



Surrey Heartlands

To: General Practices

cc. Community Pharmacies
Out of Hours Providers
Care Homes
Acute Trusts
Health & Justice Providers

24 May 2024

Dear Colleagues,

Re: COVID Medicines Delivery Unit (CMDU) Update to [NICE TA878](#)

The joint Frimley and Surrey Heartlands CMDU has been operating since the end of December 2021, providing new COVID-19 treatments for patients in the highest risk categories in our community. We are writing to provide some important updates in this area.

At the end of June 2023 the service model changed with a national requirement to move away from the pandemic arrangements over to the implementation of [NICE TA878](#). The service for patients registered with a GP in Surrey Heartlands is provided by:

- East Berkshire Primary Care OOH service: Are responsible for assessing patients and prescribing treatments
- Community Pharmacies: 6 Community Pharmacies will now be responsible for dispensing and delivering prescribed treatment. Details of the participating Pharmacies are available on the Prescribing Advisory Database [Profile](#) : [Nirmatrelvir with ritonavir - Covid-19 \(res-systems.net\)](#)
- Administration of IV treatment: work is currently underway to establish a provider for this service, with an anticipated start date Summer 2024

In March 2024 [NICE TA878](#) was updated. In response to the updated guidance from **1st June 2024** the CMDU service be available to the following cohorts of patients testing positive for COVID-19:

- patients who fall into one of the high risk subgroups, as defined by the [Independent Advisory Group](#): this patient cohort remains unchanged and NICE advises treatment with oral antivirals or IV monoclonal antibody
- Additionally patients who fall into the following cohorts will be clinically assessed for treatment with an oral antiviral:
 - people aged 85 years and over

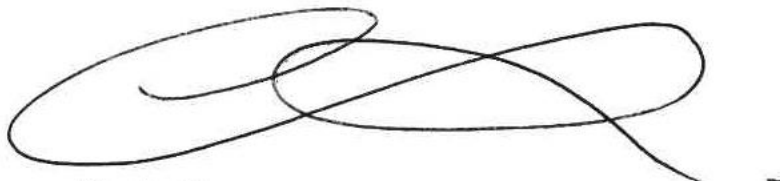
- people with end-stage heart failure who have a long-term ventricular assistance device
- people on the organ transplant waiting list
- people aged 70 years and over, or who have a BMI of 35 kg/m² or more, diabetes or heart failure, and:
 - are resident in a care home, **or**
 - are already hospitalised.

Key points to note:

- The service requires patients who fall into one of the above cohorts as defined by [NICE TA878](#), as defined by the [Independent Advisory Group](#), testing positive for COVID-19 to proactively call 03000 24 0000 for assessment (this number will be available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, though depending on time of contact there may be a need to await a call back within 24 hours to be clinically triaged).
- The number is available via the Directory of Services referrals during out of hours.
- Patients who fall into one of the cohorts as defined by [NICE TA878](#) have access to free NHS lateral flow device tests via Community Pharmacies who have signed up to the [NHS lateral flow device tests supply service for patients potentially eligible for COVID-19 treatment](#). Use this [link](#) to find out which Community Pharmacies are offering this service.
- You **do not need** to prescribe or dispense nMABs or antivirals.
- You **do not need** to make a referral to the service. Patients in the high-risk subgroups can be advised to self-refer on the number above.
- Whilst self-referral by patients on the above telephone number is the preferred route of access, the nmab.ebpc@nhs.net email remains active and is still available should you for any reason feel the need to refer patients via this route, if doing so please do remember to include current contact information for the patient to enable them to be contacted for triage.

You might want to include some information on your practice website to direct patients who fall into one of the cohorts as defined by [NICE TA878](#), to call 03000 24 0000 for assessment should they test positive for COVID-19 if not already set up.

Your Sincerely



Linda Honey

Linda Honey
Director of Pharmacy, Surrey Heartlands