

Covid Medicines Delivery Unit Service Clinical Handbook



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Somerset CMDU Clinical Handbook

Service Overview

- Assess patients who are Covid positive, and who fall into defined risk groups, for their eligibility for Covid medications
- Where appropriate, prescribe the first-line oral medication, Paxlovid
- Where otherwise appropriate, refer on for IV medication

This is the clinical handbook for the CMDU service, and should be considered in conjunction with the **CMDU Service handbook** for a full service overview.

Referrals into CMDU

Patients who are registered with a Somerset GP Surgery, (including those registered as temporary residents), can be referred in to the CMDU service in two ways:

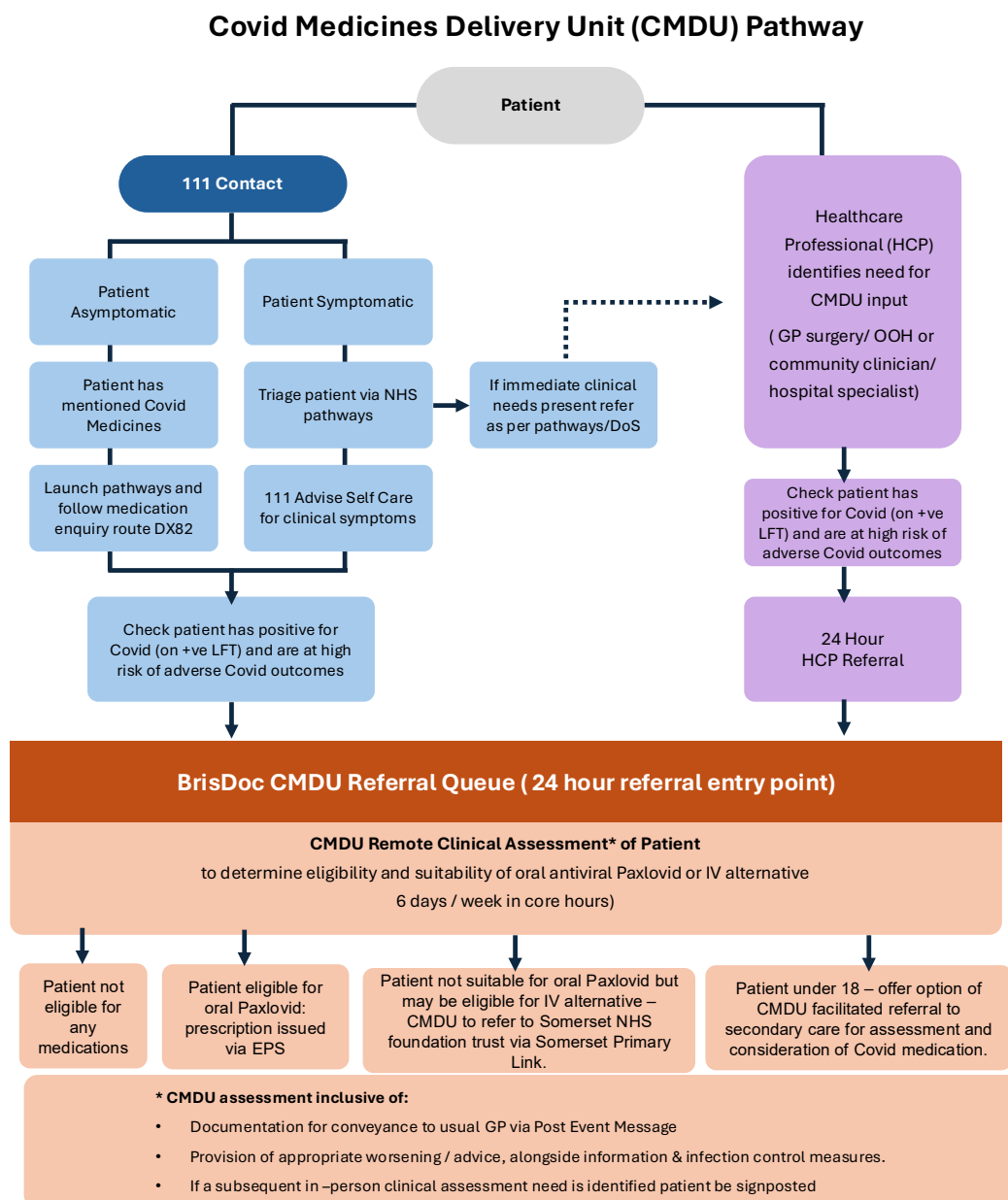
- Via NHS 111: Patients can contact NHS 111 to self-refer into the service.
- Via HCP referral: HCPs can refer into the service via an emailed referral form or phone referral if they meet the eligibility criteria.

