

Important Long COVID Update for Practice Managers and Practice Admin Staff

Improving the referral process for long COVID patients

We recognise that the current process for referring long COVID patients can be difficult and time-consuming.

The NEL ICS long COVID team has been working with GPs, LMCs, clinicians and patients to make referrals easier for both GPs and patients.

As a result, we are launching the following two things by the end of November to help improve the process. These are:

1. A new, single referral form for north east London, to ensure consistency and compliance with national data requirements.

2. A new software tool, called OneContact, which is being rolled out to all practices who use EMIS or SystemOne. OneContact will make it easier for GPs to complete the new referral form. Patients can be sent a link to a long COVID questionnaire, which they complete using OneContact, and this pre-populates much of the referral form on behalf of the GP.

We will be writing to you next week with further details on how to access and use both the single referral form and OneContact. In the meantime, below is a summary.

The process for using it will be as follows (this is for people who are 18 and over only, a separate process is being worked up for children and young people):

1. Patient contacts GP with symptoms of long COVID
2. Following **face-to-face consultation**, GP decides to refer patient to long COVID pathway
3. GP sends patient a text with link to the long COVID form in OneContact
4. Patient completes the long COVID questionnaire on OneContact.
5. The patient's form response is sent into OneContact and can be exported as a PDF or filed into the patient record in EMIS Web.
6. This populates the majority of the referral form.
7. GP completes remainder of the referral form.
8. Referral form is sent to the provider.

Instructions for using OneContact to follow this process are available [here](#).

Please note the following:

- The existing long COVID referral form is long and time consuming for a GP to complete. The new form allows the patient to complete much of the information via OneContact, removing the burden from GPs.

- The data requested from using the single referral form is a national requirement – we can't change this and so we are not able to make the form any shorter.
- Patients with learning disabilities, mental health conditions, illiteracy etc. will need to complete the form face-to-face with their GP and, if applicable, their carer.
- We are looking to make the OneContact tool available in different languages for patients who don't have English as their first language.
- We can also provide PDF versions of the questionnaire for patients to complete, where they don't have access to the internet.
- There will be a range of communications and training resources for both GPs and patients to support the launch of the new form and OneContact tool.

If you have any questions, please email Paul Thomas, our communications and engagement manager: p.thomas6@nhs.net