

## Covid at Home: Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some commonly asked questions and answers we have compiled as part of support for the rapid implementation of Covid at Home models across Wessex.

The list is a working document and is not exhaustive so please contact [admin@wessexahsn.net](mailto:admin@wessexahsn.net) if you have any questions that are not covered by any of the information below.

### 1. Definitions

#### ***What is Covid at Home?***

Covid at Home is the name used in Wessex to describe a virtual ward model that delivers an enhanced package of monitoring (of symptoms and oxygen saturations) for patients with confirmed/suspected covid-19 and who is at risk of future deterioration/admission. The monitoring provided supports the individual to remain in their usual place of residence whilst providing opportunity for symptoms they are experiencing to be overseen and reviewed by experienced health professionals.

### 2. Pulse Oximeters

#### ***How do I order pulse oximeters?***

NHS England and NHS Improvement have purchased a limited supply of pulse oximeters that can be transferred to CCGs free of charge for their local areas when there is an urgent need such as increased local infection rate, existing intention to purchase pulse oximeters, or care homes with insufficient oximeters. For more information and to submit a request for oximeters please contact [england.home@nhs.net](mailto:england.home@nhs.net).

#### ***How are the monitors being allocated?***

At the moment, monitors are allocated to any team who request them from NHS England. It is recommended you use the following ratios as a rough guide to identify the numbers you'll need: 30 per GP practice (8,000 population), 300 per acute trust (600,000 population) and 1 per 25 care home residents. Once a request has been sent to the NHS England team, they are reviewed by the NHS England team in relation to your local population and Covid numbers.

#### ***How can we deliver and collect pulse oximeters to and from patients?***

There are many approaches that teams have taken so far. This includes asking the patient or well relative to collect the pulse oximeter from an agreed location, or members of the virtual ward team being allocated to deliver the equipment to the patient's usual place of residence. Some teams have also used voluntary services such as GoodSAM which is a

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volunteer service set up to support the NHS and the social care sector during the Covid-19 pandemic.

***How do I use GoodSAM?***

The GoodSAM team have been used by some virtual ward models to support the delivery and collection of pulse oximeters. The GoodSAM team are currently developing a SOP to support their role in delivering and collecting pulse oximeters but to use the service a staff member can complete a referral on [www.goodsamapp.org/nhsreferral](http://www.goodsamapp.org/nhsreferral). GoodSAM locates the nearest volunteer who is 'on duty' and alerts them that someone needs their help. They can either accept the task or can decline it if they're not able to undertake the task, and it will pass to the next nearest volunteer and so on until someone accepts it. For more information, please visit the

website: <https://www.goodsamapp.org/NHS>

***We have already ordered our monitors but need more – what can we do?***

You can submit another request to the NHS England team.

***How quicky are the monitors delivered following a request?***

In general, orders are turned around in 3 working days. There is no priority system but if you need monitors urgently, the NHS England team can organise a 1 day delivery.

***Is there a specific brand of pulse oximeters being used and is training provided to teams to use them?***

There are two brands of monitors being used but both are CE approved and meet all ISO standards. The NHS England team are pulling together a support package for their use (but not available yet) which is based on existing work done by some Covid at Home teams.

***Can patients use their own?***

Yes. All products, provided they are CE kite marked, are safe to use in the 90%+ range (they may be less accurate below 90), but don't use \*smartphones\* as oximeters

<https://www.cebm.net/covid-19/question-should-smartphone-appsbe-used-as-oximeters-answer-no/>

***Can the monitors be used on children and young people?***

Most devices are suitable for people aged 16 and over. Specialist equipment designed for paediatrics and specialist team assessment should be considered. Covid-19 cases requiring escalation are rare in children, but it is important to consider other conditions such as sepsis that require immediate support.

***Is there a specific disinfection/infection control process that is recommended to teams with the monitors, or is this based on local protocol/policy?***

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It is recommended that team use normal infection guidance for reusable equipment i.e. cleaning with alcohol-based wipes and then leave the monitors untouched for 3 days.

***Is there a time limit to NHS England pulse oximeter service?***

At the moment the service is planned to run until March 2021.

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