Patients who live in Somerset but are registered with a GP practice outside the county borders are not eligible to access this service. The only exception is for patients who are not currently registered with any GP practice but live in Somerset and are referred via the NHS 111 service.

The CMDU pathway overview is illustrated in Figure 1.

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Figure 1.



Regardless of the referral route, all patients referred in to the service will be logged on CLEO in a CMDU-specific CLEO queue. Details from that referral will be available on their CLEO record for your information.

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Training and Resources

To support training and induction for this work, all clinicians undertaking CMDU assessments are required to complete the NHS E-Learning Module on what should be considered in the assessment for Covid antiviral medications. This course can be accessed after registering with the [NHS E-Learning Hub](#) and is called '*Covid-19 Antiviral Treatments: Covid 19*'.

Further information and resources to support your CMDU work can be found on [the Clinical Toolkit CMDU Cribsheet page](#).

SIDer+

We will not have access to EMIS for Somerset -based patients, but will be using SIDer+ instead, which is fairly similar to Connecting Care. SIDer+ provides access to patients' GP medical records, including currently prescribed medications, medical conditions and blood test results.

All CMDU -trained clinicians will receive a log in to SIDer+, which can be accessed directly from a weblink on the Clinical Toolkit Cribsheet.

Navigating SIDer+

Further information on SIDER navigation will be provided with your SIDer+ log in.

As a brief initial overview:

After entering your log in details, you will need to click on this symbol:

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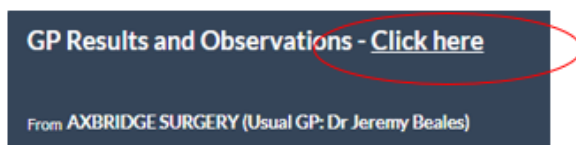
Core Care Record -
SiDeR UAT

You then need to use the 'search' symbol to select your patient. Searching for a patient requires either their

- NHS number AND DOB, or
- Family Name, DOB and Gender.

Once you have selected your patient you will be presented with a landing page.

- Select *GP Record* Tab THEN this tab:



Accessing the 'Journal View' will permit you to search for, e.g blood test results.

Continuous Learning & Service Improvement

As always, we encourage completion of a learning event via the [usual online portal if indicated](#). We also welcome your thoughts, suggestions and comments as we embark on this new service. Please speak to any of the Clinical Leadership team or email Becky Cooke directly on Rebecca.Cooke3@nhs.net.

As a new service for SevernSide, we are keen to share learning gleaned from our experiences in CMDU and plan to share this learning with the CMDU team in the coming weeks and months.

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Clinical Assessment for Covid Antiviral Treatment

All patients referred into the CMDU service should be assessed for their eligibility and suitability for Covid antiviral medications. The patient should then be supported to make an informed decision whether to proceed with the medication or not. Patients should be contacted by phone to undertake this assessment, which should be supplemented by information from the digital patient record (SIDer+).

