

Delivery of Pulse Oximeters to Care Homes – MAY 2020

Primary Care Update

Background

CCGs received a letter on 01st May 2020 regarding primary care support to care homes which specified that CCGs should ensure patients are reviewed regularly. This should include remote monitoring of Covid-19 patients using pulse oximeters and other equipment.

The basis for this was a document advocating the use of oximeters to help detect rapid deterioration (silent hypoxia) in the community.

A supply of nationally procured pulse oximeters has been made available for rapid distribution to care homes, with the supply being overseen by primary care.

Initial distribution

The oximeters will arrive in batches with an initial batch of 236 being allocated to Greater Manchester on 22nd May. Due to the rapid delivery it has been decided to distribute the initial batch equally to the local resilience forum (LRF's) at each of the 10 GM localities.

The allocation and further distribution of the pulse oximeters will be for local CCG consideration. Some care homes will already have pulse oximeters and some CCGs are piloting their use, therefore the requirements across GM will vary.

A further allocation will be supplied in installments during June and July, the final quantity for GM is estimated to be in the region of circa 8,000 (final figures still to be confirmed). These additional meters need to be deployed in a way that ensures maximum patient benefit and further work needs to take place to identify where best to place these.

The oximeters are a one-off procurement at a national level and no charge will be levied. However, there will be no replacement monitors provided and ongoing maintenance will be expected to be the responsibility of the care homes.

Guidance on use

There has not been any national remote monitoring guidance issued with NHS England proposing that training is managed locally.

A video has been produced by the RCGP that has been endorsed by the GP Excellence team and the GM training hub for use within Greater Manchester:

Elearning.RCGP Pulse oximetry in care homes

The pulse oximeters are intended to complement the usual care provided to patients with the benefit of providing SATS and heart rate. The resulting decision made regarding the care of the patient should follow the usual pathway.

Next Steps

The initial tranche of pulse oximeters have been delivered to each locality and CCGs are asked to consider how these are distributed locally.

We estimate that we will be provided with enough pulse oximeters to provide at least one per care home and consideration needs to be given with respect to identifying other services which may benefit from having access to this piece of equipment.

The GM Primary Care Cell will co-ordinate this discussion and would welcome your feedback on potential other priority areas or whether all of the pulse oximeters are distributed to our care homes.

As part of the 01st May 2020 letter requirements, each care home now has an identified named clinical lead and it would be helpful if they also had oversight of the distribution of the pulse oximeters across your locality.

For further information about the national delivery please contact Sarah Jacobs: sarahjacobs1@nhs.net

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