Introduction

Current general practice is being inundated with routine and acute work, the implications of a backlog of referrals, extra vaccination requirements, winter pressures and an evolving second wave of patients with Covid-19. As such, this has been developed as a pragmatic guide to support busy general practices wanting to set up a reactive remote monitoring solution for patients with suspected or confirmed Covid-19 who are assessed as mild but need community monitoring. It is based on national guidance and is envisaged that this can be easily slotted into your existing on the day service with minimal disruption of practice team routines.

Technology used

- EMIS along with Arden’s Novel Coronavirus Covid-19 template (currently version 15.7)
- Accurx Florey optional (use of Accurx is simple if just using one EMIS database. However, it adds a layer of complexity if using EMIS Community across multiple practices)

Team required

- Administrator (~30 minutes total time per patient requiring remote monitoring)
- Band 6 Nurse/Physicians Associate (~20 minutes per new patient and 10 minutes per existing patient)

Administrator

- Maintains spreadsheet of packs currently in use (annex A)
- Create appointment slots in ‘on the day’ EMIS appointment template for remote monitoring. Suggest 5 in the morning and 5 in the afternoon each day
Referral from hot hub/on the day GP team

- Suspected/confirmed Covid-19 via telephone/video/f2f assessment
- Clinical decision to undertake remote monitoring based on current symptoms, observations and risk of deterioration following national guidance
- Novel Coronavirus Covid-19 Ardens template used (remote clinical or face-to-face assessment tab based on type of assessment). Only situation template is not used is where you are happy Covid-19 is not a possibility
- Request patient obtains Covid-19 test or undertake swab in-house
Remote monitoring team: For new patients to remote monitoring

Band 6 Nurse/Physicians Associate
- Provide verbal advice on monitoring condition using the diary and when to seek medical help
- Confirm frequency and modality of monitoring with patient (telephone/SMS)
- Set up Accurx Covid-19 remote monitoring Florey if required
- Send templated SMS message with link to video animation explaining remote monitoring to new patients

Note: this needs to be set up in Practice Accurx templates
Sample text: We are giving you a remote monitoring pack containing a diary and pulse oximeter because you have symptoms of Covid-19. The pack contains instructions on how to monitor your symptoms and when to contact for medical help. The instructions are also available as a video animation. Please go to the following link to assess the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAeZVIAQ2sQ

- Adds patient to appropriate future appointment (AM slot for telephone, PM slot for SMS response)
- Tasks administrator to organise collection/delivery of remote monitoring pack
- (friend/relative collection, https://www.goodsamapp.org/nhsreferral or practice staff delivery)
Remote monitoring team: For existing patients in appointment slots

Band 6 Nurse/Physicians Associate as part of on the day team

If remote monitoring via telephone:
Contact existing patients booked into appointments
Add pulse rate, oxygen saturation and general condition reported by patient along with any new symptoms (add BP and temperature if available). Add via Clinical Review tab in Ardens template – see below

If remote monitoring via Accurx:
- Review Accurx response, add response to notes
- If no response by afternoon, contact patient response received by afternoon

- Organise hot hub assessment/admission if needed and add patient to following day appointment slot
- If no assessment/admission needed, determine next review date and add patient to appropriate appointment slot

Clinical review of existing remote monitoring patients using Ardens template
Remote monitoring team: For completed remote monitoring

Band 6 Nurse/Physicians Associate as part of on the day team

- If patient improved and remained stable at 14 days, end remote monitoring and task administrator to organise collection/delivery of remote monitoring pack
- Decontaminate returned packs:
  - Wear gloves and wash hands after cleaning the pulse-oximeter and disposing of non-reusable contents[1]. If the paper diary is included, obtain images for health record and dispose of diary in the clinical waste bin
- Pulse oximeter to be cleaned with actichlor solution and placed in a new zip-lock bag with a new patient diary. The returned bag should be disposed of in the clinical waste bin

Administrator

- Pack to be returned as pulse oximeter +/- paper diary within the zip-lock bag, by the patient or non-isolating patient contact. If patient unable to return, to organise for volunteer or practice staff collection
- Paper diary only to be included if no documentation of vital signs recordings
- Pack to be recorded as returned in spreadsheet