

NEL Cancer Alliance Primary Care Update 19 January 2021

1. Keeping cancer services running across north east London and use of the Independent Sector (for info)

Trusts continue to experience considerable pressure due to Covid. We are trying to maintain as much cancer work as we can and have set up a weekly call with all providers to work through capacity options. Radiotherapy and chemotherapy services are continuing, as are some diagnostic services including endoscopy (for urgent and suspected cancer patients only).

We have secured some outer London independent sector capacity for surgery and some diagnostics, including:

- BHR: Heartswood (non-complex)
- Barts and Homerton: Holly House and Spire East
- London Independent: Colorectal/GI hub – 8 lists for all 3 providers. Will start 21/01/21

For more complex cancer work, we have secured some inner London capacity including:

- London Clinic; Gynae and complex colorectal
- Princess Grace; collab with NCL
- King Edward VII; complex breast

Please note this situation is changing constantly and we'll keep you updated.

Barts health have shared comms around diagnostic availability which can be [found here](#), but a reminder that the pathway for cancer remains, albeit virtual (telephone) consultations may occur.

We are in contact with BHRUT and Homerton to receive their updates and we will share this with you when we have it.

We will also share any information being sent out from our trusts to patients who are shielding.

2. GP referrals (for action)

FIT Tests

Can we remind practices of the importance of undertaking a FiT test as part of the Pan-London 2WW approach following the impact of C-19, so that those with the **highest likelihood of having cancer are seen first (FiT>100) and to minimise any delay to their pathway.**

Here is a link to a Barts Health video, which you may want to consider texting out via Accurx to patients. <https://youtu.be/MOeQ-IJS2mw>

You can also access a poster on Fit testing in 11 of the most common languages in London: <https://www.healthylondon.org/suspected-cancer-referrals/patient-information-leaflets>

For GPs in WEL, If you require additional FiT test tubes please do email bartshealth.fittuberequests@nhs.net.

Safety Netting

Please also note the importance of maintaining **safety netting** for your patients.

(WEL CCGs have shared previously the EMIS and System One options to safety net electronically and this can be [found here](#).)

3. Screening services: important update for GPs

The message from NHSE is that all screening programmes should continue. They have asked trusts to ensure that staff in screening services are not redeployed, so colposcopy, endoscopy etc. will run for as long as possible.

Bowel screening

Bowel screening continues. The screening hub sent 88k kits in December, but the spoil rate of returned samples has increased due to postage delays. Patients across London reported to be declining colonoscopy due to Covid 19.

Please note that BowelScope had been suspended since March and all patients eligible will now receive a FiT kit.

NHSE have also confirmed that the age extension will be phased in from April 2021 but before that, anyone who was invited for BowelScope screening but was not screened, will be sent a FIT kit. These should be sent at the beginning of April over the course of a week.

WEL CCGs have successfully awarded a Bowel Screening Calling support service for all three boroughs following funding from the NEL Cancer Alliance. Further information will be shared on how GP practices can sign up in order to support practices patients attending their screening appointments for the national screening programme.

Breast screening

Breast screening recovery continues. The national team has decided that, to aid recovery, open invitations will be sent to women. Open invitations are letters informing women that they are due to be screened and asking them to call to make an appointment (rather giving them a fixed date and time).

They are sent a text reminder to make an appointment 7 days after the letter is sent and receive a reminder phone call at 14 days. At 28 days, if they have not made an appointment, another open letter is sent. The plan is to send open invitations for all sites by the end of January.

Cervical screening

Cervical screening should continue and practices should do as much as they can. Invitations are still being sent and practices should encourage patients to attend screening appointments when invited.

The YouScreen HPV self-sampling study, led by King's College London in partnership with the North Central London and North East London Cancer Alliances and other organisations is underway. It is being offered in the boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Islington, Newham and Tower Hamlets. Just six GP practices will be involved at the start, but there has been a fantastic response to the call for participation and in total 166 practices have joined the study.

More information about YouScreen and how the study will work can be found here: <https://www.eastlondonhcp.nhs.uk/aboutus/youscreen.htm>

Communications

We will continue to support screening through our communications and engagement activity, to encourage the public to attend their appointments when requested.

Please follow us on Twitter @CancerNel. Our animated breast screening video is here: <https://youtu.be/CkMOOA0RTI4>

If you have any queries regarding screening please contact Caroline Cook via email: caroline.cook9@nhs.net.

4. Suspension of the lung cancer screening SUMMIT Study (for info)

Due to the current COVID-19 infection rate and the latest lockdown, all SUMMIT Study appointments and invitations have been paused. In order to ensure that any patients who need to be followed up are seen in a timely manner, the research team is aiming to resume clinically indicated appointments from 25 January.

Recruitment of new study participants, and initial and Year 1 appointments will not begin again until mid-February at the earliest. The safety of our patient population is the priority and these restart dates will be continually assessed alongside the current pandemic situation and national guidelines. A further update will be provided to inform you when it is appropriate to resume SUMMIT lung cancer screening activity.

5. A warm welcome to Ameesh Patel, a new GP lead

The NEL Cancer Alliance have recently appointed Ameesh Patel as a new GP Lead, funded by Cancer Research UK.

Ameesh will be supporting the Alliance in projects aiming to improve the outcomes of patients with cancer, and particularly in the earlier diagnosis of cancer. In addition to his Cancer Alliance responsibilities, he is a member of a 'virtual team' of Cancer Alliance CRUK GPs from across the country.

Contact: ameesh.patel@nhs.net

6. Quality of Life (QoL) survey for people living with and beyond cancer: *Information for primary care in case any queries are raised by patients – no need for any action*

Public Health England, NHS England and NHS Improvement have launched a nationwide Cancer QoL Survey to help understand what matters to patients.

Please note that this is being rolled out directly to patients and is not being undertaken through the North East London Cancer Alliance.

From December 2020, all patients diagnosed with breast, prostate or colorectal cancer in England are being invited to complete the survey 18-months after their diagnosis.

People with other cancer types will be included from July 2021 onwards.

The information collected from the survey will help us to work out how best to support people living with and beyond cancer. This is an ambitious programme with a scale and depth that isn't being matched anywhere else in the world.

More information is on our North East London Cancer Alliance [webpages](#) or visit www.CancerQoL.england.nhs.uk.

Key points to note about the survey:

- People will receive a survey invitation through the post 18 months after their diagnosis.
- People will initially be encouraged to complete the survey online. A paper-based option is also available.
- The survey takes between five and 10 minutes to complete.
- Patients will be asked to complete two widely used quality-of-life questionnaires: the generic EQ-5D and the cancer-specific EORTC QLQ-C30.
- Patients' survey responses are being linked with data held about them in the Cancer Registry to provide an overview of whether quality of life differs, for example, depending on age, gender, cancer type or stage at diagnosis.
- A small-scale test of providing individual reports to patients and clinicians has proved successful; wider-scale tests of providing patients with a summary report containing their own QoL scores will start in 2021.
- There is a free helpline (**0800 783 1775**) and [website](#) to support patients and staff with any questions about the survey.
- The survey is being carried out by a centrally-run survey company (Quality Health) under direction from Public Health England, NHS England and NHS Improvement.

7. SafeFit: a free trial for people living with cancer

SafeFit has been designed, in response to COVID-19, to support people living with cancer to maintain and improve their physical and emotional wellbeing, whilst following Government guidelines.

It is a free remote trial for anyone in the UK with suspicion of, or confirmed diagnosis of, cancer. Patients will be put you contact with a cancer exercise specialist who will support them during the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.

For more information, visit <https://safefit.nhs.uk/>