**Guidance for managing community clozapine patients during COVID-19**

**1.0 Background**

During the outbreak of Covid-19 it is possible that patients may not be able to attend their usual testing location for a blood test and to collect their normal supply of medication.

**2.0 Managing patients unable to attend for their blood test**

2.1 Depending on the frequency of blood test monitoring there is a grace period where clozapine can be given, allowing for patients to rearrange their blood test (see below). In this Trust we have requested that Lloyds pharmacy supply the maximum amount of clozapine as a one off when the patient attends the next clozapine clinic to reduce the risk of patients missing their dose for > 48 hours in cases where patients are quarantined or have confirmed Covid-19

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Monitoring frequency** | **Supply of clozapine that Lloyds pharmacy normally supply** | **Maximum supply of clozapine from date of last sample to cover patients during the covid-19 outbreak** |
| Weekly | 7 days | 10 days |
| 2 weekly | 14 days | 21 days |
| 4 weekly | 28 days | 42 days |

2.2In the event that a patient is unable to attend their usual clozapine clinic for a blood test it is important to rearrange it as soon as possible and not leave it towards the end of the grace period. Alternative options include:

* Attend clinic on a different day
* Attend a different clinic elsewhere **(See appendix 1)**
* Nurse/ doctor attend patient to take bloods
* Attend GP practice (if phlebotomy service is available)
* Attend at a blood test centre (e.g. community hospital, district general hospital, will need a blood form)

**3.0 Patients who have confirmed / suspected COVID-19 or self-isolating**

3.1 All confirmed or symptomatic cases need to be on put on the RED board in the CMHT’s. Liaise with the staff in the clozapine clinics to ensure this happens.

3.2 If patient is experiencing severe respiratory problems then advice should be sought by contacting NHS 111 and consider stopping clozapine

3.4 If Patients present with **flu-like symptoms with chest pain and shortness of breath**. Consider WITHOLDING **clozapine** (suspect myocarditis and investigate accordingly).

3.5 Patients presenting with flu-like symptoms with no chest pain or shortness of breath can continue clozapine but will require an URGENT FBC (suspect neutropenia). They should not attend healthcare settings for phlebotomy.

The table below shows a symptom comparison of COVID‐19 and a low white cell count:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **COVID‐19** | **Low White Cell Count** |
| A high temperature of 38C or above | A high temperature of 38C or above |
| A new, continuous cough (coughing a lot for  more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing  episodes in 24 hours) | Flu‐like symptoms (aches, lethargy, dry cough,  headache, nausea, diarrhoea) |
| Breathing difficulties | Sore throat |
|  | Chills and shivering |

**3.6 Bloods from suspected cases and positive covid-19 patients should not be tested in a PoCHi machine because the machines can generate aerosols – this could lead to increased rate of spread.**

3.7 In appendix 2 there is guidance on transportation of blood samples. Further information can be found in the KMPT policy titled “Taking specimens for microbiological investigations.” Available at: <http://i-connect.kmpt.nhs.uk/downloads/infection-control/TakingSpecimensKMPT.CliG.091.03.pdf>

3.7 If patient has an amber or red result guidance should be followed as per clozapine policy.

3.8 It is important to check smoking status because patients with a chest infection will be smoking less, effectively increasing clozapine plasma levels. A decision should be made to consider a clozapine dose reduction and a plasma level in 7 days.

3.9 When a clozapine plasma level is sent to **ASI Laboratory Team for analysis the request form must be clearly marked if the patient has tested positive for COVID-19. It is also imperative that samples are packaged appropriately using the kits provided, including the rigid tube and absorbent materials that are supplied, since these comply with UN3373 Category B requirements.**

Appendix 1: Contact details of clinics that run in Kent

**Ashford**

Ashford Clozapine Clinic is open on: Monday 9 - 4pm

The clinic is located at Eureka Park, Eureka Business Park TN25 4 BY

Phone: 01233 658100

**Canterbury**

Laurel House Clozapine Clinic is open on Wednesday:

1.00 pm – 4.00pm The clinic is located at Laurel House, Old Dover Road, Canterbury CT1 3HH

