



For the attention of GP Practices

East of England

By email only

Swift House
Hedgerows Business Park
Colchester Road
Chelmsford CM2 5PF

rachel.webb6@nhs.net

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Dear GPs and Practice Managers,

Business Continuity Plans and Increased Transmission of new variant COVID-19

As you are doubtless aware, there was a Central Alerting System (CAS) alert found [here](#)¹ distributed on 24th December in relation to concerns about the increased transmissibility of new COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) variant. It reiterated the importance of maintaining excellent infection prevention and control (IPC) measures in your surgery. This is especially important following a number of recent outbreaks among staff in GP surgeries across the East of England. Temporary closures of GP surgeries can have a significant adverse impact on patients and the local NHS.

It is paramount that you ensure that all recommended measures are being followed, that all staff training is up to date in respect of IPC and that all PPE is continuously available to everyone. These measures include social distancing in all locations, enhanced cleaning of communal areas, regular hand sanitisation and use of face masks and appropriate risk assessments.

GP surgeries should remain open to treat patients in line with current Standard Operating Procedures, offering care which is safe, necessary and clinically prioritised². I wrote to you in June (a copy of the email has been included alongside this letter) recommending that you review your business continuity plans in the light of the pandemic. Given the current heightened risk I would strongly recommend that you ensure your plans include contingency arrangements to mitigate outbreaks among your staff and/or closure of premises. We strongly recommend that you liaise with your Primary Care Network to plan how to provide essential and urgent services in the event of a temporary closure of one or more sites within the network. You should also discuss your plans with your CCG who may be able to provide wider support. There should also be consideration of the use of hot and cold sites to permit separation of those confirmed or suspected to be COVID-19 positive.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/new-sars-cov-2-variant>

² <http://createsend.com/t/d-784FD6FC91C2797B2540EF23F30FEDED>

I appreciate that you and your colleagues are under unprecedented pressure from all the impacts of the pandemic and would like to thank you for your invaluable work and care for your patients and for supporting the wider NHS. Please contact your CCG if you have any queries about BCPs and they will escalate issues to me as appropriate.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Webb
Director of Primary Care and Public Health