Eligibility

Patients must meet all the following key eligibility criteria to be considered for Covid antiviral treatment:

- **Positive for Covid 19 (LFT)**
 - Please confirm with the patient that they have had a positive Lateral Flow Test. These tests are available for free for patients who are eligible for Covid antiviral treatments. Information on how to access these is available on the CMDU Clinical Toolkit page if required
 - Verbal confirmation that the patient has had a positive lateral flow test is sufficient.
- **Be high risk for progression to severe covid as per current NICE criteria.**
 - Please refer to the current NICE guidance for qualifying medical conditions, to confirm the patient is currently within an eligible group.
 - Links to the current NICE guidance are on the CMDU Cribsheet page and in the Appendix below.
- **Have symptom onset within the last 5 days**
 - Day 0 is counted as the first day of symptoms
- Have mild to moderate symptoms of Covid **not** requiring hospital admission

Please ensure you document confirmation and relevant details of the above eligibility criteria in your CLEO notes.

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Clinical Assessment to ascertain suitability for oral Paxlovid

There are several factors that will need to be considered as part of your assessment to determine if oral Paxlovid is suitable for eligible patients.

Whilst not an exhaustive list, this includes:

- Interactions with other medications/ supplements. Paxlovid has a number of clinically important interactions that may preclude using this drug and require referral for an IV alternative. For other medications, it may be clinically appropriate to temporarily adjust or withhold the interacting medication to permit Paxlovid to be used. Please check all prescribed and non-prescribed medications/ supplements the patient is taking in addition to reviewing their digital medication records.
- **Renal impairment** – Paxlovid is contraindicated in severe renal impairment (eGFR <30) and requires dose adjustments in moderate renal impairment (eGFR 30-60). We would encourage clinical discretion when considering the recency of any blood tests results, just as you would for any other medication.
- **Hepatic Impairment** : Paxlovid is contraindicated in severe hepatic impairment (Child's Pugh C).
- **Considerations in females of childbearing age:** Paxlovid is not recommended in pregnancy. It can also impact the effectiveness of hormonal contraception containing ethinyl estradiol so additional contraceptive precautions are required during and after use of Paxlovid. Breastfeeding is not recommended whilst using Paxlovid and for 7 days after the last dose.
- **Patient Factors** – e.g ability to swallow tablets, ability to understand and implement any medication adjustments required.

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The NHS England E-Learning Guide explains these and other considerations in more detail.

The CMDU cribsheet also highlights some of these key considerations as an aide-memoire on shift, as well as links to resources that will support your assessment, such as drug interaction tools.

Clinical experience in the BNSSG CMDU service has shown that a significant proportion of patients who are both eligible and suitable for Covid anti-virals elect not to have them, having talked through the pros and cons. Please be aware of this and approach the consultation as you would any other in which a 'new drug' decision is to be taken.

If a patient wants treatment, is eligible for covid antiviral medications, but Paxlovid is contraindicated or unsuitable, the patient can be referred onwards for consideration of IV alternatives.

Prescribing Paxlovid

If your patient is eligible and suitable for oral Paxlovid, and wants to have it, this should be offered and prescribed via EPS.

If for any reason EPS is not possible, the shift manager can support with a FP10 alternative that can be scanned and emailed to an appropriate pharmacy, with postage used as a back-up.

Patient information about Paxlovid & relevant medication adjustments

All patients prescribed Paxlovid should be provided with information about the drug, including the importance of starting this as soon as able. If they are collecting themselves from a pharmacy, please ensure appropriate infection control precautions are taken.

If a patient has co-existing medications or supplements that need to be adjusted or withheld during the Paxlovid treatment, ensure the patient or their appropriate

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representative is informed of what these adjustments are, and for how long these adjustments need to continue. Documenting this clearly in your notes will support other HCPs who may subsequently encounter the patient.

Paxlovid CLEO and Medication Information

In CLEO, you will need to select the '*Include full formulary*' and '*Include Brands*' boxes in your search. Paxlovid will appear as a '*30 tablets (5 x 4 tablets + 2 tablets)- Paxlovid 150/100mg tablets*' in CLEO.

