



Date: 1st April 2020

Wessex Cancer Alliance
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Dear CEO colleague,

In these extra-ordinary times we write, not to add to your burden, but to ensure that there is a commonality of understanding between Wessex providers regarding the provision of urgent cancer care during the COVID pandemic.

NHS Trusts are working urgently with nearby private providers to establish new pathways of care for these patients.

We would be grateful if you would **briefly outline how your Trust is working in collaboration** in this way (whether for example transferring surgical casemix, providing inpatient medical care, or providing systemic therapy provision off site).

A fuller understanding of your plans will make it easier for us to establish where capacity opportunities may exist for others if it becomes necessary to transfer pathways of care between NHS Trusts.

Sadly it will be necessary for difficult decisions to be taken about the investigation and treatment of patients referred with a suspected cancer diagnosis.

It remains the responsibility of primary care to refer such patients according to national guidance, and to maintain ownership of such patients where a mutually agreed decision has been taken not to refer at this time.

However, where patients are referred to secondary care, **Trusts must maintain a PTL for all patients, whether on an active or temporarily suspended pathway.**

Where patient pathways have been suspended it will be crucial during the recovery phase for all providers to use common codes to indicate the reason for and intention of pathway suspension.

Please can we ask you to ensure that your cancer management teams apply the recommended COVID pathway decision codes which you may already have seen but are as follows:

COVID-19: Patient cancellation - Afraid/Deferred post-COVID

COVID-19: Patient unwell

COVID-19: Patient self-isolating

COVID-19: Trust Decision based on risk assessment

COVID-19: Patient pathway pause Diagnostics – social distancing

COVID-19: Trust Clinical pathway pause Diagnostics

COVID-19: Patient pathway pause Treatment – social distancing

COVID-19: Trust Clinical pathway pause Treatment

COVID-19: Trust Treatment change due to guidance/risk stratification


Please accept our thanks for your ongoing efforts on behalf of our cancer patients at this very difficult time for everyone.



Matthew Hayes
Medical Director



Paula Head
Chair



Sally Rickard
Managing Director