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# Coronavirus update

Welcome to the seventh bulletin providing you with an update of what has been taking place across Morecambe Bay to tackle the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

We are now seeing some “normality” return to the country – with shops re-opening and plans for bars, restaurants and foreign holidays being talked about. However the events in Leicester – where they have brought in a local lockdown – have shown that this is fragile and that the virus is still something which poses a threat to us.

We know from experience that the virus doesn't take long to take hold and spread across communities. That's why keeping social distancing is so important. While many media outlets talk about the government now recommending one metre plus for social distancing (one metre plus other mitigations such as sanitisers, face masks etc), it is really important not to lose sight that they recommend two metres be the norm where it is possible.

So please – as visitors return to the Morecambe Bay area and we see places re-open – continue to impress on colleagues and friends that where possible they remain two metres apart, limit contact where possible and continue to take precautions. We need to continue to protect our services across Morecambe Bay.

So far we have sadly seen 169 people die in our hospitals, with others sadly dying in our care homes and out in our communities. While we have seen more than 370 treated and discharged from hospital, and many more in our communities recover, we will continue to monitor the figures closely to ensure we continue to safely treat people across our communities.

We've including articles and updates in this newsletter from across our system, and hope you find it an enjoyable and interesting read.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support and to pledge we will continue to keep you updated.



Aaron Cummins



Jerry Hawker

Joint Chief Operating Officers – Bay Health & Care Partners

## Tackling the pandemic

Within the following pages you'll find out more about how we are continuing to respond to the pandemic, including an update on the ongoing plans for our communities, our continuing work to restore services, and other updates from our partners across the Morecambe Bay area.

## BHCP Assembly

You'll recall that last year we set up our Bay Health and Care Partners Assembly - and around 350 of you signed up. Some attended public events we held where we talked about healthcare and how it might look in the future across Morecambe Bay. We promised then to keep in touch - but of course the coronavirus pandemic has meant that our plans were postponed.

We are now making plans to bring those meetings back, but to use technology to ensure that we can hold the meetings safely - without having any social distancing issues.

These are likely to begin again in late August or September and we will let people know nearer the time. In the meantime if you would like to join our assembly you can do so at this [link](#).

## Multi-agency social media surgeries taking place to tackle domestic abuse

Cumbria Police, together with a number of partner agencies from across the county, have been working to reduce domestic abuse through dedicated DA 'social media surgeries' held twice weekly since March.

The DA surgeries, which are hosted by Cumbria Police on the force's Facebook and Instagram channels, have been set up to offer the public a new way of reporting abuse whether that be as a victim or if they concerns for someone they know. During these surgeries, agencies have been sharing key information to the public on the various signs of abuse and the support available within Cumbria.

The surgeries are a new way of working for all agencies involved. Numerous victims have reporting incidents of abuse after engaging in the surgeries, enabling agencies to provide the appropriate safeguarding measures. The success of these surgeries has been highlighted nationally, with many other areas across the UK looking to adopt similar schemes. The work in Cumbria has also been subject of acknowledgement from the Prime Minister.

## Helping support Learning Disability week

**Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust has been supporting this year's Learning Disability Week, with a focus on the importance of friendships during lockdown.**

People with a learning disability are more likely to experience loneliness and social isolation and this may have been made worse by the lockdown according to the national charity Mencap, who are behind the national week, which was held in June. They wanted to raise awareness of the importance of friendships to help tackle social isolation, as well as exploring the different ways of maintaining friendships during this unusual time.

Friendships are known to help people feel happier, included, and valued, and enhance wellbeing. But for people with a learning disability, opportunities to participate in their community, meeting people and develop friendships can be more difficult – and even more so during these times.

Learning Disability Week is important in helping to raise the profile of this significant and important area of work, and the Trust is determined to do everything they are able to do, each and every day, to support a group of people who experience significant health inequalities.

## Virtual Fracture Clinics

**Virtual Fracture Clinics launched last week at the Royal Lancaster Infirmary (RLI) and Westmorland General Hospital (WGH) for new patients.**

The Virtual Fracture Clinic (VFC) is a new service designed to speed up access to orthopaedic trauma care.

Traditionally, patients who visited the RLI Emergency Department with orthopaedic injuries would require multiple hospital visits for face-to-face assessments and treatment.

