

17 August 2020

Bay Health &
Care Partners
delivering



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Coronavirus update

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

You will have seen the recent news regarding Greater Manchester and parts of Lancashire and West Yorkshire bringing in additional measures to tackle coronavirus and in particular, the news that Preston has additional measures in place. Obviously this is very close to our area and we recognise that these additional measures are the reason that we continue to urge everyone across our communities to continue to take all the precautions they can against spreading the virus.

We do not want our area to have to implement similar measures – just as the society and the economy are beginning to get back to something approaching normality, with visitors returning safely to the Lake District.

So please, continue to wear face masks in public areas of healthcare premises, there is additional hand sanitiser in place, observe the two-metre social distance between you and others where possible – and ensure you continue with good hand hygiene – in short wash your hands more often.

These measures will help to minimise the risk of further spread of the disease and protect you, our patients and the public, and the NHS and care system.

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.

Preparing for winter – flu and NHS 111 First

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 challenges 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. We are therefore urging everyone eligible to get a free flu vaccination from their GP –

Letters or other notifications will be being sent out as part of the preparation for winter.



In Lancashire and South Cumbria, we are starting work on the 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.

Funding awarded to upgrade A&E Facilities in time for winter

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust (UHMBT) has been allocated £2m to upgrade its two emergency departments at Furness General Hospital and the Royal Lancaster Infirmary as part of preparations for winter.

It is one of 117 organisations to be allocated a share of £300m as part of one of the Prime Minister's latest announcements.

Kate Maynard, Chief Operating Officer, UHMBT said: "I'm pleased for our local communities and colleagues that UHMBT has been informed today that it will receive an allocation of £2m as part of the Prime Minister's announcement that 117 NHS Trusts will be allocated a share of £300m to upgrade A&E facilities. These funds are part of the NHS Preparation for winter and the risk of further outbreaks of coronavirus.



"Our plans include improving the capacity at our two Emergency Departments in Furness General Hospital and Royal Lancaster Infirmary. This investment will also help to further improve the experience for both patients and colleagues as well as removing patients waiting on corridors, which is not something that any of us want to see in our hospitals."

You can read more about the full announcement [here](#).

Cancer appointments are safe - please attend if you are asked to



Together with hospital trusts across the region, Lancashire and South Cumbria Cancer Alliance is reassuring people that it is safe to attend cancer appointments during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

People who are being tested or treated for cancer are being urged to keep their appointments. New measures are in place to help protect patients and staff from coronavirus, it is important to not delay cancer treatment.

Cancer assessment and treatments are still happening during the pandemic. New innovations such as video consultation, reviewing photographs of skin lesions and arranging urgent tests are helping the recovery process. Meanwhile, specialised surgical hubs are helping to ensure patients receive safe and timely operations for cancer.

We understand many people with cancer are anxious about the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on their treatment and care. Cancer specialists and local teams throughout the NHS are working together to ensure that cancer services can be delivered as safely as possible. Cancer services are still available, and the NHS is here for you.



Hospitals are safe!

Health care leaders have come together to reassure patients it is safe for them to attend hospitals for operations and appointments.

Planned operations and appointments are starting to return at our hospitals across the region as the pressure of COVID-19 reduces and hospitals are urging people to make sure they attend when requested.



There are concerns that some people have put off health care out of worries about visiting a hospital during the pandemic and are keen to stress the safety measures in place.

We want to reassure patients that as we reintroduce our elective programme, which was put on hold as a result of the pandemic, it is safe to come in for scheduled surgery. We are sensitive to those who are nervous about coming into a hospital during this time, but we can assure people the risk is extremely small. Hospitals are safe places and the earlier that patients come to hospital, the better the chances we have to treat their symptoms.

For anyone coming in for surgery, there are a number of extra measures now in place to ensure the safety of patients and staff. Steps have been taken to isolate COVID-19 patients and make sure that the rest of the hospital is safe for other patients. Patients due for surgery are asked, in most cases, to self-isolate before their operation and the hospitals are divided into COVID and non-COVID areas. The cleaning regimes in hospitals have been enhanced even further and infection prevention precautions have been escalated, while staff are also now being swabbed on a regular basis themselves to ensure they do not have the virus.

