

- To:
- Trust CEOs
 - Trust directors of nursing
 - Trust chief operations officers
 - Trust DIPCs
 - Trust IPC leads
 - CCG directors of nursing
 - CCG medical directors
 - Regional IPC leads
 - Regional chief nurses
 - Regional medical directors

NHS England and NHS Improvement
Skipton House
80 London Road
London
SE1 6LH

27 September 2021

- cc.
- Regional directors
 - Regional operations directors

Dear Colleagues,

UKHSA changes to IPC requirements

To support the ongoing recovery of elective care, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) was commissioned to review and provide updated recommendations on COVID-19 control measures. These have been published and are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukhsa-review-into-ipc-guidance>.

The UKHSA guidance consists of three short thematic guidance documents focused on changes to the requirements for physical distancing, pre-elective procedure patient testing and enhanced cleaning. These changes focus primarily on low-risk areas, and so it is understood that the impact of enhanced IPC will still be significant in a number of providers and pathways.

In terms of physical distancing, UKHSA has recommended that this be reduced from the current 2m to pre-pandemic levels for patients in low-risk pathways, subject to a series of conditions which should be met where possible. UKHSA has also proposed some additional flexibility to the current NICE pre-elective patient testing protocols for specific patient groups, ie an on-the-day LFD test. UKHSA has also recommended that enhanced cleaning procedures are no longer required in low risk areas.

The current UK IPC guidance published by Public Health England is in the process of being revised to ensure that it is appropriate for the management of COVID through the coming winter. This revised guidance is due to be published ahead of winter and will incorporate the UKHSA recommendations.

In advance of publication of the revised UK IPC Guidance we have been advised that, where it would improve capacity or efficiency, providers should implement the UKHSA recommendations, unless a local risk assessment precludes their safe implementation.

Thank you for your continued commitment and leadership in ensuring excellence in IPC to support the safe and efficient delivery of NHS services.

Yours sincerely,



Ruth May
Chief Nursing Officer, England



Professor Stephen Powis
National Medical Director