Now, orthopaedic trauma patients will be referred to the VFC where the fracture clinic team will review cases within three days following attendance at the emergency department, with no need for the patient to attend the hospital for an assessment.

Clinicians will look at patient X-rays and medical notes, and an orthopaedic physiotherapist or specialist nurse will telephone to discuss treatment and management. Following the phone call, patients may be advised to have further X-rays, or discharged by phone or, if further specialist help is required, a referral will be made to the most appropriate clinic. Their GP will be informed accordingly.

If any patients are not available on the telephone, a letter will be sent directly to them detailing their treatment plan. This letter will also be sent to their GP.

While new to this area, the model is well-established and a safe way to manage patients with more minor fractures. The Virtual Fracture Clinic model has been used by other trusts for many years and is hoped to be introduced at Furness General Hospital soon.



This new way of working is another example of Bay Health and Care Partners working together more effectively to provide better care in the community, which will keep people across Morecambe Bay healthier and at home for longer without having to come into hospital.

Meanwhile, across Lancashire and South Cumbria more than 14,800 virtual clinics, totalling more than 6,000 hours, have taken place in hospitals to make sure local patients get the best possible advice and support from their homes.

Attend Anywhere – an online video consultation tool – is being rolled out across hospitals in Lancashire and South Cumbria for scheduled clinic appointments as part of the response to coronavirus (COVID-19) and is already receiving great feedback from staff and patients.

While all hospitals and NHS staff have been working hard to make sure both staff and patients remain safe, video consultations have enabled patient appointments to take place in their own home during the COVID-19 pandemic, reducing unnecessary physical attendances and enabling patients to receive ongoing care.

The system has been used to allow family members and carers to join in appointments without needing to travel to hospital.

In Paediatrics, some children who we have seen through the video clinic have complex needs and were in the shielding category during the pandemic and needed to be seen in this way.

# Ambulance service support for Armed Forces week 2020

Last week's Armed Forces Week celebrations highlighted how much we value the skills our staff learn when they volunteer in forces roles.

The relationship works the other way around too, and we also welcome military paramedics from Cumbria and Lancashire, who can work with us on honorary contracts.

They bring invaluable military experience to NWS, and they benefit from working in the community with our expert frontline crews.

The army medics get vital clinical exposure at NWS to a much wider cohort of patients than they do in the military, in turn they support us by helping to ensure our core resources are operational, with the right mix of clinical skills. In short they are expert planners, and have been invaluable as we have faced the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.



One of the real rewards of the contract scheme is that NWS has employed a number of paramedics after they have left the military, and this has provided us with clinicians who are highly competent and familiar with NWS and its processes, values and behaviours.

## Control plans

As the number of Covid-19 infections in the country reduces, it is expected that we will move into a new phase of response, one that relies more on responding to local outbreaks rather than on a national approach. Upper tier local authorities are leading on publishing a Local Outbreak Control Plan.

While it is the responsibility of upper-tier local authorities to prepare these plans, many agencies are involved in implementing them.

The plans describe how the local Test and Trace system works and how this connects to the national system; gives further details of the approach being taken to support schools and care homes; and outlines how the community will be engaged in this work.

The plans for Lancashire and Cumbria can be found at <https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/publichealth/covid19outbreakcontrol.asp>

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/public-health/managing-coronavirus-in-the-county/>

## Breast screening service update

Coronavirus has had a major impact on the NHS including breast screening services. To help protect patients from the virus and to respond to the pandemic, we decided to reschedule breast screening appointments.

We are starting to send out appointments again now. We are inviting those who have been waiting the longest first and will carry on like that until we have caught up. If you have any concerns about unusual changes to your breasts, please speak with your GP as soon as possible. They will be able to refer you for tests if necessary.

## Plans to ease guidance for those shielding

The government has announced that those shielding from coronavirus will be advised they can spend more time outside their homes from today.

Clinically extremely vulnerable people will be able to spend time outdoors in a group of up to six people including those outside of their household, while maintaining social distancing. Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable and live alone or are single parents with children will also be able to create a 'support bubble' with one other household of any size, following the same rules already in place for the wider population.

