

Date: 02 April 2020

Yeovil District Hospital
Higher Kingston
Yeovil
Somerset BA21 4AT
Switchboard: 01935 475122
Email: caroline.osborne@ydh.nhs.uk

Dear Colleagues

Advice for General Practitioners

Fast Track suspected Cancer referrals

During the pandemic, people will continue to experience symptoms that meet two-week wait referral criteria for suspected cancer. Pressures on the hospital means that we may not be able to offer the same assessment service for patients referred on 2ww pathway as we did before the pandemic.

We are ensuring that we have appropriate triage systems and safety netting procedures in place so that potential cancer patients are managed appropriately and not lost to the system during this challenging period.

In order to manage **patients' expectations** around their suspected cancer referral there are several key points that we are kindly asking GPs to relay to patients:

- The way that the hospital is assessing potential cancer patients has changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The assessment will start with a **telephone consultation** for many patients.
- The next steps will depend on whether clinical features are high or low risk.
- Some patients may be advised about having an investigation before seeing a consultant.
- Following referral, patients will be entered onto a "safety netting" register to ensure that tests and appointments are followed up.
- Some appointments for investigations or follow up may not take place in Yeovil District Hospital; patients may be asked to attend a different hospital.

Each 2ww cancer pathway referral will be vetted and triaged based on the information in the referral proforma.

In order for us to be able to triage referrals safely and effectively it is incredibly helpful to us if you could include the following relevant information:

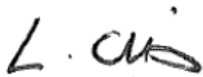


- Reason for referral
- Patients' WHO status
- Any comorbidities
- What information you have told the patient
- Whether you have seen the patient face to face or whether you held a telephone or video consultation.

This will enable specialists to triage referrals with the greatest clinical need appropriately.

It is essential that urgent cancer treatments continue and given that the COVID situation is likely to persist for some time, rather than deferring cancer care, continuing to provide it through reconfigured care pathways is generally a more appropriate approach. We appreciate that everyone in primary and secondary care is working hard, in an uncertain and difficult time and we truly thank you for your help and support in helping us to manage our 2ww referrals.

Yours faithfully



Luke Curtis

General Manager Cancer Services

Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust



Caroline Osborne

Clinical Director Cancer Services

Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust



Contact numbers

Please refer patients with suspected cancer via the normal 2ww referral proformas.

If you feel that you need further advice about referring a suspected cancer please contact us to discuss the referral. The contact numbers for site specific advice during the COVID pandemic are listed below:

Suspected Breast Cancer Referrals	01935 384352
Suspected Urological Cancer Referrals	07557 314837
Suspected Lower GI Referrals	01935 606064
Suspected Upper GI Cancer Referrals	01935 383048
Suspected Gynaecological Cancer Referrals	01935 384650
Suspected Lung Cancer Referrals	01935 384574
Suspected Haematological Cancer Referrals	07467 004675
Suspected Head and Neck Cancer Referrals	07554406370 or 01935 606466
Suspected Brain Cancer Referrals	07554406370 or 01935 606466
Suspected Skin Cancer Referrals	07886 295367
Suspected Cancer in Children	01935 384467 or 01935 384360

We have also set up a local **Cancer Patient Helpline** which will be staffed by our cancer support workers to assist patients who have general enquires about their cancer and treatments. This is going live on Tuesday 7th April 2020.

Cancer Helpline for Patients (weekdays 0900-1700) 01935 609684

There is an **Acute Oncology Assessment Service** with a patient helpline. This is specifically for patients currently having systemic anti-cancer therapy (chemotherapy/immunotherapy etc). These patients will be asked to contact the helpline if they are concerned about any new symptoms they develop. The helpline will be staffed by a team of acute oncology specialist nurses who will triage patients to the correct care setting in view of their symptoms.

Acute Oncology Patient Helpline (weekdays 0830-1830) 01935 384873

