

Deployment of COVID-19 treatments for highest risk non-hospitalised patients – key messages for primary care

- [The clinical commissioning policy for neutralising monoclonal antibodies \(nMABS\) or antivirals for non-hospitalised patients with COVID-19](#) has been released.
- A local COVID-19 Medicine Delivery Unit (CMDU) for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire has been set up at Nottingham University Hospitals (NUH) to provide access to COVID treatments for non-hospitalised patients (aged 12 and over) believed to be at greatest risk of disease progression, hospitalisation or death.
- Patients are eligible if they meet all of the eligibility criteria and none of the exclusion criteria AND have a positive PCR test (or registered positive lateral flow) within the last 7 days AND onset of COVID-19 symptoms within the last 7 days. A full list of eligible cohorts (based on medical history) and exclusion criteria can be found in the [commissioning policy](#).
- GP practices do not need to confirm patient eligibility for treatment, outside of the two basic referral criteria below, nor discuss treatment options as this will be carried out by the CMDU.
 - Timing of symptom onset (within last 7 days) & a positive **PCR test** within 7 days.
 - Assessment of severity of symptoms to confirm the patient does not require immediate hospitalisation.
- The highest risk patients have been identified nationally and will have received this [letter](#) from NHS England and NHS Improvement to inform that they may be suitable for these new treatments if a test confirms coronavirus. In the event of a positive PCR test or registered positive lateral flow, the local CMDU will contact most patients directly to discuss the treatment and confirm eligibility.
- Any highest risk patients who are not contacted directly by the CMDU after 24 hours of a positive PCR/registered lateral flow test result are being asked to phone their GP practice or 111 (out of hours) for an urgent referral to CMDU. This may include patients who have been identified by local specialist teams as being eligible but not picked up through national coding.
- If a potentially eligible patient contacts the GP practice, and is not presenting as clinically unwell, do not contact the on-call consultant or send the patient to A&E. You will need to do an urgent referral to the local CMDU using the electronic Referral Service (e-RS). The service name is “COVID-19 Neutralising Monoclonal Antibodies (nMABS) Delivery Unit (CMDU) – Nottinghamshire patients”. The service ID is 7980354 found under the ‘Infectious Diseases’ speciality and ‘not otherwise specified’ clinic type. This referral is time critical as these treatments should be started as soon as possible as preferred treatments must be delivered within 5-7 days of COVID-19 symptom onset.
- If a potentially eligible patient contacts the GP practice and is presenting as clinically unwell, follow the normal review and escalation procedures.
- The CMDU will contact **all** patients that are referred to them to let them know whether or not they are eligible for treatment.
- GPs will not be expected to prescribe or dispense nMABS or antivirals. nMABS (sotrovimab) or remdesivir will be administered intravenously at the local CMDU and oral antivirals (Paxlovid® or molnupiravir) will be prescribed, dispensed and delivered directly to patients from the local CMDU.
- GPs will be notified if patients are treated by the CMDU and must be aware of a **large number of significant and potentially dangerous drug interactions with Paxlovid® (PF-07321332 (nirmatrelvir) plus ritonavir)**
 - The CMDU will conduct a full medication history (including prescription, over the counter, contraception and herbal medications) with the patient prior to the medication being prescribed and may advise temporary

adjustments to regular therapy which can typically be restarted/readjusted 3 days after the last dose of Paxlovid®.

- Patients using combined hormonal contraceptives should be advised to use an effective alternative contraceptive method or an additional barrier method of contraception during treatment and until after one complete menstrual cycle after stopping Paxlovid®.
- **Extreme caution** must be taken if any new medicines are initiated whilst a patient is taking, or has recently completed, a course of Paxlovid and interactions MUST be checked in advance of all new medicine prescribing
- For more information use the [Liverpool COVID-19 interactions checker](#) to check for interactions, noting that it is not exhaustive. If in doubt, please speak to your CCG/PCN/ward pharmacist.
- Oral antivirals will also be made available to a wider cohort of at-risk patients through a national study known as PANORAMIC. GPs can help recruitment to this study; further details are in the NHS England and NHS Improvement [letter to general practice](#).
- The main CMDU infusion suite is located at the St Francis unit at NUH City campus and there is a satellite suite at Kings Mill Hospital, supported by Sherwood Forest Hospitals, which can accommodate a small numbers of patients from the North of the county..