

Dear Practices

Please see the below comms from NEL. I can confirm that there will be no contractual action taken in relation to a C&H practice registering staff on a temporary basis for testing purposes.

Richard Bull



Antibody Test offer for General Practice Staff in NEL

18 June 2020

In May, the government announced the roll out of antibody testing with the requirement that all regions were to have arrangements to offer NHS staff tests as soon as possible. This was quickly followed up with the requirement for the staff test offer to be completed by the 10 July.

As a result, CCGs have been working diligently with GP practices and providers to co-ordinate local arrangements for how this will be delivered. This has been particularly challenging for some areas where services for phlebotomy are not currently commissioned locally from practices. Additionally providers have had to identify a solution for the electronic ordering and processing of blood test results from the labs.

Tower Hamlets were able to successfully roll out their offer in late May, followed by City and Hackney from the 15 June. This has been achieved in part through their GP practices registering their staff as Temporary Residents on the clinical system in order to access the TQuest platform for pathology.

Since we are in the exceptional circumstances of a pandemic and given the national imperative to deliver the testing offer within a very tight timeframe, NEL, alongside other STPs in London have accepted that practices can use the pragmatic approach of registering staff as temporary residents solely for the purpose of offering this test.

The Commissioners recognise the duty of care of GPs in supporting the well-being of colleagues and how this approach may facilitate the practice offering the test to staff for their own personal interest and to support the national epidemiological data collection.

Contractors could also consider a mutual reciprocal arrangement where staff are able to access the test from their own practice where they are currently registered.

If a GP contractor is unable to offer their staff the anti-body testing or chooses not to do so, staff may have access to the wider NEL offer being developed for roll-out at the beginning of July. This offer is being developed by ELCHP for wider staff groups that include CCGs, NELCSU, social care and Community Pharmacy. More information will be available as the plans are finalised.

GP practices and Providers who offer the test will have to gain informed consent (see consent form attached) .

Patient Testing

We are aware that some patients have been requesting tests from their GPs. The guidance sets out that if the patient is having bloods taken and requests the test, a antibody test should be provided. The LMC has provided guidance on the patient communication which practices may find useful.

Links:

<http://coronavirus.wel.nhs.sitekit.net/covid-updates/roll-out-of-antibody-testing-in-primary-care/111798>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-tests/coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-tests>

<http://coronavirus.wel.nhs.sitekit.net/covid-updates/roll-out-of-antibody-testing-in-primary-care/111798>