

How to Access the COVID virtual ward toolkit

What is COVID virtual ward?

The COVID virtual ward model is a **secondary care** led initiative to support **safe discharge** (step down) and appropriate admission avoidance for COVID patients either referred to or in a hospital. There is a distinct difference to the COVID Oximetry @home model that has been set up, mainly in primary care settings.

	COVID Oximetry @home	COVID virtual ward
WHERE	Primary care supervised	Hospital supervised
WHO	Lower acuity / complexity	Higher acuity / complexity
WHEN	Community diagnosed patients	Emergency hospital patients
AIMS	Safe admission avoidance	Early supported hospital discharge Safe admission avoidance
HOW	Patient self-monitoring/escalation Earlier deterioration presentation	More intensive monitoring Reliable deterioration recognition
WHAT	Supportive treatments	+/- Dexamethasone, LMWH, O2

What is this document for?

This document introduces you to the resources available in the COVID virtual ward toolkit. There are a variety of different models that can be flexed or adapted dependent on local system and geography.

Is there national guidance available?

For further information, visit www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/covid-virtual-ward.

How do I access the toolkit?

You will need to have access to the **FutureNHS Collaboration Platform** to access the toolkit. This includes an active discussion forum and national learning network meetings.

- **For new members to the platform:** visit future.nhs.uk/system/home, register for an account and request access to the **National Patient Deterioration Forum**.
- **For registered members:** log on and click on **My Workspaces**, then **Find a Workspace**. Search for **National Patient Deterioration Forum** and follow the instructions to join the workspace.
- Once access is granted, click on the [COVID Virtual Ward toolkit](#)

COVID Virtual Ward (secondary care model) toolkit

This link will take you to the COVID Virtual Ward toolkit which contains a variety of resources to support with implementation or further development of existing secondary care/integrated services.

What does the toolkit contain?

There are six sections to enable you to set up this model of care. Contents are described below.

Section	Content	Description of resource
 Section 1	What is COVID Virtual Ward and why should I set one up?	Section 1 includes national guidance and introductory webinars.
 Section 2	Six steps to setting up COVID virtual ward	<p>Section 2 provides six key steps to support setting up a virtual ward:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage the local pathway through your AHSN 2. Form a stakeholder delivery group 3. Design and agree your model; this includes example standard operating procedures 4. Develop your implementation strategy and implement it; this includes examples of system wide strategies 5. Request pulse oximeters early; guidance on where to get pulse oximeters and how to manage logistics 6. Developing a local learning system
 Section 3	How will I know if my COVID virtual ward is a success?	<p>Effective measurement is central to understanding the quality of care being provided, and to supporting any efforts to improve care measurement can show us important information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well our current process is performing • Whether we have reached our aim • How much variation there is • Small tests of change • Whether the changes made have led to improvement • Whether a change has been sustained <p>This section provides information about measurement, how to guides and examples including patient experience.</p>
 Section 4	How do I engage patients in my COVID virtual ward?	This section includes example communication plans, patient information leaflets and videos, including multilingual versions.
 Section 5	Additional resources	Section 5 contains additional resources that will help you set up your COVID virtual ward.
 Section 6	NHSX Innovation Collaborative – Digital Health	Information and links to the NHSX Innovation Collaborative – Digital Health workspace on FutureNHS, to support any digital options relating to COVID virtual ward.

Who developed this document and toolkit?

Thank you to the pilot site patients and staff who have generously shared their experiences and resources. These have been curated into this guide and toolkit by a small team of staff from the AHSNs with input from Matt Inada-Kim, National Clinical Lead. If you have case studies, documents or additional hints and tips, please do contribute. Please add them to the folder in Section 5 on FutureNHS. They will be reviewed by the team and uploaded to the relevant section once checked.