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Coronavirus update

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

Across our health and care system we have seen us carry out almost 10,000 anti-body tests (with 20% showing a positive result for antibodies), and almost 400 people have been discharged from our hospitals after treatment for Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Sadly we have seen more than 370 people die in our hospitals, and others in our Care Homes and communities, after a positive test for coronavirus and our thoughts are with all those families and loved ones who have been affected by this terrible pandemic.

We are at somewhat of a crossroads at the moment. On the one hand shops and restaurants are opening up, we are seeing many people taking holidays, and we are being encouraged to eat out on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays during August.

On the other hand we have seen people in Spain being asked to join those from other countries in having to isolate for two weeks on their return to this country, and a number of additional measures taking place in Oldham, Blackburn and Leicester.

The pandemic is definitely not over and we all need to continue to take measures to protect ourselves, our patients and the community. That's why as we restore services, we are doing it in a really safe way. It will ensure that we continue the recovery that we have begun here in Morecambe Bay.

All healthcare colleagues are wearing face masks in public areas of healthcare premises, there is additional hand sanitiser in place, and we are asking everyone to observe the two metre social distance between them and others where possible – in short we want to protect patients and colleagues across the system.

Please – everyone – ensure you wash your hands more regularly. These measures will help to minimise the risk of further spread of the disease. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our thanks to 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 how we continue to keep you safe, our continuing work to restore services, and other updates from our partners across the Morecambe Bay area.

Keeping you safe

A vital part of the recovery from the pandemic is continuing to keep colleagues, visitors and staff safe. Face covering are already compulsory on public transport and in our hospitals for non staff members. For staff face masks are now compulsory in communal areas of healthcare premises.

Face coverings are now compulsory in every shop.

Within the hospital premises operated by University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust updated guidance to manage patients has been published to ensure the safety of patients and colleagues continues to be a priority.

The updated guidance from the Infection Prevention team takes into account all the latest national and regional policies.

Wards are codes as follows across the Trust:

- **BLUE: COVID positive**

If the screen returns a positive result – the patient will be then cared for in a Blue area for up to 6 weeks or until discharged.

- **YELLOW: Suspected COVID**

Patients with a risk of having COVID-19 on admission will be admitted to a yellow area. They will have a screen for COVID-19 and if positive will be admitted to a blue area. If it is not detected but COVID-19 is still suspected by a senior clinician they will remain in the yellow area and a repeat screen will be carried out. If COVID is no longer suspected they will transfer to a green area.

All wards are designated a colour, but some wards may have an arrangement for those patients that are in another colour stream. For example the majority of wards are now Green, but may have Yellow or Blue patients in single rooms.

Area colour posters should be placed on the doors of the clinical care area for staff awareness. The Elective Green wards DO NOT have the ability to care for other colour streams.

The priority for single patient rooms, in all wards, are those that:

- Require shielding
- Those that are on Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs)
- Those with known Alerts/cross infection risks

Those on AGPs should not be in the same bay/cohort as those who are not. This applies in any colour stream.

If a patient tests positive for COVID-19 they will be investigated by the Ward to trace any potential contacts. Any inpatients found to have had significant contact will be isolated or cohorted for 14 days, or until discharge with advice given to continue until total of 14 days.

Any patient that has already been discharged or any visitor who has had significant contact will be contacted by the ward and advice given in line with self-isolation.

The Ward must inform the IP team of any contacts found from positive patients.

Significant contact would be a contact without a face mask: within 1metre for more than 1 minute, within 2metres for more than 15 minutes or directly face to face for any amount of time. COVID-19 contact should be considered for 48hrs prior to the test for patients without COVID symptoms or from the onset of symptoms for those with symptoms.

- **GREEN: Non-COVID**

Non-elective patients will be triaged for their COVID-19 risk on admission. If they are deemed to have no current risk they will be admitted to a green area. Patients will have a surveillance screen – which if negative will mean they remain in a green area.

- **GREEN ELECTIVE: Non-COVID (elective shielded patients)**

All elective (planned) patients will be asked to self-isolate with their household for 14 days prior to their admission and will also have a Covid-19 screening in the 72 hours prior to admission. Nursing staff will carry out an additional surveillance screen on arrival and ensure patient welfare and patients remaining in these areas will be rescreened every 7 days until discharge.