This reflects the contents of a Paxlovid pack: the tablets are in a 5 daily-dose blister cards with a total of 30 tablets packaged in a carton.

Each daily blister card contains 4 nirmatrelvir tablets (150mg each) and 2 ritonavir tablets (100mg each), and indicates which tablets need to be taken in the morning and evening. This patient information link illustrates how the blister packs appear : [Patient information for Paxlovid - GOV.UK](#).

Nirmatrelvir tablets are pink, and Ritonavir tablets are white.

We recommend that your CLEO prescription wording mirrors BNF recommendations.

The standard dosing is listed [here](#) but copied below for your information:

Adult

300 mg (two pink tablets) and 100 mg (one white tablet) twice daily for 5 days, to be initiated as soon as possible after SARS-CoV-2 positive result and within 5 days of symptom onset, for each dose, nirmatrelvir (pink tablets) and ritonavir (white tablet) to be taken together.

Further information on Paxlovid can be found on the Clinical Toolkit CMDU Cribsheet. This includes patient information links that can be sent via text message.

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Pharmacy Selection

Immediate stock availability of Paxlovid can be variable and consequently we recommend clinicians consider carefully what pharmacy they choose to send the EPS to. In addition, Somerset has a fairly sizeable geographical spread and travel times to open pharmacies will need to be considered in your choice. We have shared a map of Somerset in the Appendix for your information.

Given that stock may fluctuate, we would recommend **providing all patients with their EPS code** so that they can take this to an alternative pharmacy if required.

Specialist Pharmacies

There are a number of Specialist pharmacies that have an agreement to routinely stock this medication. These are listed on the CMDU Clinical Cribsheet page.

Non-Specialist Pharmacies

Other pharmacies within Somerset are unlikely to have Paxlovid in stock routinely. However, most are able to order this in with advance notice for patients. Most pharmacies in Somerset will have twice -daily delivery slots to support this.

Depending on the distance of the nearest Specialist pharmacy from the patient, it may be preferable for the patient to have the EPS sent to their local (non-specialist) pharmacy, who can then order the Paxlovid in.

If a decision is made to issue an EPS to a non-specialist pharmacy, the patient must contact the pharmacy to inform them of the EPS prescription, and check with them when it will be available to collect **before** travelling to pick this up. Please ensure this is conveyed to the patient if this option is chosen. This option may be preferable for some patients, and particularly if they are early in the 5-day treatment window period.

In circumstances when the patient is required to commence the oral antiviral medication at very short notice to meet the 5-day window, it would be reasonable to consider additional measures to ensure your prescription is sent to a pharmacy with available stock. This might include contacting the pharmacy in advance of sending the prescription, or providing the patient with alternative Specialist Pharmacy details to

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contact as a back-up, if the stock is unexpectedly unavailable at their original EPS destination for any reason.

Some pharmacies may offer delivery options for patients who are unable to collect their medications.

Information for all patients referred irrespective of eligibility/suitability for covid antivirals

Alongside the clinical assessment to determine eligibility for Covid antiviral medications, all patients referred into the service should be provided with the following information routinely:

- **Infection control advice and precautions**
- **What to do if their symptoms get worse, and where to access further care if required.**

The CMDU Cribsheet page has links that incorporate the above advice that can be sent to the patient or their representative, that can supplement advice given verbally over the phone.

Onward Referrals

Adults

Referrals to secondary care for consideration of IV antiviral treatment are made to **Somerset Primary Link Service** by phone: **01749 836 700**. The SPL service is open 8am –8pm, Mon- Sat.

Somerset Primary Link will arrange transport for your patient if needed and will usually call the patient back within an hour to make arrangements.

IV treatments are given at the Shepton Mallet Community Hospital.

