

Study Summary

Implementing a timed colorectal cancer diagnostic pathway

A handbook for local health and care systems.

NHS England. 2018.

Available online: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/implementing-timed-colorectal-cancer-diagnostic-pathway.pdf>

Conclusion

A colorectal cancer diagnostic pathway which engages with patients, maximises use of existing facilities and supports new ways of working among medical staff can be achieved. This can lead to patient-, workforce- and system-centric benefits, including improved quality of care and less variable outcomes

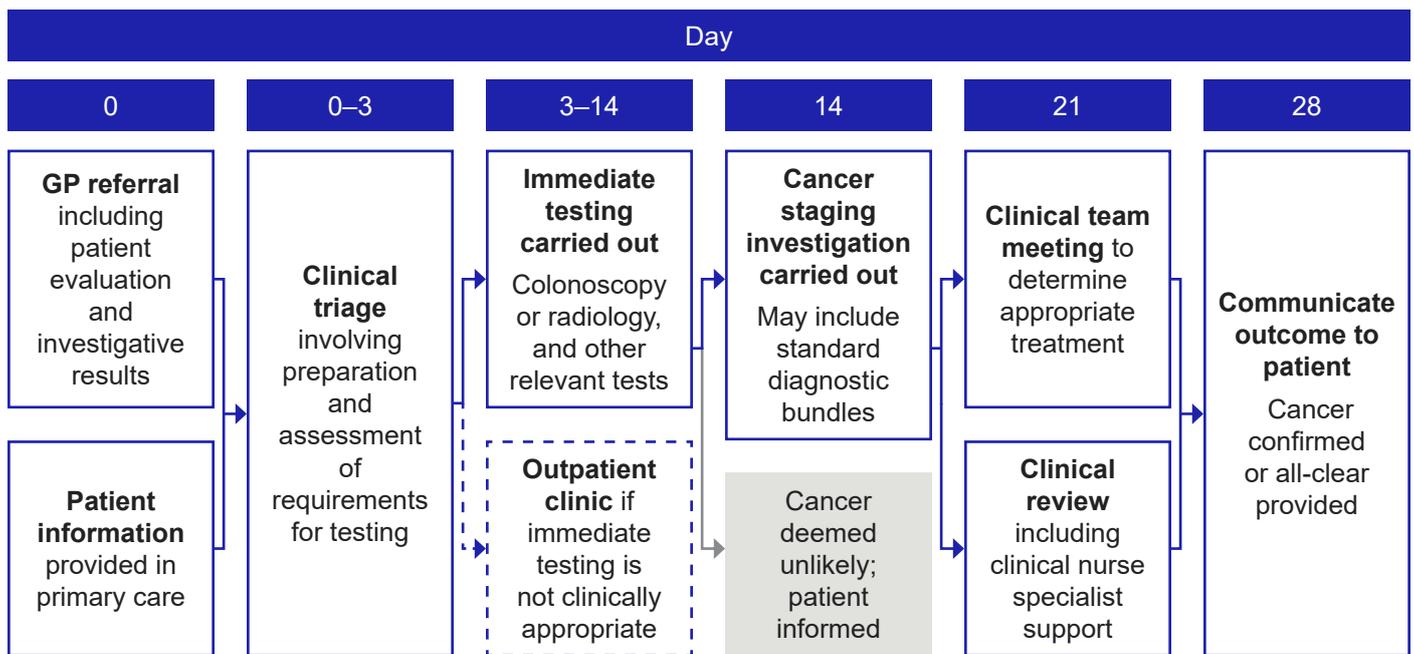
Rationale

- Colorectal cancer is the fourth most common diagnosed cancer in England and early diagnosis is the best chance of cure
- Age-standardised survival, stage at diagnosis and routes to diagnosis vary substantially by region
- NHS England have developed a 28-day diagnostic pathway for colorectal cancer aiming to expedite and standardise diagnosis across England
- Complete involvement of patients, the healthcare workforce and the healthcare system is required within the pathway
- The pathway has been developed by the NHS England Clinical Expert Group for colorectal cancer, formed of clinical leaders with tumour specific clinical expertise



The pathway has been designed to complement existing resources, such as NICE Guidelines (NG12)

28-day diagnostic pathway



Features and benefits of the fast pathway

The colorectal cancer diagnostic pathway is characterised by patient-, workforce- and system-centric features. These features have corresponding **benefits on the efficiency and quality of care.**

Pathway features

Benefits



Patient

- Provision of information at the point of referral to encourage compliance and reduce delays

- **Potential to improve survival** with faster diagnosis
- Empowerment from knowledge of the diagnostic process
- Reduced anxiety with less time between referral and diagnosis
- Fewer hospital visits



Workforce

- Developed and dynamic healthcare staff to improve communication
- Patients monitored at every step through the pathway

- **Effective use of workforce** to meet increasing demand
- Ability to use a national, endorsed pathway and work across primary and secondary care to ensure streamlined service



System

- Clinical triage that ensures patients are dealt with appropriately at the first point of contact
- Standardised diagnostic bundles
- Optimised use of existing resources and expertise

- **Highly consistent and improved quality of care with reduced variation in outcomes**
- Reduced demand for outpatient clinics and fewer medically unjustifiable delays in care
- Improved performance against national standards