Face masks

Our colleagues in hospitals are already wearing masks to protect themselves, colleagues, visitors and patients in public areas.

In clinical areas personal protective equipment is used by all colleagues, and when visiting people's homes we continue to use that PPE to protect you.

Hand sanitiser is also available at entrances and at regular points throughout our healthcare and other premises so please, if you do visit any healthcare premises use the protection being offered.

Some of these recommendations are now being extended to primary and community healthcare settings as an addition to existing national COVID-19 IPC guidance which advises on appropriate PPE usage in patient facing clinical settings and other measures to be taken to reduce transmission risk such as hand hygiene and social distancing.

The new guidance can be viewed [here](#).



Face masks continued

Exemptions to face masks

Government guidance for wearing face masks has been updated July to include shops, supermarkets and indoor shopping centres.

The current Government guidance on face coverings (including how to make a face covering) is [here](#). Section 3 talks about when you do not need to wear a face covering. There is no need for a doctor to provide an exemption letter, as patients can make their own.

Exemption Cards

Some people may feel more comfortable showing something that says they do not have to wear a face covering. This could be in the form of an exemption card, badge or even a home-made sign. [Access exemption card templates](#).

How to wear glasses with face masks to prevent fogging

Wearing a facemask or face covering is becoming the new normal, but one of the minor problems of the COVID-19 pandemic is fogged-up eyewear. This happens when warm breath escapes from the top of the mask and lands on the cooler surface of the lens.

Ceri Smith-Jaynes from the Association of Optometrists (AOP) has come up with the following ways you can prevent your glasses from fogging. [Click here](#) for more.

Restoring GP services

If you have visited your GP recently you will have seen some changes. It is now recommended that colleagues working 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.

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.](#)



Lancashire and south Cumbria mental health helpline

There are two mental health phone lines for people who need help, support and access to services. The Mental Health Crisis Line is open 24/7 on 0800 953 0110 and staffed by trained clinicians who can offer help, advice, mental health assessments and access to services to anyone in crisis or anyone worried about someone else.

There is also a Wellbeing Line, staffed by volunteers with lived or professional experience who offer a listening and support service for anyone who is feeling lonely or just wants to talk. This team can be contacted on 0800 915 4640 or by texting 'Hello' to 07860 022846.



The opening hours for the Wellbeing Line were extended to 24/7 during our initial response to COVID-19 but will return to normal on Monday, July 27. These are:

- Monday – Friday between 7pm and 11pm
- Saturday – Sunday between 12noon and 12midnight

Care homes update

Care Homes across Morecambe Bay are beginning to welcome back visitors.

In Cumbria care home leaders are cautioning that future outbreaks are possible and strict rules will be kept in place to keep residents safe.

Under the new approach:

- Visiting slots to Residential and Nursing homes will be booked in advance, with visiting 'windows' in the morning and afternoon.
- Visitors will be required to confirm on the day of the visit that they do not have COVID symptoms and are not living in a household with anyone who has COVID symptoms.
- Visits will take place outside and will be subject to cancellation dependent on the weather, visits inside homes will be allowed in specific circumstances only.
- Only two people will be allowed to visit at a time.
- Appropriate PPE will be provided and visitors will be asked to follow clear infection control rules.
- All visits will keep to the 2 metre social distancing rule.
- No food or gifts can be given and there will be no access to toilets for visitors.
- Homes you are visiting will talk through the process

For full details of visiting procedures family and friends should contact their loved one's care home directly.

In Lancashire, each care provider will have their own policy on visiting, but it is recommended that people should only visit in person when it is absolutely essential and visits should be limited to a maximum of two people from the same household.

In homes where there are confirmed outbreaks of Covid-19, no visiting will be allowed, apart from in exceptional circumstances when residents are at the end of their lives.

Temporary closure of Langdale Ward at Westmorland General Hospital

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust has made a temporary change to the way it provides community services at Westmorland General Hospital in order to protect the safety of patients and staff at the site.

The Trust operated community beds (on the Langdale Ward on Level Four of the hospital). The plan to reinstate elective (planned) services following the coronavirus outbreak mean that the WGH site will be used for routine day surgery for patients across the Morecambe Bay area.

