To: General Practices

cc. Community Pharmacies

Out of Hours Providers

Care Homes

Acute Trusts

Health & Justice Providers

7th July 2026

Dear Colleagues,

Re: COVID Medicines Delivery Unit (CMDU) Update NICE TA878

From Monday 13th July, the Primary care based CMDU model that has successfully operated providing new COVID-19 treatments for patients in the highest risk categories since December 2021 across the historic Frimley ICB and Surrey Heartlands ICB localities is to be extended to encompass the new Thames Valley ICB. We are writing to provide some important updates on this service which are especially relevant across the historic BOB ICB where this service had been provided by acute hospital trusts but who will no longer do so from Monday 13th July. There is no change for the historic Surrey Heartlands locality where the service will continue to operate as it has done to date.

At the end of June 2023 there was a national requirement to move away from the pandemic arrangements over to the implementation of NICE TA878. The service for patients registered with a GP across Thames Valley ICB from Monday 13th July will be provided by:

• **East Berkshire Primary Care OOH service:** Are responsible for assessing patients and prescribing treatments

• **Community Pharmacies**: 10 Community Pharmacies will now be responsible for dispensing (and by exception if needed delivering) prescribed treatment. Details of the participating Pharmacies are available here

• **IV therapy**: Following the withdrawal of Sotrovimab from the UK market there is no parenteral treatment option for treating COVID-19 in the community as such the service offered will be with two oral antiviral options.

In March 2024 NICE TA878 was updated. In response to the updated guidance from 1st June 2024 the CMDU service has been available to the following cohorts of patients testing positive for COVID-19:

• patients who fall into one of the high risk subgroups, as defined by the Independent Advisory Group: this patient cohort remains unchanged

• Additionally patients who fall into the following cohorts will be clinically assessed for treatment with an oral antiviral:

o people aged 85 years and over

o people with end-stage heart failure who have a long-term ventricular assistance device

o people on the organ transplant waiting list

o people aged 70 years and over, or who have a BMI of 35 kg/m2 or more, diabetes or heart failure, and:

▪ are resident in a care home, **or**

▪ are already hospitalised.

Key points to note:

• The service requires patients who fall into one of the above cohorts as defined by NICE TA878, and by the Independent Advisory Group, testing positive for COVID-19 to proactively call 03000 24 0000 for assessment (this number will be available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, though depending on time of contact there may be a need to await a call back within 24 hours to be clinically triaged).

• The number is available via the Directory of Services referrals during out of hours.

• Patients who fall into one of the cohorts as defined by NICE TA878 have access to free NHS lateral flow device tests via Community Pharmacies who have signed up to the NHS lateral flow device tests supply service for patients potentially eligible for COVID-19 treatment. Use this link to find out which Community Pharmacies are offering this service.

• You do not need to prescribe or dispense antivirals.

• You do not need to make a referral to the service. Patients in the high-risk subgroups can be advised to self-refer on the number above.

• Whilst self-referral by patients on the above telephone number is the preferred route of access, there is an email, nmab.ebpc@nhs.net which remains active and is available should you for any reason feel the need to refer patients via this route, if doing so please do remember to include current contact information for the patient to enable them to be contacted for triage.

You might want to include some information on your practice website to direct patients who fall into one of the cohorts as defined by NICE TA878, to call 03000 24 0000 for assessment should they test positive for COVID-19 if not already set up.

Yours Sincerely

Mohammed Asghar

Associate Director of Pharmacy, Thames Valley ICB