Those who choose not to seek medical treatment until their condition deteriorates considerably place themselves at greater risk. NHS organisations will continue to reassure local people who have to go to hospital that it is safe.

Safeguarding homeless people from COVID-19

During the coronavirus pandemic, partners in Lancashire and South Cumbria worked together to provide housing and healthcare support to around 1,500 homeless people.

Colleagues from across housing, social care, health, other public sector and voluntary, community, social enterprise and faith sector organisations came together to safeguard rough sleepers and other vulnerable homeless people from COVID-19.

As the whole country prepared to go into lockdown and 2.2 million people were advised to shield from the coronavirus, the government issued guidance to councils to make arrangements for rough sleepers – known to be at a greater risk to the virus as they often have underlying health issues.



Homelessness is not just about housing or bricks and mortar – it is about people and their health and social needs. By working together during this pandemic, we are now able to address the multiple needs of individuals, putting them at the centre, with services wrapped around them.

A key success of the COVID-19 response has been the speed at which we've come together to respond to the housing, health and social care needs of homeless people and rough sleepers. We are committed to ensuring we address all of the needs of our homeless population, not just the need for short-term accommodation.

Across Lancashire and South Cumbria to date, more than 1,472 homeless people have been found temporary or emergency accommodation and more than 374 health assessments have taken place.

Togetherall - support is there

Been struggling during COVID-19?
Rebranded mental health service is available to all.

A free mental health service available to everyone living in Lancashire and South Cumbria has been renamed.



Big White Wall has supported thousands of people across the region over the past few years, but as of 5 August 2020 it is now known as Togetherall.

And while thousands of local people were urged to stay at home to protect their physical health due to COVID-19, it is understandable many may struggle with their mental health as a result. Therefore, mental health leads across Lancashire and South Cumbria are encouraging residents to use free resources such as Togetherall.

Togetherall, which is available at togetherall.com, provides a clinically safe and anonymous online community providing peer to peer support, personal assessments, and self-help courses for those who need it.

Togetherall is constantly monitored by 'wall guides' who are on hand 24/7 and will intervene if members seem particularly low and at-risk and provide personal support on a one-to-one basis.

Togetherall also offers members the opportunity to take online tests to measure their anxiety or depression levels to set goals and track their progress. Online courses with health professionals covering things like sleep problems, stopping smoking and anger management are also available.

For more information or to sign up to Togetherall quickly, anonymously and free of charge, visit the [website](https://togetherall.com).

Campaign continues to encourage talking to save lives

Health and care partners in Lancashire and South Cumbria have launched the next phase of their suicide prevention campaign encouraging residents to keep talking throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The first phase of the Let's Keep Talking campaign saw more people than ever reaching out to local and national services for help. But the local health and care partnership remain concerned that people's mental health will continue to be adversely affected during the uncertain times ahead as the pandemic continues.

In the early stages of lockdown, organisations worked together to share campaign messages encouraging people to talk to friends and family to cope with stress, anxiety and social isolation and to signpost people to mental health support.

Following on from this, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS) has refreshed materials with updated messaging to reflect the new normal. Materials include posters, leaflets and social media images. The partnership has also worked with Global Radio, owners of Rock FM, to use instream radio and digital advertising to target the key audiences.

As with the earlier campaign, the four main audiences are:

- Young people and older teenagers
- Parents who are juggling home working and limited childcare
- Men who have been furloughed, made redundant or who are self-employed
- Older and vulnerable people getting used to the new normal.

Read the full article on the [Let's Keep Talking campaign](#).

Cumbria CVS

Safe returning to volunteering for existing volunteers

Cumbria CVS will hold a virtual session for existing volunteers on how to safely return to volunteering. The session held on Wednesday 16 September or Wednesday 14 October (2pm-3pm) will cover:

- Understanding COVID-19 and the volunteering picture in Cumbria
- How volunteers can keep themselves safe and others safe when volunteering during COVID-19
- Understanding the importance of volunteer risk assessments
- Mental Health and well being of volunteers and others
- Training opportunities available for volunteers
- The importance of communication and assertiveness skills during the pandemic.