This will require those patients to self-isolate for two weeks prior to their surgery to ensure that they remain coronavirus-free – and the Trust therefore needs to maintain the site being a COVID-19 secure hospital – free from coronavirus.

As medical patients who are usually those admitted to the Langdale wards will not have been self-isolating - the Trust plans to change the way it provides community services for those patients and ensure the safety of patients and staff at the site.

The Trust has therefore temporarily closed the beds on the Langdale ward, and will use staff who provide those services in a different way – to support patients in the community to remain safely at home. The temporary closure will be reviewed every three months.

Full quality and equality impact assessments have been carried out and the Rapid Response and Rehabilitation services are being strengthened to support people being cared for in their own homes.

We are doing this to ensure that we can treat as many people who need procedures and operations as quickly and safely as possible after they have had to be postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic and our response to that.

We are strengthening our community teams to ensure that patients across the south Lakes area who would otherwise have been admitted to the Langdale ward can be treated in their own homes and receive the very best care – while able to continue living at home. We would stress

BHCP Assembly

You'll recall that last year we set up our Bay Health and Care Partners Assembly - and around 350 people signed up. Some attended some 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.

We are planning to discuss the services that have needed to change to keep people safe and we will be seeking the experience and views of people as to how this has felt to them. We have written to all current members of the Assembly and welcome new members.

If you would like to join our assembly you can do so at this [link](#).

Neglect: If you SEE something, SAY something

Neglect continues to be a concern for children and young people. Neglect is the most common form of child abuse and it is likely that there are many more children affected by neglect than are actually reported.

Lockdown has brought added pressures to parents and carers of children and young people. Many children will not have been seen on a regular basis, be living in a low income household and be subject to pressures such as domestic and substance abuse.

Parents and carers now have the added pressure of the summer holidays and occupying their child/ren.

We all have a responsibility: If we SEE something we need to SAY something!

Read more about what neglect looks like and the types of neglect in the [5 minute briefing](#).



Psychological resilience hubs

You may already be aware that Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation trust is working with partners from across the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS) to create a psychological resilience hub to co-ordinate support for people who have been psychologically affected by Covid-19 and need some support with their mental health.

The purpose of the hub is to ensure that support is provided and this will initially be focused on NHS and social care staff, emergency services workers and their families - although we will, of course, support anyone who gets in contact because they have been affected by the pandemic. This project is being created in recognition of the intense effort made by everyone across health and social care settings and emergency services and represents a real opportunity to make sure those who have been affected psychologically are supported.

In the first instance, they are promoting the telephone number for the hub which provides access to mental health professionals. Callers will be assessed on the 'phone and we will be issuing emails with links to an online wellbeing questionnaire as part of the initial triaging system. Some people will be signposted to national and local support services but immediate support and referral to services will be made for anyone indicating high levels of distress too. They will be launching the resilience hub later this month and have now contacted colleagues in the system to ask them to identify anyone who might require immediate support.

As part of this project they are also offering our Workplace Trauma Support training. The approach develops staff to provide peer support within their own teams, supported by psychological professionals. Colleagues in the Traumatic Stress Service have now trained 110 people. The training, which initially targeted line managers at inpatient and secure units, has more recently expanded to include psychological services and psychologists, including third year Clinical Psychology Trainees to support teams that do not have psychology staff. The training is designed to help people across the system understand and see signs of trauma in colleagues and themselves.

If you'd like to find out more, please contact the Traumatic Stress Service on 01772 647071.

Preparing for winter

As we move into the next phase of our response to Covid-19, we must start to think about the months ahead, specifically the winter period, and the issues that it inevitably brings. Lancashire and South Cumbria must fully prepare for the possibility of a second peak as well as making robust plans for a potentially bad flu season.

This year's flu vaccination campaign will be more important than ever and will have to take Covid-19 into consideration. Crowded waiting rooms in emergency departments can no longer be the norm, particularly in light of the risks this poses of transmission of Covid-19.

