

Chief Executive Officers
Medical Directors
Acute NHS and NHS Foundation Trusts
Community and Mental Health Trusts with UTCs

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Dear Colleague,

Friday 7 February 2020

Coronavirus Priority Assessment Service

Thank you for your recent work in planning for local responses to the Coronavirus outbreak.

The case definition, and associated guidance, is changing rapidly. Up to date information can be found at:

- For the public: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/wuhan-novel-coronavirus/>
- For health care workers: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus>

NHS 111 is the main route of managing individuals who are concerned they may fit the case definition for 2019-nCoV. The aim is to manage as many individuals as possible in the community, and safeguard the business as usual processes of NHS frontline units.

Individuals may present to acute units at the request of NHS 111, or may self-present. To mitigate the burden of this on the frontline, a standard operating procedure (SOP) was issued on Friday 31 January asking organisations to plan a local Coronavirus Priority Assessment Service.

This service is designed to protect NHS staff, and members of the public from the Coronavirus outbreak whilst safeguarding NHS business as usual resources.

Within the NHS 111 Coronavirus Service patients will be directed to an NHS 111 Coronavirus Pod to be assessed by NHS 111. Should it be determined that they need to be tested, the receiving unit will be contacted by NHS 111, and diagnostic sampling should take place as per PHE guidance.

Following the release of the SOP on 31 January, we have had feedback from across the NHS, both through our regional teams and from the webinars on Thursday 6th February.



We have today released Version 2 of the SOP. We appreciate that this is a fast moving and challenging situation, and we understand that plans need to be made which consider the local and regional differences in healthcare infrastructure and provision. The SOP has been aligned with NHS 111, infection control teams and frontline clinical feedback.

Posters will be provided to support your organisation in implementing these plans.

Please continue to ask questions and provide feedback via your regional EPRR teams. Other plans, including home diagnostic sampling and non-ambulance transport provisions, are being drawn up and your efforts to provide the Coronavirus Priority Assessment Service in the meantime are invaluable in safeguarding the public, and our fantastic NHS staff, whilst other plans are implemented to enhance our overall response.

We will continue to provide updates via EPRR structures and also through weekly webinars.

We would request that you have your implementation plans drawn up by the end of Wednesday 12th February. Please enact these local plans as soon as possible, with an expectation that all Coronavirus Priority Assessment Services should be operational by Friday 21st February at the latest.

We acknowledge that some of the requests within the SOP may provide specific challenges to particular organisations. Your regional EPRR teams coordinating the wider response to Coronavirus are ready to support you with these challenges.

Thank you all for your ongoing hard work.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Willett', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Professor Keith Willett
NHS Strategic Incident Director (Coronavirus)
NHS England and NHS Improvement