

IMPORTANT: Caring for people at highest risk during COVID-19 pandemic

EMIS Health is aware of challenges related to the letter sent to patients last week and the guidance sent to GP practices by NHS England / BMA / RCGP at the weekend around identifying high-risk patients.

We have been in discussion with NHS Digital to seek clarification on a number of points:

- Enabling clinicians to understand what clinical conditions have led to patients being marked as high-risk.
- Understanding why some GP Patients are not included in the high-risk group and the process GP's need to take to include those patients.
- What responsibilities GP's have with respect to contacting patients who they believe should be included.

We are awaiting guidance from NHS Digital and we advise practices **NOT TO UNDERTAKE** any activity until further guidance is forthcoming.

Many thanks,



Extract from NHSEI newsletter 28/03/2020

Earlier this week we [wrote to you](#) regarding the process for identifying and supporting patients at highest clinical risk from coronavirus. We have received a number of questions about this process and are producing an FAQ document which aims to answer as many of those queries as possible. In the meantime, the information below covers some of the key issues that most of you have raised with us:

- All [patient letters](#) generated by the central process have now been distributed and should have been received via Royal Mail.
- In line with the letters from [Chief Medical Officer](#) (CMO) and [NHS England and NHS Improvement](#), all patients included in the CMO defined cohort that could be identified through centrally available data should have been flagged in practice IT systems.
- GPs should have received a report from their system supplier. This report can be run locally on your practice IT systems – you will not receive separate notice about this.
- If your practice have not yet got your patient flags, or report, please contact your IT system supplier and let us know immediately, via: England.covid-highestrisk@nhs.net Please do not send any lists of patients or other patient identifiable data to this email address
- We knew the data in the initial extract would not be complete due to the limitations of centrally available data. Next week, NHS Digital will update the original cohort and identify some additional patients based on GP data. Any additional patients identified will be flagged in GP systems in the same way as the original cohort and practices will have an updated report in their system.
- After this next update, we would like practices to review the list for accuracy and identify any additional patients who meet the CMO's original criteria but are not included amongst those identified. We will provide further details of how this should be done via GP system suppliers.
- As set out in the [CMO letter](#) and subsequent communications from Royal Colleges, there may be other patients, not included in the original CMO cohort, that GPs consider to be in the highest risk category and who should be advised to shield.
- **Please do not run searches to identify these cohorts at this stage. NHS Digital and ourselves will be in touch next week to confirm how this process can be streamlined for GPs.**
- In the meantime, please start to consider specific patients within your practice who may fall into this category of extremely vulnerable on medical grounds. We expect this to be small numbers; shielding will only be effective if we focus these most stringent protective measures on those at the highest clinical risk.