In Lancashire and South Cumbria we are starting work on rollout of the new national NHS 111 First programme. NHS 111 First is part of a national integrated programme to improve outcomes and experience of urgent and emergency care. To keep patients safe and allow them to maintain social distancing we are asking them to call NHS 111 before they go to A&E. NHS 111 will then book them into a time slot at the emergency department, or at the most appropriate local service for the patient. All patients who need a blue light response will still receive one.

NHS 111 First will ensure that patients can access the clinical service they need, first time, with the convenience of a booked appointment or time slot if they need to attend an emergency department. Blackpool is one of two 'first mover' sites, in the North West, who will adopt the approach by the end of August, enabling us to test processes, check safety, understand any system impacts and evaluate the service.

We are seeing a great deal of enthusiasm from our Trusts to adopt this approach, given the potential to address congestion in emergency departments and social distancing requirements, as well as to redirect patients to more clinically appropriate options, and we will continue to keep you updated as things progress. We will then be seeking to quickly identify 'fast follower' sites to roll out through the autumn.

Six steps to safer sleep for babies

Each year around 200 babies will die unexpectedly before their first birthday. Many of these deaths are classified as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or cot death, which usually happens when babies are sleeping.

No-one wants to think that the worst will happen to their baby but it's important that parents and carers know the risks and what they can do about them. Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has produced some useful advice in a short animation called 'Six Steps to Safer Sleep' that you can [watch here](#). On the website there are also a number of resources such as posters and leaflets that can be shared with new parents.

For more information visit [LSCB's website](#).

Summer holiday activity directories

To support parents and carers looking for childcare and activities during the school summer holidays 2020, Cumbria County Council (CCC) and partners have launched an online directory for each district of Cumbria which lists local options for holiday camps, childcare providers and other support services and activities. The directory is designed to help parents and carers to find information about available services: [CCC Children and Families Information Service Directory - summer holidays 2020](#)

Lancashire County Council (LCC) has also produced a directory of summer holiday activities: [LCC summer holiday provision in Lancashire \(0-11 years\)](#)

Project 5 – Support for NHS staff

Project5 is a not-for-profit community interest company, that provides a unique service to NHS staff. Their offer, which is provided by over 1,000 highly skilled and trained coaches, psychologists and therapists, is to work with staff whilst they are capable of effecting change in their own lives.

They provide contact, through FREE 1-to-1 sessions, to those who are finding work hard, are sleeping less, are eating more, and are showing the early signs of strain. This offer is open to all NHS staff and can be accessed via <https://www.project5.org/>.

Bereavement and loss grab sheets

Four grab sheets have been produced for anyone who would like to know more about bereavement and loss, which include links to other websites and to further materials which may be helpful in supporting people with Learning Disabilities.

[Grab sheet 1](#) explains what bereavement is; how people may react to loss; the things that may affect someone's reaction to bereavement and the different types of loss.

[Grab sheet 2](#) explains what grief is; what grief feels like; and how someone might behave. "Who is suffering from grief?"

[Grab sheet 3](#) explains what approaches can be used to support people who have experienced bereavement and loss, or who are "suffering from grief". (It's important to note that grief is normal and one does not "suffer from it" in the same way that you suffer from an illness. However, some people may be severely affected by grief).

[Grab sheet 4](#) explains about how to communicate about loss and bereavement, about funerals and how to support ourselves whilst supporting others.

COVID-19 vaccine trials

A new NHS service has recently been launched, helping people across the UK sign up for information on the new COVID-19 vaccine trials.

The new NHS COVID-19 vaccine research registry will help large numbers of people be recruited into the trials over the coming months, potentially leading to an effective vaccine against coronavirus being identified and made available to the UK public.

It has been developed as part of the UK Government's Vaccine Taskforce, in partnership with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), NHS Digital, and the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh Governments.

There are a number of vaccines being identified and safety-tested at the moment, but only large scale trials can give scientists the information needed about how effective they are. The NIHR working with the NHS aims to recruit over half a million people onto the registry, which will allow people to be put in touch with the vaccine trials in the coming months.

Researchers are looking for people from all backgrounds, ages and parts of the UK, including both people with or without existing health conditions, to take part in vaccine studies, to make sure that any vaccines developed will work for everyone.

For further information [click here](#) and to sign up to the registry [click here](#).

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

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).