From Saturday 1 August, the guidance will then be relaxed so clinically extremely vulnerable will no longer be advised to shield. They will continue to have access to priority supermarket delivery slots if they have registered online before 17 July for a priority delivery slot. NHS Volunteer Responders will also continue to offer support to those who need it, including collecting and delivering food and medicines.

The food and medicine boxes facilitated by the National Shielding Service will stop as of 1 August as individuals are advised they can visit shops and pharmacies.

[Click here to register and access a priority delivery slot.](#)

From 1 August, those who need to work and cannot do so from home will be able to return to work as long as their workplace is coronavirus secure.

Clinically extremely vulnerable people should continue to follow strict social distancing measures, taking particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household and practise good, frequent handwashing.

The government will be writing to all individuals on the Shielded Patient List with updated information on shielding advice and the ongoing support that will be available to them.

The updated guidance for those classed as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable will be published on 6 July and 1 August as these measures come into force.

[Read more on the government's latest announcement.](#)

Colin Cox, Cumbria County Council's Director of Public Health, said:

"The government is advising people to shield until 1 August 2020 and will ease its guidance again from 6 July 2020, so people can spend more time outdoors and form a support bubble.

"I understand that for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable the decision to do so won't be one taken lightly.

"It's impossible to say definitely that the situation is safe for people who have been shielding, while COVID-19 is still present in the UK there will always be a level of risk. But it is important that people take into account the latest information about the local situation in Cumbria when deciding what to do.

"Weekly figures are published by government which currently show low numbers of new infections in Cumbria, around 20-30, much lower than other parts of the north west. That is relevant information when people are trying to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

"I wish we could provide certainty, but at the moment we can only provide information to help people make the right decision for them. If people do go out it is very important to maintain social distancing and good hygiene practices, indeed this applies to the whole population."

# Reminder of GP Practice changes

## Face masks in general practice

If you visit your GP you may see some changes from the 15 June. From this date it is recommended that staff in primary care should wear a surgical face mask when not in PPE or in a part of the facility that is COVID-secure in line with the workplace definition set by the government.

Social distancing measures, where possible, are a critical part of controlling the virus in clinical and non-clinical areas. However, where it isn't always possible to maintain social distancing, public health advice is that wearing a face covering is an appropriate precautionary measure. Practices in our area are already contacting their patients about this

## GP appointments and bookings - Coronavirus update

To prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) there have been changes to GP appointments.

But it's still important to get help from a GP if you need it.

You can contact your GP surgery by:

- visiting their website
- using the NHS App
- calling them

[Click here for further information.](#)

# Reinstating services at our hospitals

Some of the services that were postponed due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic will be restored across University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust (UHMBT) over the coming weeks and months, as the Trust moves into the second phase of its coronavirus response.

Teams across the Trust have been working hard to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and ensure the safety and quality of services for all patients. Along with the rest of the NHS, the number one priority for the last few months has been ensuring that all those who need urgent care - not just those with coronavirus - have been able to get it when they need it.

To allow this to happen and to help reduce the spread of the virus, some non-urgent appointments and surgeries were postponed and other appointments were delivered in a different way such as via telephone or video clinics.

Services affected included:

- Cancer: services continued with the exception of screening (breast, bowel and cervical); colonoscopy (DTT, routine and surveillance), UGI, and some other investigations that we use for cancer pathways e.g. CPEX, spirometry.
- All routine surgery and OP face to face attendances were suspended from 20th March with the exception of patients on cancer or other urgent pathways.
- The IRD plan was suspended in its entirety
- All routine imaging (CT, MRI, US, XRay) was suspended
- All routine Clinical Investigations such as echo, angiograms were also suspended.
- With the exception of GI Bleeds and patients triaged as urgent all endoscopy was suspended

## Reinstating services at our hospitals continued...

The Trust is now in the position to be able to restore some of the services that were changed or postponed whilst teams were focused on dealing with the outbreak.

The Trust has already started to see some of the patients awaiting urgent elective procedures, and are now starting to see patients who have been waiting for their elective procedures including:

- Endoscopy - we are now doing all 2week wait and urgent and have restarted BCSP (bowel screening)
- Dermato-surgery services have been restored
- Day surgery procedures that support cancer pathways - these include infusions and other treatments
- Ophthalmology services - outpatient and surgery
- Orthopaedic surgery
- Ultrasound and xray services have been re-instated at Ulverston
- Home birth services and colposcopy clinics

In the next couple of weeks we are planning to restore the rest of the routine work we carry out including Clinical Investigation Unit work, stroke and frailty ambulatory care services, breast screening services and the virtual fracture clinic service.