To book and for online joining details via zoom please email: info@cumbriacvs.org.uk

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 information.

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

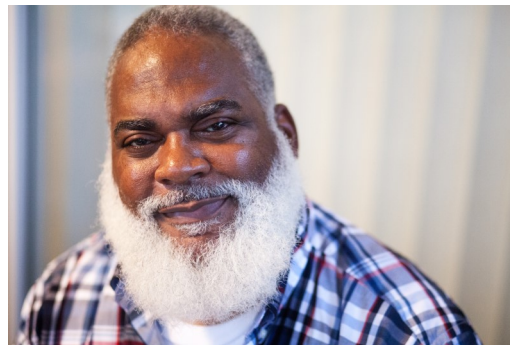
Further information: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/gps/gp-appointments-and-bookings/>



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 two-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.

NWAS involving communities, stakeholders, patients and public panel members during the pandemic

As it has for many, the COVID-19 pandemic had led North West Ambulance Service's (NWAS) Patient Engagement team to explore new ways of working and engaging with its communities, stakeholders and patient and public panel members.

Throughout the pandemic NWAS has ensured important information is shared with communities, stakeholders and Patients and Public Panel members covering topics such as how to access its services if people are hard of hearing and mental health support available.

NWAS is aiming to hold a number of virtual focus group sessions with patient and community groups to help it understand their thoughts on its response to COVID-19, where they think

NWAS could improve and what changes could be made going forward. From the feedback that it receives from its focus groups, NWAS will look towards planning a number of bigger themed virtual events to hopefully address the issues raised.

If you are a member of a patient or community group who would be interested in joining a focus group session or would like NWAS to join one of your dedicated meetings please contact talk.tous@nwas.nhs.uk

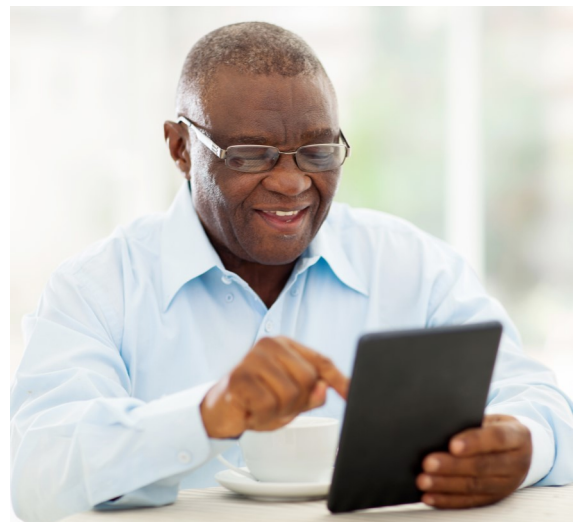
Patient feedback for North West Ambulance Service

It is important to NWAS that it provides a quality service which meets the needs of its patients, therefore NWAS gathers feedback - both good and bad - about people's experiences, whether they're a patient or the family/carer of a patient, so that NWAS is able to continue with best practice and improve where it needs to.

NWAS collect feedback in a number of ways including surveys, focus groups, community engagement and its online complaints and compliments forms.

Over the last few months due to the pandemic, and based on national guidance, NWAS has had to pause its usual patient engagement programme where historically it would engage with patients via postal surveys to receive their feedback on its core services of Paramedic Emergency Services, Urgent Care Service and Patient Transport Services.

NWAS has now begun re-engaging with patients that have used these services to understand their thoughts on how it has responded to their needs during COVID-19. Please feel free to share this information wider with others who may wish to provide NWAS with their feedback.



Take the survey

Patients can share their experience of using the above three services by completing one of NWAS' patient surveys online.

<https://www.nwas.nhs.uk/get-involved/complete-an-online-survey/>

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).