



Dear Hospital Clinicians,

**RE: Imaging strategy during Covid-19 pandemic**

Ensuring the safety and best care of patients is our primary concern at all times. During this outbreak of Covid-19 it is necessary to measure the risk to patients of delayed outpatient diagnostic procedures against the risk of them contracting or spreading the virus while in the hospital. A body of evidence from international sources shows that the infection risk is the greater in all but the most urgent outpatient diagnostics cases.

The number of patients waiting for a diagnostic test is significant. However the number of patients for who a diagnostic outpatient appointment is clinically justified, while the Covid-19 risk persists, is much smaller. The triage process for imaging requests set out below allows us to focus our decision making and clinical efforts onto the group of patients who most require our services.

Please see below full details of the Trust approved processes currently being undertaken for the following imaging departments (hyperlinks)–

1. [Body imaging, neuro imaging and interventional radiology](#)
2. [Paediatric imaging](#)
3. [Nuclear medicine](#)

We know that this strategy will result in extended waiting times for many patients. These decisions have not been taken lightly and we have spent much time considering the safest and most transparent way to organise this process. Our duty is to manage the whole population of patients that require imaging. This can best be achieved by being as responsive as possible to those in need of urgent investigation and imaging diagnosis, and by protecting those for whom Covid-19 would present the greater clinical risk, by not bringing them to hospital.

Jonathan Richenberg

Sabina Dizdaravic

Kyriakos Iliadis

Faye Cuthbert

Emma Simpson

## Body imaging, neuro imaging and interventional radiology

Under normal circumstances, at the point of referral, all imaging requests are assigned an urgency code:

- 1 – routine
- 5 – urgent work to be appointed in 4 weeks
- 8 – cancer pathway to be appointed in 2 weeks

We will postpone all imaging requests assigned code 1 and most assigned code 5\*. These requests will remain on our system in a dedicated database and will be rebooked as and when the impact of Covid-19 lessens and social distancing measures are relaxed.

\*with the exception of some oncology scans for treatment response assessment as already agreed with oncology

All imaging requests assigned code 8 will be reviewed by a radiology consultant and either appointed or postponed as above.

Referrers will be sent a weekly spreadsheet of their postponed cases for their review and consideration, along with an automatically generated email for each postponed case to their specialty email inbox as per the existing cancellation process

- If the postponed scan is required while Covid-19 is still affecting services, please contact any of the following
  - - the troubleshooting radiology consultant x67777
    - neuroradiology x8211
    - interventional radiology x4240
    - your MDM radiologist by email (see list below)
      - MSK – John Bush/Rosie Scott/Helen Anderson/David Yu
      - GI - Graham Dodge/Simonne Tryb/Phil Thompson/Gareth Lewis
      - Gynae – Lavanya Vitta/Faye Cuthbert/Jonathan Richenberg/Nigel Marchbank
      - Urol – Phil Thompson/Emma Simpson/Faye Cuthbert/Jonathan Richenberg
      - Skin – Emma Simpson
      - Head and Neck – Charlie Sayer/Ting Ting Zhang
      - Chest – Charlie Sayer/Nigel Marchbank/Ting Ting Zhang/Joon Lee
      - Neuro – Ram Vundavalli/Nick Skipper
      - Haematology – Graham Dodge/John Bush/Chloe Mortensen
      - Cardiac – Joon Lee
      - Vascular/IR – Yuri Gupta/Dhiraj Joshi/Bhaskar Ganai/Gareth Lewis/Chloe Mortensen/Malcolm Johnston

We will reinstate the request. It is likely that we will have capacity to do any reinstated scans immediately.

