Dear Colleague

Latest Update re Patients Identified for ‘Shielding’

You will be aware that both North and South Lanarkshire Councils have assisted us in the first pass at contacting all those ‘thus far’ identified in the list of “clinically highest risk groups” who have received a letter from Scottish Government. These are those patients in the initial 6 categories in the CMO letter – attached for ease of reference.

There might be others who are vulnerable for a multitude of reasons, e.g. flu vaccination ‘at risk’ groups, these patients do not require shielding advice, but need to follow social distancing measures only. There are also other vulnerable groups due to risk factors such as severe frailty, mental health issues, substance misuse, poverty etc. and would benefit from practical support. These patients will not receive a letter.

You will also be aware that there continues to be additional lists of people described as ‘at risk’ being produced from Scottish Government and, as these lists are released, so we are contacting the patients involved to ensure they are able to receive basic food and supplies as well as any medication that they might need.

The guidance schedule attached also explains the process to be undertaken to run audits of ‘shielded’ patients in your practice who have been sent the letters.

You should now therefore note that

1. The READ code is being applied by InPractice systems in accordance with the schedule above.
2. That eHealth facilitation have provided guidance as to how to access the audit.

You will be contacted by a member of the primary care team to alert you to when the list of those patients in your practice have been contacted by the Council (s) and the results of where they have either

1. indicated they would be keen to have medicines delivered (as they have initially indicated that they do not have friends/family who could collect on their behalf) or
2. who have indicated they have a clinical need that they would want assistance with (some brief detail of which is included in the narrative)

In relation to (a), a note of all the pharmacists in your area, where they provide home delivery services for shielded patients, will also be provided. This would allow a message to be put on any repeat prescription requests for this group that if they do not have friends/family to collect, then the respective pharmacy can deliver.

We will be in contact with you in the next seven days to identify if there are any people in your respective practice who do not have access to a home delivery service, such that we can arrange delivery of medicines as required.

In relation to (b), it is obvious that a number of the queries are of a minor nature, however for some it will require the GP/respective clinician in the practice to ensure the appropriate response/review of current clinical need to advise the patient accordingly of future management of care.

Alongside this, each locality’s treatment room service is contacting those patients where there is a recognised need for continuing input – as per guidance/letter attached. We have asked that the treatment room services ensure each practice is aware of the respective patients who will continue to receive a service. Please contact your respective Locality Service Manager if there are any issues re access to respective treatment room support.

(NB The vast majority of treatment room services which are continuing will be delivered in a domiciliary context to assist with the overall public health ‘staying at home‘ message re ‘clinically highest risk’ and shielded patients not leaving home. This will be subject to regular review to resume normal delivery as soon as possible.)

We are progressing work to help with the identification and final notification of the list of those patients who make up ‘group 7’. GPs will also have the opportunity to identify patients who they believe should be in ‘group 7’ from their lists. Could you therefore please continue to send a list of any patients you identify to Shieldingpatients@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk indicating the reasons for this as this would help with follow up arrangements?

You will appreciate that given the pace this has moved at and the various contributing factors along the way, it will be inevitable that there will have been patients missed, some who may have had a recent diagnosis, or may have died, moved house etc. and as such your assistance in cross checking the patients identified from all lists is vital. This includes the ‘group 7’ patients identified from secondary care for whom there will be limited or no data on co-morbidities on clinical portal to assess if they need to be part of group 7. The list of all patients in ‘group 7’ need to be sent to NSS so that shielding letters could be issued as soon as possible.

Once received, we will work through a similar contact arrangement to remove much of the initial calls that would be required by GP practices.

We have also attached the latest letter which has gone to all patients in the shielded group for information.

Finally, all the documentation in relation to ‘shielding’ is also contained at the link below

<http://firstport2/staff-support/knowledge-services/public-health/shielding/default.aspx>

We trust this is helpful.

Linda Findlay Keith McIntyre