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Children

Patients under 18 years cannot be treated directly by the CMDU service. Patients under 18 who are eligible for Covid antiviral treatment should be offered the option of contacting their specialist or consultant directly themselves, or if they prefer, we will facilitate a referral to their specialist team or Somerset FT Paediatric Clinical Assessment Unit on their behalf.

We have been advised that most children who are eligible will have contact details for their specialist team, and this would usually be the first point of contact. However, the generalist Paediatric teams detailed below are available for HCPs to contact if not.

- Taunton Paediatric Assessment Unit (TA1 5DA) on 01823 342072.
- Yeovil Paediatric Assessment Unit (BA21 4AT). This unit does not have a direct phone line but you can contact the Paediatric team by requesting to speak to the on call Paediatrician team via Yeovil hospital switchboard.

Further Clinical Assessment required

Patients identified during your CMDU assessment as requiring further clinical review and assessment of their symptoms should be advised to contact 111 or their usual GP themselves to obtain this.

If you are concerned the patient is unable to do this themselves or with the assistance of a representative, then you can support this by calling their GP surgery in-hours, or in the OOH period, the Somerset OOH IUC provider, (HUC).

Contact details for HUC and Somerset GP practices will be kept on the RADAR backdoor numbers webpage.

If you are concerned a patient is very unwell and requires an ambulance, phone 999 on their behalf.

Patients who lack capacity.

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If a patient lacks capacity in matters relating to their assessment for Covid antiviral medications, we suggest involving an appropriate representative where possible to ensure the same eligibility checks are completed and determine the next most appropriate step for the patient.

This may be a designated and registered LPA for health and welfare, or other suitable representative.

In exceptional circumstances, and during in hours availability, you may consider contacting the patient's usual GP surgery by phone to seek further information when this will aid decision making in the patient's best interests.

If this is the scenario for your patient, please document clearly in your CLEO notes the process and rationale of any shared decision made so this is clear for their usual GP surgery and other HCPs.

Public Health Notification

Covid 19 is a notifiable disease and requires routine referral to UKHSA. HCP referrals into CMDU will be asked if they have made this referral already.

If they have not confirmed in the HCP referral that this has been done, or there is any doubt, please do this yourself.

Safeguarding

If you need to make a safeguarding referral for a Somerset -based CMDU patient you can find out how to do so via this Somerset Safeguarding page: [Safeguarding - NHS Somerset ICB](#).

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Failed Contacts

If you are unable to reach the patient, please make further attempts on all numbers available at reasonable intervals as per SevernSide's standard failed contact process.

If these attempts are unsuccessful, and/ or you remain unable to reach the patient at the end of a CMDU operational day, a clinical judgement will need to be taken as to whether to close the case without further attempts.

In most circumstances, it may be appropriate to leave the CMDU case in the CMDU CLEO queue for a further attempt to be made on the next CMDU opening day, noting that this may not always be the following day of the week (as this is not a 7-day service).

This decision to will be influenced by several factors. For example, whether the patient will still be within the treatment window period at that point, the relative spread of previous attempts (e.g over a short time frame vs attempts in the morning *and* afternoon periods), alongside individual patient factors.

If a decision is made to close the case please send a message to the patient to indicate that their case has been closed and that we will not be making further attempts to call them. Signalling in this message that they should re-contact **111** in the first instance will allow them a patient – led route back into the CMDU service if they remain eligible at that point. We recommend that 111 is used instead of their usual GP surgery to ensure that if they re-seek CMDU service this is accessible to them 24/7, thereby avoiding potential delays that might result during the OOH weekend/ BH periods, when they will be unable to contact their usual GP.

