delivered through PCNs or federations.

Any practice that needs support to enable this to happen should contact their borough team at souccg.cbcsouthwark@nhs.net. The CCG can make available financial support to pay for overtime for administrative staff or will look to redeploy staff to support the reorganisation of the workload.

Even though we do not have all of the detail yet we would recommend that you also review your business continuity plans and refresh your infection protection and control procedures.

We also attach to this letter a proposal to support you to continue to drive the delivery of flu vaccinations for your practice population by offering an enhancement to the item of service payment. If you would like to opt into this arrangement please email souccg.cbcsouthwark@nhs.net

We recognise just what a significant ask this is of you all especially at this time of year but the evidence shows that the best thing we can do is to get as many people vaccinated with all three covid vaccination doses as well as flu, which means there is still much more to do.

I know that you have been thanked many times during the past 18 months but your support is very much appreciated and valued by the SEL ICS and CCG teams.

Wishing you all a very happy and healthy Christmas

Best wishes

Sam Hepplewhite

Executive Director of Vaccinations and Primary Care

Appendix A: National and local commissioned services

Firstly, we would like to thank you for your courageous efforts and ongoing commitment to caring for our patients and communities. In the last week there have been a range of messages and letters on the priorities for primary care and local systems.

This appendix aims to provide a summary of the contract arrangements and wider support in place for Q4 of 2021/22 to underpin your continued efforts. For more detail on the national changes summarised in this appendix please refer to the national letters sent to practices on the 3rd and 7th December 2021.

Staff wellbeing

There are a wide range of health and wellbeing resources available to South East London staff. These include:

- Keeping well in SEL – an [online resource](#) providing free wellbeing and psychological support for all NHS staff in south east London.
- A range of [wellbeing support options](#) available from the NHS London wide LMC's [Professional Support Network](#) provides confidential, expert, impartial one-to-one advice and support to GPs and practices.
- **Funding is being made available to PCNs(?) to support local work with your practice teams to support staff wellbeing.**

National contract - practices

- *Quality and Outcome Framework (QOF)*: The four vaccination and immunisation indicators, the two cervical screening indicators, the register indicators and the eight prescribing indicators will continue to be based on practice performance in 2021/22. For the remaining areas of QOF:
 - Points relating to new indicators (2021/22 cancer indicators, 21/22 Mental Health indicators and the non-diabetic hyperglycaemia indicator) will be reallocated to the prescribing indicators mentioned above.
 - Indicators relating to diabetes and hypertension will be income protected, with practices paid based on 2019/20 achievement
 - All remaining indicators will be income protected and paid based on 2018/19 achievement
 - The quality improvement (QI) domain will be paid to practice in full
 - Practices will need to agree a plan with their commissioner which sets out how QOF care will be delivered wherever possible in line with clinical risk. In South East London we plan to take a light touch approach to this requirement, and await the BMA/RGCP guidance on clinical prioritisation.
- *Minor surgery (DES)*: SEL will pay the higher of either actual activity, or historical activity from 2018/19 for Q4. Therefore, practices do not need to submit a MS claim form for Q4 2021/22 unless they can demonstrate that their activity was higher than in previous years. Please contact the SEL Primary Care Team directly on england.selprimarycarequeries@nhs.net if this is the case.
- *Learning disability health checks*: Reimbursement is based on activity

National Contract – PCN DES

- *Extended Hours:* We are not yet requesting data from PCNs on the utilisation and booking of extended hours in recognition of the ongoing pressures on general practice. However, when the new Enhanced Access specifications are published, we will be asking PCNs for retrospective information to support the transition of existing services over to the new specification.
- *Investment and Impact Fund:* The three flu immunisation indicators will continue to operate on the basis of PCN performance in 2021/22. The appointment categorisation indicator has already been completed. All other indicators are suspended and funding will be allocated:
 - Firstly, to a PCN support payment to be paid on a weighted patient basis; and
 - Secondly, to a new binary IFF indicator relating to all practices within a PCN being signed up to phase 3 of the Covid-19 Vaccination programme at 31st December 2021 until 31st March 2022.

Locally Commissioned Services

In the summer of this year, we wrote to practices to put in place a safety net around our local incentive schemes, recognising the pressure that general practice has remained under (alongside the rest of the system). This safety net remains in place and means that practices will receive payment for locally commissioned services regardless of achievement against any Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) if the practice can demonstrate it has taken all appropriate steps to achieve the KPI up to the 12th December 2021. Local teams will work with practices to demonstrate this using a light-touch approach.

This approach will stay in place for the remainder of 21/22 financial year

Prescribing/Medicines Optimisation Schemes

In-line with our local commissioned services, all prescribing and medicines optimisation schemes in 2021/22 will be subject to the same safety net. This means that practices will receive payment under these schemes regardless of achievement if the practice can demonstrate it has taken all appropriate steps to achieve the KPIs up to the 12th December 2021. Pharmacy teams will work with practices to demonstrate this using a light-touch approach.

This approach will stay in place for the remainder of the 21/22 financial year.

Winter Access Fund

South East London CCG has worked very hard with local GP leaders and regional colleagues to develop a flexible plan for the Winter Access Fund. Our approach has been centred on the need to recognise and support the significant work undertaken in general practice to improve care for patients. Our plan for the use of funds has now been assured.

We fully recognise and understand that the current asks of general practice in relation to the vaccination programme will impact on routine care over the remainder of December, and that in turn this will impact on access to routine appointments. Once the current vaccination surge is completed, we look forward to working with you to support the continued and ongoing efforts of your teams in delivering high quality and accessible services. In the New Year, local teams will share

information on how practices can access funds via the Winter Access Fund to support this, where schemes align to fund rules.

In the meantime, if practices, PCNs or Federations need any support at all to support access to urgent care for patients over December please do not hesitate to contact your local teams who will work with you to see if Winter Access Funding can support you.