- If the postponed scan is no longer required, or likely to be irrelevant after Covid-19 then please let us know and we will cancel the request off our system altogether

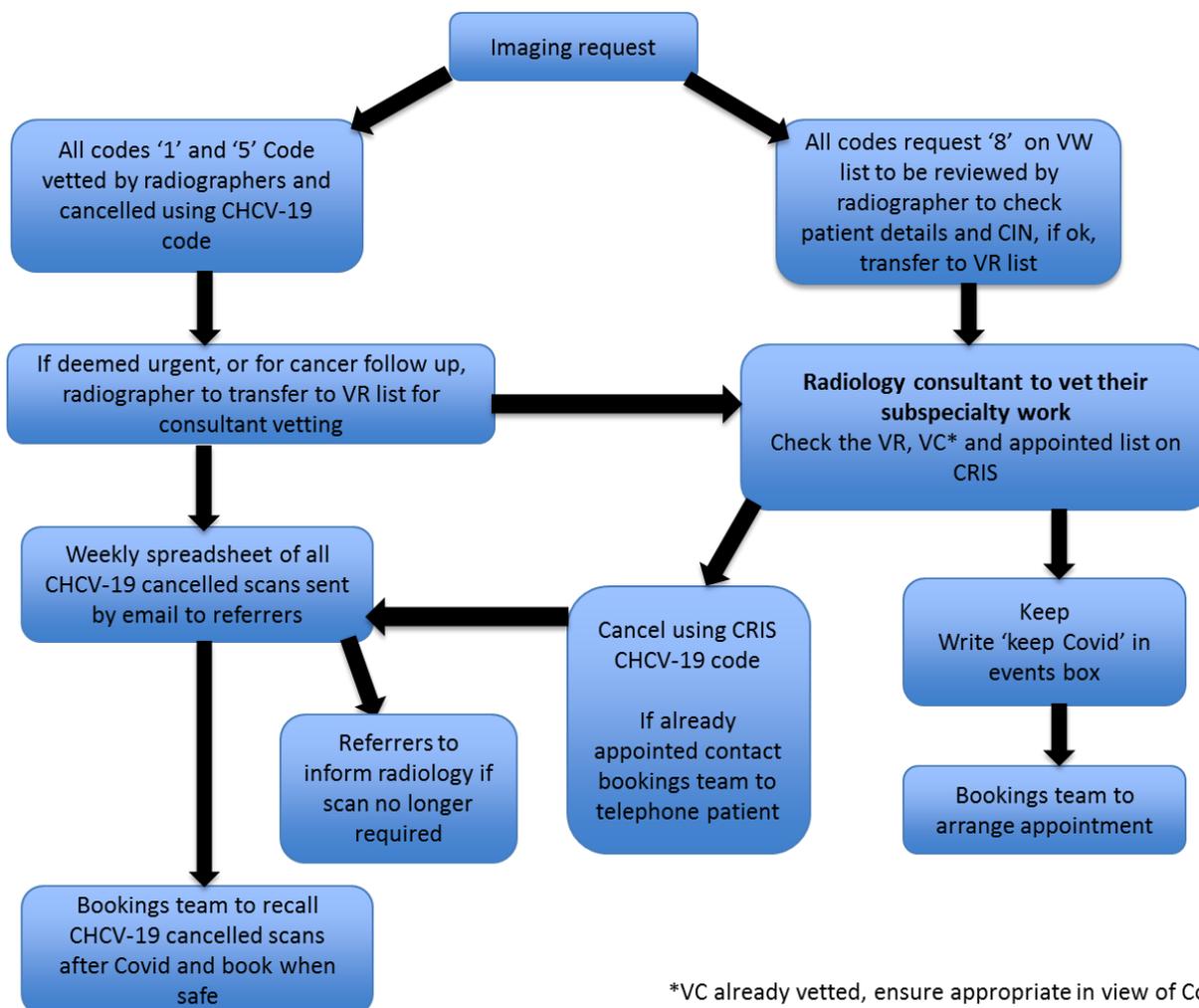
For any new imaging requested while Covid-19 is still affecting services, please send the request as usual but indicate in the free text if this should be done during Covid-19 outbreak or if it can wait until afterwards. Our radiographers

will triage all requests and anything to be scanned during Covid-19 will be referred to radiology consultant for vetting.

After Covid-19 abates, we will recall patients and prioritise new appointments according to referral date and urgency (1, 5 and 8).

If referrers are redeployed, please consider arranging cover within your own team for reviewing the weekly spreadsheet of postponed requests.