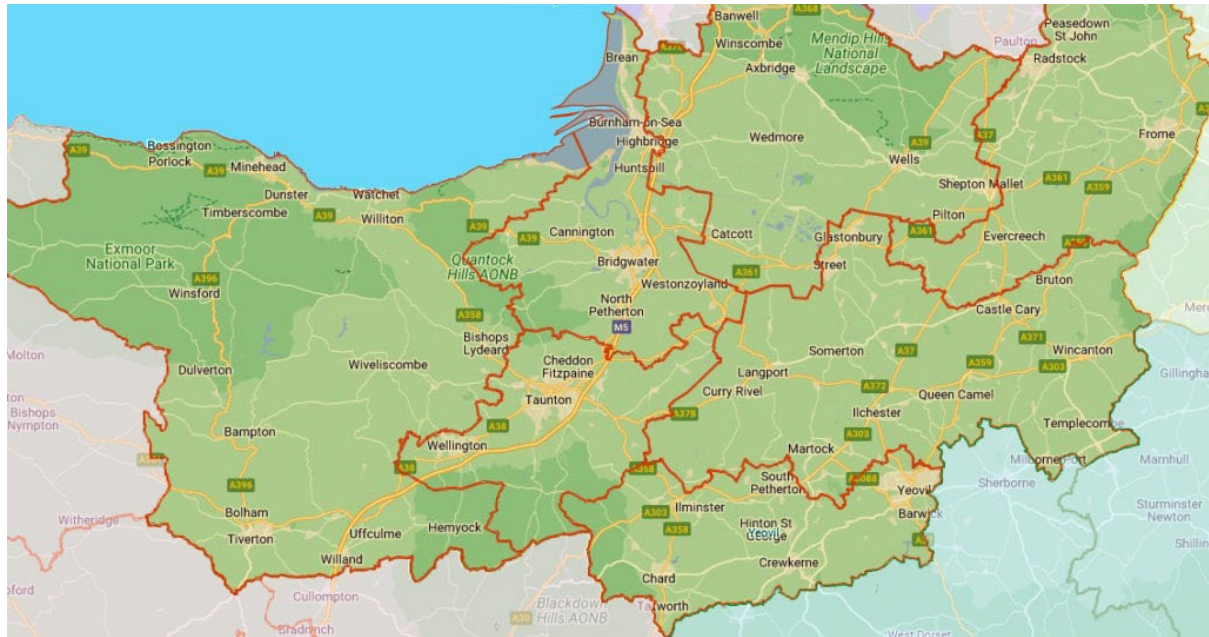
Case Documentation for usual GP

A CLEO post event message will be sent directly to the patient's usual GP surgery when your case is closed.

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Appendix

Map of Somerset



Clinical Toolkit CMDU Cribsheet page

Link [here](#):

NHS Learning Hub Training

The 'Covid-19 Antiviral Treatments: Covid 19' module can be accessed here: on the [NHS Learning Hub](#)

NICE Guidance

These links provide supporting information on the NICE definitions of Covid-19 high-risk groups:

- [Risk Factors for Progression to Severe Covid in Adults.](#)
- [Risk Factors for progression to severe covid in Young people aged 12 to 17 years.](#)

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Patient information links

- Advice on Covid 19 symptoms and what to do: [COVID-19 symptoms and what to do - NHS](#)
- Infection control advice: [How to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19 infection. - NHS](#)
- Patient Information on Paxlovid can be found via the following links:
 - Gov.UK Website: [Patient information for Paxlovid - GOV.UK](#)
 - [EMC Paxlovid Package Information Leaflet](#)
 - This link: [COVID-19 antiviral treatment: Paxlovid - GOV.UK](#) provides patient information on Paxlovid in multiple languages, English large print, Braille, an audio version and British Sign language version.
 - Easy Read Information on Covid 19 treatments : [Treatments-for-COVID-19-Easy-Read.pdf](#)
- If the patient is being referred on for consideration of IV Therapy you may wish to share this information on Sotrivumab: [Sotrovimab: a medicine to treat COVID-19 - NHS](#)

Version Control

Date	Version	Author	Change Details
10/10/2025	1	RC	Published on Radar.
24/10/2025	1.1	RC	Further clarification on eligible patients based on location, Information on Paxlovid prescribing in CLEO, and Failed contacts.