Phone: 01227 597111

**Dartford**

Arndale house clozapine clinic is open on Wednesday 9.00 – 4.00pm:

The clinic is located at

Arndale House, 18-20 Spital St, Dartford, DA1 2DL

[Phone](https://www.google.com/search?safe=active&rlz=1C1GGRV_enGB757GB757&q=dartford,+gravesend+and+swanley+mental+health+team+phone&ludocid=12294149247428393009&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwii29aBjIfjAhVJXRUIHUxzDPcQ6BMwFHoECBQQAg): [01322 622230](https://www.google.com/search?safe=active&rlz=1C1GGRV_enGB757GB757&ei=nl0TXcTOOJHqxgPGz5uQCg&q=arndale+house+dartford&oq=arndale+house&gs_l=psy-ab.1.0.0i71l8.0.0..14175...0.0..0.0.0.......0......gws-wiz.2LMj7ensJJw)

**Dover**

Coleman House Clozapine Clinic is open on:

Tuesday 9.00 – 4.00pm

The Clinic is located at Brookfield Avenue

Dover

CT16 2AH

Phone: 01304 216666

**Folkestone**

Ash Eton Clozapine Clinic is open on:

Tuesday 9.00 – 4.00pm

The clinic is located at Ash Eton Radnor Park West, Folkestone CT19 5HL

Phone: 01303 2227510

**Gillingham**

Canada House Clozapine Clinic

is open on:

Monday 9.30-4.00pm

Tuesday 9.30am – 4.00pm

The clinic is located at

Canada House, Barnsole Rd,

Gillingham ME7 4JL

Phone: 01634 583000

**Herne Bay**

Kings Road Clozapine Clinic is open on:

Monday 9.00 – 4pm

The clinic is located at 11 Kings Road, Herne Bay CT6 5DD

Phone: 01227 2065540

**Maidstone**

Albion Place Clozapine Clinic is open on:

Monday from 9.00 - 4.00pm

The clinic is located at Albion Place Medical Centre, Kingswood CMHC

23-29 Albion Place, Maidstone

Kent ME14 5TS

Phone: 01622 766900

**Thanet**

The Beacon Clozapine Clinic is open on Tuesday and Thursday from 9.00 – 4.00pm

The clinic is located at The Beacon, Manston Road, Ramsgate CT12 6NT

Phone: 01843 855200

**Tunbridge Wells**

Highlands House Clozapine Clinic is open on:

Tuesday from 10.30 – 400pm The clinic is located at Highlands House, 10–12 Calverley Park Gardens, Tunbridge Wells, Kent,

TN1 2JN

Phone: 01892 709211

**Appendix 2: Transport of specimens**

The movement of pathology specimens is subject to the Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2009.

1.0 Potentially infectious material presents a hazard when it is being transported and care must be taken to ensure that the risk to others people is kept to a minimum.

2.0 Most clinical samples are generally classified as Category B and assigned to UN3373 (Biological Substance, Category B) and should be packaged in accordance with packing instruction P650. Clinical samples assigned to UN3373 may be posted in appropriate packaging which contains a hard rigid plastic case and also carries absorbent material in the case of breakage.  If unsure of packaging or transport arrangements, advice should be sought from the microbiology laboratory.

3.0 In the unlikely event of a potential Category A specimen, routine transport arrangements must not be used.   Advice must be sought from the microbiology laboratory.  KMPT has a policy in “Taking specimens for microbiological investigations” and in Appendix D there is a List of category A infectious substances

4.0 The member of staff who collects the specimen has a legal responsibility to ensure the following:

* The specimen container is leak-proof and securely sealed.
* All traces of body fluid have been removed from the outside of the container.
* The specimen is not overfilled.
* The specimen is placed inside a bag which contains sufficient absorbent material to absorb the entire contents of the specimen if the event of a spillage.
* The container is sealed inside the plastic bag. (Wilson 2012)

5.0 The specimen is accompanied by a fully completed request form in a separate pocket.

6.0 A biohazard label is placed on the container and accompanying form where appropriate. **It then goes into a red rigid container**