

## **COVID-19 Advice Hub and Community Assessment Centres**

### **Frequently asked questions for GPs**

#### **Why were the advice hub and assessment centres set up?**

The Covid Advice Hub at Airdrie Community Health Centre and the Community Assessment Centres (CAC) were established on Monday 23 March on instruction from Scottish Government to remove the Covid workload from General Practice. It was intended that the Covid services would not be reliant on out-of-hours (OOH) services.

#### **How do patients access the centres?**

Patients who call the NHS 24 111 number are triaged and around 50% of cases are passed to the Covid Hub for further clinical triage. Around 12 to 20% of Covid advice calls require face-to-face assessment.

#### **What systems does the service use?**

The service operates with Aadastra which is the clinical IT system used in OOH and clinicians will have OOH level access to clinical portal which provides access to the GP summary, lab results and hospital correspondence. The GP rota is managed with Rotamaster which is also used in OOH. Access to Aadastra and Rotamaster is arranged by contacting Anne Robertson – [anne.robertson@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:anne.robertson@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk)

#### **How are the hubs and centres staffed?**

The Hub is staffed by GPs, Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANP) and a respiratory physiotherapy colleague with support from admin, in the main, from the OOH service with experience of call handling in Aadastra. The CACs are staffed by a multidisciplinary team of GPs, ANPs, other nursing staff and healthcare support workers. Secondary care staff who are available to be redeployed are also being asked to contribute.

#### **Is training being offered?**

Guidance is being provided for clinicians with plans for an electronic repository of information. Online training resources are also being developed.

#### **What are the opening hours of the hub and centres?**

The Hub and CACs were initially set up to run from 8am until 8pm but the Hub is now open until midnight and the Douglas Street CAC is open 24 hours, with cover currently provided by OOH overnight. It is intended that the Hub and CACs will be open 24 hours in due course.

#### **Are other centres planned?**

Two other CACs are being made ready in East Kilbride and Wishaw so that, if demand increases, these can be opened at short notice.

#### **Will personal protective equipment be available?**

Personal protective equipment will be provided in line with current and evolving guidance.

**Are patient numbers increasing?**

The numbers of cases are increasing steadily, but not as rapidly as had been anticipated initially.

**How is technology being used?**

Arrangements are being put in place to enable Covid advice calls to be triaged remotely, either from an NHS Lanarkshire device on the intranet or from home via an NHS Lanarkshire device with secure remote access. Devices should have Google Chrome downloaded to support NearMe consultations. Clinicians may use their own telephone but should withhold their number for personal security and privacy. Clinicians who are interested in providing Covid advice sessions remotely can email Lynn MacDonald and Babs Gemmell –

[Lynn.Macdonald2@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:Lynn.Macdonald2@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk) and [babs.gemmell@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:babs.gemmell@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk)

**What if patients don't have their own transport?**

From Friday 10 April patient transport will be available for patients who are unable to drive themselves to the CAC or who do not have a household member who can drive them. This will be arranged by the Covid Hub admin staff.

**Are home visits available?**

It was not intended that the Covid Hub and CACs would be responsible for home visiting, but we have had the capacity to carry out some home visiting. However, in some cases, it may be preferable for the patient's own GP to visit due to their knowledge of the patient's circumstances. In these cases, there will be a professional to professional call from a Hub clinician to the practice.

**Can GPs refer patients directly?**

From Friday 10 April there will be direct access to the Covid Advice Hub for clinicians in in-hours General Practice who have already triaged a suspected Covid case, and who feel the patient needs to be seen due to concerns regarding deteriorating Covid symptoms. This will be by a professional-to-professional call with one of the GPs in the Hub. The contact number for the Covid Hub is 01698 753349.

Practice care navigators should sign-post patients to NHS 24 on 111. It is not intended that practices will have direct access to the community assessment centres as it is important that the CAC workload and patient access arrangements are managed via the Covid Hub.

**Are secondary care colleagues involved?**

Secondary care clinicians are also being asked to support the work of the centres. This will include training and professional to professional links.