

Collaborative Working Project between Leyland PCN, within Lancashire and South Cumbria ICS, and Pfizer Limited to improve access to COVID-19 therapeutics in deprived populations: review of project outcomes

Background

Due to high levels of respiratory disease and other multi morbidities, Lancashire & South Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS) has made respiratory disease a priority for all its Primary Care Networks (PCNs). Across the ICS, PCNs were instructed to take part in a project to support "Respiratory Wellness over Winter" with high-risk respiratory patients being referred to their Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLW). Leyland PCN decided it would be appropriate to add COVID-19 therapeutic eligible patients to this list of high-risk respiratory patients.

Until 27 June 2023, the process to identify COVID-19 therapeutic eligible patients was managed by NHS England and involved letters or texts to inform eligible patients of what to do in the event of catching COVID-19. Since then, there has been no national process to identify and contact eligible patients. Leyland PCN took ownership of this process, engaging with patients using PCN "Additional Roles Reimbursement Staff" (ARRS) with the aim to demonstrate a significant improvement to the patient pathway by providing the opportunity for trained staff to proactively reach out to patients (on the telephone) from the most deprived populations.

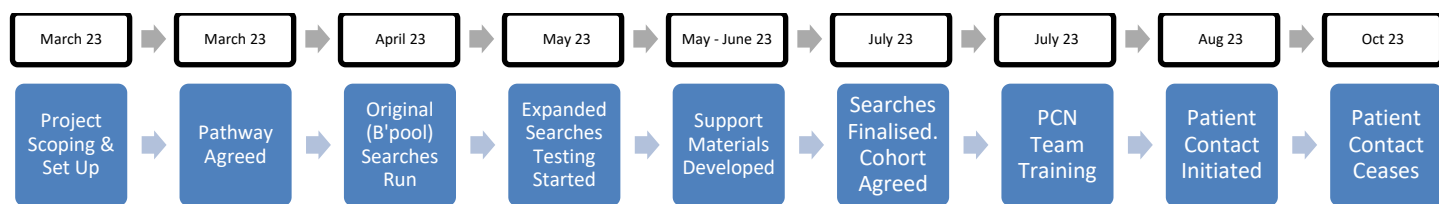
The process

The English Indices of Deprivation show that there are some areas in Leyland with problems related to deprivation. Three Super Output Areas fall within the top 20% most deprived areas in England. These areas include Clayton Brook, Golden Hill, Seven Stars and Lowerhouse.

The project considered pathways and processes to ensure that patients:

- 1) Were accurately identified by designing, checking and ratifying a "COVID-19 Therapeutic Eligibility Search" in EMIS.
- 2) Were referred in a timely manner to our PCN Lifestyle Improvement Team.
- 3) Received appropriate and personalised support from our practice teams through the utilisation/development of appropriate patient and health professional materials.

The development of the EMIS searches proved to be an important and difficult part of the project. However, by working with a GP practice in Blackpool, the PCN data team and the MLCSU data quality team built confidence in the search. In early August the search was agreed as accurate, and patient contact was initiated. The searches identified a total of 308 patients in the most deprived cohorts to be contacted.



Results

The team successfully made contact with 201 patients and failed to make contact with 107 patients, of the total 308. The outcomes of the 201 successful calls were as follows;

Call Breakdown	PCN Total
CAT A: aware of pathway, have Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs), & know how to report positive result	10 (5%)
CAT B1: partially aware of pathway and agreed to follow the advice given	35 (17%)
CAT B2: partially aware of pathway but were not interested in the advice given	0 (0%)
CAT C1: unaware of pathway and agreed to follow the advice given	148 (74%)
CAT C2: unaware of pathway and were uninterested in the advice	8 (4%)
TOTAL	201

To achieve the above results, patients were phoned a maximum of 3 times and the full breakdown of calls made was as follows;

1 contact	2 contacts	3 contacts	Unsuccessful contact
186	13	2	107

The total staff time for all the above calls is estimated as approx. 95 hours (13.6 working days)

The contacts included other interventions and, following the ethos of "Make Every Contact Count" (MECC), all 201 patients successfully contacted were given information and advice about:

- How to access COVID-19 therapeutics when appropriate
- Contacting their practice for attendance at annual reviews
- Brief interventions about appropriate long-term conditions (bespoke conversations based on a review of patients notes)
- How to access flu jabs within the local community
- How to access Social Prescribing Link Worker and Health & Wellbeing Coaches

Conclusions and next steps

Overall, the project can be considered a major success with 183 patients out of a total of 201 contacted (=91%) either unaware or partially aware of the pathway for COVID-19 therapeutics and agreeing to follow the advice provided by the PCN Lifestyle Improvement team.

As a result of this successful pilot, the PCN care coordinators are now running a search to identify **all** patients eligible for a COVID-19 therapeutic (not just those from the most deprived wards). The PCN will suggest that practices “push” an SMS message regarding eligibility for COVID-19 therapeutics out to this cohort via AccurX. The PCN have an agreed template for this “push” message.

The PCN will endeavour to contact the remaining 107 patients who have yet to be reached. They are considering alternative opportunities to reach these people (i.e., working with council led social prescribers, and the council’s outreach teams).

In addition as follow-up processes in Q2, 2024, the PCN will endeavour to re-contact patients to see if they were able to access COVID-19 therapeutics if they became ill, and how they managed their illness through that period.

Finally, the PCN team involved in the project are committed to continuing to spread best practice across NHS organisations and will seek to support the roll out of this project through Lancashire and South Cumbria population health teams. This may include PCN Manager forums, Practice Manager forums, Health Inequalities leads group, etc. The PCN will also continue to support the spread of the project across other PCN/NHS organisations so patients from all ICSs can benefit.