Telephone and video clinics will continue wherever possible to prevent people making unnecessary trips to hospitals.

Clinicians across the Trust are currently reviewing relevant patients awaiting an appointment against national guidance to allow them to determine which patients should be offered an appointment now and who can be deferred to a later date.

The plans are also being produced in partnership with the Healthier Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System to ensure all patients in the area have a fair and equal access to care.

The Trust has put measures into place to support the safety of staff, patients and visitors who need to attend its hospitals and community settings, including:

- Ensuring patients with suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus will continue to be cared for on designated wards across the Trust
- Patients awaiting planned surgery will be required to self-isolate for 14 days prior to coming into hospital and will be tested for coronavirus before their procedure goes ahead in line with the Trust's policy to test all patients on admission or before surgery.
- Hand washing facilities and hand gel are available at all of the Trust's main hospitals and community settings
- Schedules of enhanced cleaning of public areas have been increased
- Relevant wards have been reviewed to ensure there is at least 2m between the beds to allow for social distancing
- Testing of symptomatic staff and family will continue as per current guidelines, and additional capacity is in place to allow routine testing of staff in frontline roles showing no symptoms (asymptomatic) will support infection prevention and control measures
- Access to antibody testing is also available to Trust staff and so far, over 7,000 members of staff have registered to take part in the initiative. This will help to build understanding and knowledge of coronavirus and inform the clinical approach.

We are now waiting Government guidance on phases three and four of the recovery plan from the pandemic and will share more information as and when we receive it.

# New interactive map will give tailored mental health care to Lancashire and South Cumbria residents

Health organisations in Lancashire and South Cumbria have worked in partnership to develop an interactive map of mental health services for people living in the area.

The Google Maps based system lists all the organisations working locally, and allows residents to search for their closest service or for specific types of support, to ensure they get appropriate care.

The interactive map means that people can use it to find:

- their closest mental health service
- most age-appropriate service (e.g. for younger or older people)
- language translation or interpretation facilities
- opening hours for mental health services (e.g. 24 hour support)
- different types of support for example, bereavement services, counselling, practical support).

The interactive map also includes countywide services available to residents. When people access the map and click on their chosen organisation, they will be given information and contact details generated by a Google search.

## Suicide bereavement - the importance of investing in lived experience

Sharon McDonnell, Managing Director of Suicide Bereavement UK and Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Manchester has written a blog talking about her loss, PABBS training and the importance of including people with lived experience in research projects:

Suicide Bereavement: The Importance of Investing in 'Lived Experience'

For more information about PABBS evidence-based and evaluated suicide bereavement training including new training dates available, visit [Suicide Bereavement UK](#).

## Primary care: looking after you too

NHS People Services launched a service called 'Looking after you too' to support all staff delivering frontline primary care services, to help maintain their psychological wellbeing during this time.

Individual coaching support is available with a highly skilled and experienced coach and is available for all staff working within general practice. For more information about how it works, or to register and book a coaching session, visit [Our NHS People's website](#).





## Lancashire STI home testing kits launched

The Lancashire Sexual Health Service has launched a new service 'free home testing kits' to screen for sexually transmitted infections which are available for Lancashire residents of all ages over 16 years of age.

[Click here](#) for more information on requesting kits, kit contents, guidance on how to obtain samples, plus a link to a video on how to take a blood sample.

## New Barnardo's national programme: See Hear Respond

**See Hear Respond** is a service provided across England by Barnardo's and a group of national and local community-based organisations, in response to COVID-19.

The programme has been created help children and young people in England who are experiencing harm and increased adversity during lockdown by providing support to those who are not being seen by schools or other key agencies. This work is focused on:

- Under 5s with a specific focus on under 2s
- Those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and where there are concerns about their welfare e.g. online safety
- Children who maybe at increased risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation inside or outside of the home
- Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee children experience barriers to accessing services
- Young carers

Working with their partners, Barnardo's aim to reduce the likelihood of harm and ensure other support and protective networks are in place using: online digital support, including advice and information, online counselling and a telephone helpline; face to face interventions, such as support for groups at risk outside the home and one to one support; reintegration into education, including assessments and the delivery of support pathways back to education.