Please see our summary flowchart for the process for new imaging referrals –



\*VC already vetted, ensure appropriate in view of Covid

## Paediatric Radiology

Under normal circumstances, at the point of referral, all imaging requests are assigned an urgency code:

- 1 – routine
- 5 – urgent work to be appointed in 4 weeks
- 8 – cancer pathway to be appointed in 2 weeks

All imaging requests for paediatric radiology will be reviewed by a paediatric radiology consultant and only urgent scans carried out. All routine imaging will be cancelled.

Referrers will be sent a weekly spreadsheet of all cancelled cases for their review and consideration

If the cancelled scan is required while Covid-19 is still affecting services, please contact the paediatric radiologists (details below) and we will reinstate the request if possible. Referrals made in the community by either a GP or community paediatrician will receive a letter (see below) from the imaging department for each patient that has had the imaging request cancelled

Dear Colleague

Due to the current Covid-19 outbreak we have cancelled all but urgent imaging.

All imaging requests have been vetted by a consultant Paediatric Radiologist. Those requests that are urgent will be booked accordingly. Imaging requests that have been deemed to be able to wait until the Covid-19 outbreak is under control have been cancelled.

Those patients cancelled will not have their imaging appointment reinstated. If routine imaging is required please clinically re-asses your patient once services are no longer being affected by Covid-19 and re submit a new imaging referral form.

Details of the patients you have referred for imaging whose appointments have had to be cancelled are included in this email.

If you feel the imaging request should not be cancelled and needs to happen, please discuss with the Paediatric Duty on call Radiologist: 01273 696955 ext 3152

The decision to follow this process has not been taken lightly and we have spent much time considering the safest and most transparent way to organise it. We understand that it is not without consequence to patients or to you. Our duty is to manage the whole population of patients that require imaging. This can best be achieved by being as responsive as possible to those in need of urgent investigation and imaging diagnosis and protecting those for whom Covid-19 would present the greater clinical risk, by not bringing them to hospital.

Many thanks for your understanding

Dr Kyriakos Iliadis      Lead Consultant Paediatric Radiologist and      Darren Sander      Lead Superintendent  
Radiographer

Imaging Department, Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital, Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust

## Nuclear Medicine

Under normal circumstances, at the point of referral, all imaging requests are assigned an urgency code:

- 1 – routine
- 5 – urgent work to be appointed in 4 weeks
- 8 – cancer pathway to be appointed in 2 weeks

All imaging requests for nuclear medicine will be reviewed by a nuclear medicine consultant and all but the most urgent and essential oncology imaging will be postponed. The request will remain on our system in a dedicated database and will be rebooked when the impact of Covid-19 lessens and social distancing measures are relaxed.

Referrers will be sent an individual letter (see below) for each postponed case.

- If the postponed scan is required while Covid-19 is still affecting services, please contact the nuclear medicine consultants (see contact details below) and we will reinstate the request. It is likely that we will have capacity to do any reinstated scans immediately.
- If the postponed scan is no longer required, or likely to be irrelevant after Covid-19 then please let us know and we will cancel off our system altogether

For any new imaging requested during the Covid-19 outbreak, please make the request as usual but indicate in the free text if this should be done while Covid-19 is still affecting services, or if it can wait until afterwards. Only nuclear medicine consultant vetted scans will be performed during the Covid-19 outbreak.



**Brighton and Sussex  
University Hospitals**  
NHS Trust

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Royal Sussex County Hospital  
Eastern Road  
Brighton

01273 696955 ext. 64382  
bsuh.nucmed@nhs.net  
April 2020

Dear

<i>Clinical Referrer</i>	
<i>Referrer location</i>	

Re:

<i>Patient name</i>	
<i>dob</i>	
<i>Hospital number</i>	
<i>NHS number</i>	
<i>Scan requested</i>	

Due to the current COVID-19 situation, unfortunately we have had to postpone all routine Nuclear medicine imaging. These patient referrals will be reinstated once the pandemic has settled, according to priority of clinical urgency (as per information provided on the request form). We would be more than happy to discuss any referrals you feel cannot wait for this longer period of time (ext. 64382/67618). Conversely, on review of this patient, if you decide you no longer need the scan then please let us know by email above.

Urgent and essential oncology studies, however, will still be performed if clinically required during this time.

Many thanks for your understanding.

Nuclear Medicine Department

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust