

The implementation of the Faecal Immunochemical Test (qFIT) across the South West

June / July 2018 Project Update Bulletin

View the FIT video here: <https://youtu.be/zb1o8ykvS6U>

What's New?

GP's across the South West now have access to the Faecal Immunochemical Test (qFIT).

Commenting on the implementation:

- **Jon Miller, South West Cancer Programme Lead, NHS England, says:** Patients in both Alliances have had a qFIT test. This is a huge achievement and has been a long time coming from the NICE guideline in July 2015, through to the bid writing over the New Year into 2017. I know how tenacious you have all had to be to hang on to the fact that this is a good test for patients as we have grappled with issues along the way and overcome the challenge of rolling the programme out across 400 miles, 13 laboratories, 600+ practices and 4.5 million people.
- **Dr Joe Mays, Peninsula Alliance GP Lead for Prevention and Early Diagnosis, says:** I'm really pleased to have been involved with introducing qFIT for symptomatic patients in primary care. We expect this to help GPs identify more patients with bowel cancer at an early stage, but it may also offer GPs greater confidence in managing some patients with benign bowel conditions without the need for more invasive tests.
- **Mr John Renninson, Clinical Lead, Associate Medical Director, Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital says:** We are grateful for the advice and support that we have received from the clinical teams working in our hospitals throughout this process. They have challenged and advised us to ensure that the project delivers on its intention to make a NICE recommended intervention is available to our population.
- **Mel Feldman, Consultant Surgeon, Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust says:** Now that qFIT has launched for some patients at 'low risk but not no risk' of having colorectal cancer we are waiting to see these patients in the two week wait cancer diagnostic service. Cornwall has a rich data set which will allow us to work out whether this helps us find cancer at an earlier stage or use our diagnostic tests more effectively, which will be extremely helpful for planning services for the future.
- **Paul Thomas, Consultant Clinical Pathologist, Severn Pathology, North Bristol NHS Trust and Timothy McDonald, Consultant Clinical Scientist, Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust say:** There was a genuine feeling of excitement when we received our first qFIT sample. We have been working closely with the cancer alliances to provide a qFIT testing service for the South West. The logistics of rolling out kits and generating a robust infrastructure for a brand new test to every GP in the South West has been challenging and we are proud to have achieved by the go live date.

GP Events are continuing around the South West:

- **Eileen Deakin, GP and Clinical Lead for Long Term Conditions, South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group**, says: South Devon and Torbay GPs attended a Cancer Update event on the 26th June where they heard an excellent presentation from consultant colorectal surgeon Mr David Defriend on the colorectal pathway and the launch of FIT testing. The role of FIT in the low risk but not no risk population and the difference between this test and the forthcoming screening FIT testing were clearly outlined and the test was presented in a positive way as a benefit for patients who may avoid more invasive tests whilst still picking up early disease. Colleagues reported that their kits and instructions had arrived and one GP had already issued a kit.

What's next?

- Following the completion phase 1 (project initiation) and conclusion of phase 2 (implementation) we now enter into the final stage of the project: evaluation, and moving into business as usual.
- The evaluation phase will critically examine the FIT program to determine the level of attainment of project objectives, impact and sustainability as well as consider future development opportunities. This will be provided to CCG's to inform commissioning arrangements.
- The first data set will be reported in August. Secondary care metrics will be extracted from the cancer register and a template for reporting and the reporting timetable will be sent to cancer managers shortly. Secondary Care metrics will focus on outcomes of positive fit referrals in terms of how the patient was first seen and diagnosis / stage of cancer.
- A bespoke piece of work is being undertaken with Mel Feldman, Consultant Colorectal Surgeon, Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust to capture how qFIT for this group has affected referral into, and flow through, the 2WW system determining the presenting symptoms of patients with a positive fit, how these were investigated, and the proportion of cancers.
- An evaluation will also be undertaken of the implementation process and the clinical approach. For example consideration of follow up management.

Project Update

Key project highlights from June

- FIT Packs have been prepared and distributed to all GP practices across the South West.
- At the point of writing around 30 tests have been received and processed by the laboratories. We have no reports of positive FIT results at this point.
- Reporting metrics have been agreed with Laboratories and Cancer Managers
- Information gathering exercise into how FIT is being implemented elsewhere in the country has been undertaken and will be reported in the next bulletin.
- Patient experience / GP feedback plan commenced. PPE lead will contact CCG's to ensure that they are aware of both surveys. Programme of educational events including event at

Torbay and BSNNG GP forums have been conducted.

- FIT endoscopy modelling tool being developed by CADEAS
- Conversations held with PHE concerning bowel screening communications to ensure differentiation with low risk but not no risk cohort.
- Survey of GP Practices to ensure 2ww forms updated and guidance received.
- Information for GP's and patient feedback website live

Next Steps for July

- Project communications drafted and approach shared with other alliances.
- Reporting timetable and template provided to Cancer managers.
- Evaluation specification agreed.
- Commissioner feedback mechanisms agreed.

New Risks: PPE capacity to support evaluation (peninsula area only)

Where can I access further information and support?

- Contact the programme team for information about the project: sarah-jane.davies@nhs.net
- For more information about the test kit visit: www.exeterlaboratory.com/ and www.nbt.nhs.uk/severn-pathology
- For more information about FIT the following website might be of interest: www.faecal-immunochemical-test.co.uk/
- View the FIT video here: <https://youtu.be/zb1o8ykvS6U>