There is a freephone number for children and families who wish to self-refer: freephone: 0800 157 7015. If you have any queries in relation to the service or how to make a referral for a child or family you are working with, please contact the regional coordinator for the North, Kate Goodwin on 07876 190420 or email [kate.goodwin@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:kate.goodwin@barnardos.org.uk).

## Keeping people connected

To help people adjust to this new world, an over-the phone support service for people with learning difficulties and/or autism has been launched by We Are People First and Lancashire County Council, called 'Keeping People Connected'.

Working with a range of organisations across Lancashire and Cumbria, 'Keeping People Connected' provides a safe, reliable and friendly connection through calls and conversation. It provides a way to have a chat; to ask questions and to keep connected. Read more about the service.

You can contact the service by calling the below numbers or email:

- If you are in Cumbria call: 0300 303 2789
- If you are in Lancashire call: 0300 303 0175
- Email: [keepconnected@wearepeoplefirst.co.uk](mailto:keepconnected@wearepeoplefirst.co.uk)

# How we are keeping our colleagues, patients and visitors safe



**NHS**  
University Hospitals of  
Morecambe Bay  
NHS Foundation Trust

## Reducing the number of people in our hospitals

To make sure we keep the number of people in our hospitals to a minimum, access to our hospitals is restricted and visiting remains temporarily suspended until further notice.

## Covering our faces

If you come into one of our hospitals or community settings, you will be required to wear a face covering. It doesn't have to be a surgical face mask; it can be something as simple as a bandana or scarf as long as it covers your mouth and nose.

In line with latest guidance, all staff will wear a surgical mask when in work. Depending on the reason you are being seen, they may wear other types of PPE such as gloves, aprons or FFP3 face masks.

## Keeping our distance

We have taken steps to allow for social distancing wherever possible, such as removing chairs in our waiting rooms, ensuring there is at least 2.5 metres between hospital beds and asking everyone to stay to the left when walking through our sites.



## Keeping everyone safe

We have put a number of things in place to keep everyone safe, such as continuing to care for patients with suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus on designated wards; asking patients awaiting planned surgery to self-isolate for 14 days before admission and testing them for coronavirus 72 hours before admission; and continuing to test symptomatic colleagues and their families.

For patients who may be immune-suppressed, extra planning and protection will be put in place.

## Practising good hand hygiene

Everyone who comes into our hospitals or community settings should wash their hands regularly using the hand washing facilities and hand gel provided. We have also taken steps to keep our sites as clean as possible including increasing cleaning schedules in public areas and removing magazines and toys in waiting areas.



We believe these measures will help to significantly reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus so unless you are told otherwise or you feel unwell, please attend your appointment

# THANK YOU

## TO OUR WONDERFUL LOCAL COMMUNITIES



**NHS**  
University Hospitals of  
Morecambe Bay  
NHS Foundation Trust

We've published advertisements thanking our local communities in local newspapers across Morecambe Bay.

Our thanks and thoughts are with our communities for their support over the past 16 weeks.



Bay Health & Care Partners  
delivering



**NHS**  
University Hospitals of  
Morecambe Bay  
NHS Foundation Trust

# THANK YOU

## TO OUR WONDERFUL LOCAL COMMUNITIES

# Keep up to date

We are keeping staff, stakeholders and the public up to date in various ways, including a daily email bulletin for staff, this e-update for stakeholders and regular information for the public.

If you want to keep up to date, you can access recent news on our website:

[www.healthierlsc.co.uk/morecambe-bay](http://www.healthierlsc.co.uk/morecambe-bay)

Or social media:

Twitter: @MorecambeBHCP

Facebook: UHMBT



This newsletter has been created by the Bay Health and Care Partners:

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust (UHMBT); Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group (MBCCG); Morecambe Bay Primary Care Collaborative; Lancashire and South Cumbria Care NHS Foundation Trust; Cumbria County Council; Lancashire County Council; North West Ambulance Service (NWS).