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Coronavirus update

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

It's a really fast moving situation which means we're working in very different ways and facing very different challenges to those we were facing less than two months ago.

We want to pay tribute to all the teams of key workers across Morecambe Bay – without them, wherever they are working, our lives would not be able to continue.

We also want to pay tribute to the public who, by and large, have stayed safe, stayed home and protected our NHS.

We have continued to provide services in primary care, the community, our hospitals and across mental health services, and have made preparations to ensure that if things become more pressured we can continue to provide services for the people of Morecambe Bay.

We'd also like to thank all our partners across the councils in south Cumbria and north Lancashire, the large firms and smaller businesses who have helped us, at whatever level. Everyone has been so kind and generous and have really helped our efforts. Thank you all for your continued support.



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 have managed the pandemic, including how we've put additional capacity into the system to manage patients in both primary and community care, and in our hospitals.

We'll also tell you more about the work we've been doing behind the scenes to ensure that we have the staff able to manage the patients we have seen, and how we have continued to supply personal protective equipment (PPE) to our front line teams.

PPE Update

In the first four weeks of the current pandemic, our teams have gone to astonishing lengths to ensure the hospital and community teams have the correct PPE to wear.

During that time 800,000 sets of gloves, more than 400,000 aprons and more than 300,000 surgical masks have been supplied. In total, more than 1.6 million different items of protective equipment have been supplied to frontline teams in our hospitals and across the community.



In addition to the national supplies which have been arriving and have been distributed regularly to the clinical teams throughout our community, our teams have:

- **Helped source a sustainable supply chain for hand sanitisers using a local company (Wax Lyrical), which was on stream within a week of the pandemic outbreak**
- **Sourced a sustainable supply of re-usable full face visors by working in partnership with local businesses**
- **Sourced an additional 8,000 scrub suits and implemented a 'scrub hub' on all sites as part of the PPE protection for all our staff within the first days of the pandemic**
- **Implemented a 'single point of ordering' system for PPE orders to ensure that all wards/department, as well as community colleagues, receive daily PPE stock**
- **Implemented a seven-day service to ensure PPE is delivered on a daily basis**
- **Worked with regional and national colleagues to ensure that if there are issues with supplies, all local organisations have access across the region to the stocks available.**

Additional capacity

Work has taken place across hospital sites to build additional bed capacity. Areas within the hospitals across Morecambe Bay have been designated for patients with confirmed coronavirus, patients with suspected coronavirus and patients with other conditions, to ensure that patients are kept safe during the current pandemic.

There has also been work to build additional capacity in community centres including Kendal Leisure Centre and Furness Academy in south Cumbria, as well as work at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) to build capacity in the system for recovery beds, should they be needed.

The speed of the work locally has been phenomenal and we have so many local firms to thank, including BAE for their help in ensuring that the work to complete these areas was carried out so speedily.

Domestic abuse campaign

Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Board have been working together with our partners to signpost to information and support available both locally and nationally for victims of domestic abuse during the period of lockdown.



The government acknowledges that the order for people to stay at home can cause anxiety for those who are experiencing or feel at risk of domestic abuse. There is never an excuse for domestic abuse, no matter what the circumstances are. GOV UK have issued guidance for anyone suffering from domestic abuse with free and confidential advice available 24 hours a day on a dedicated helpline 0808 2000 247.

For anyone who feels they are at risk of abuse, it is important to remember that there is still help and support available, including police response, online support, helplines, refuges and other services. The campaign has also ensured people at risk understand that if they are suffering from domestic abuse, isolation rules do not apply.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Advice

Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust has extended its existing helpline to provide support 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

This is to help reduce the number of people calling 111 and accessing services through other pathways. The helpline offers emotional support and a listening ear to anyone who is suffering from stress or anxiety or to people who may be feeling lonely and isolated during this time.

The service is available to everyone in Lancashire and South Cumbria and can be contacted on 0800 915 4640 or by texting 'HELLO' to 07862022846.



Community teams working differently

The current issues we are facing mean that teams in the community across Morecambe Bay are working differently to how they used to.

Teams are utilising telephone advice more, using photographs and technology to support self-care for patients in their own homes. Packages have been created to support self-care and provide care home and carers the much-needed guidance so they feel well supported.

New heart failure patients are now not being seen by a consultant but being managed in the community.

Teams are having daily dial ins with their manager and doing many more telephone consultations than previously to ensure they limit patient contact to only where it is necessary.

Staff have supported patients in different ways to keep them in contact with relatives using technology which has really helped some isolated patients.

The teams are also providing an increased number of out of hours welfare checks to people in the community who are vulnerable, including for those without nursing needs.

Managing 999 calls

The North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) is continuing to experience high demand on the 999 service, which is approximately 6% higher than they would normally expect. Some parts of the region have seen a rise of over 10% in demand, with 5,000 999 calls being received in a single day.



They are also experiencing continual high demand on the NHS 111 telephone service, which on some days has risen to over 15,000 calls a day. An average day is around 4,000 to 5,000 calls. The Trust has posted a series of social media messages to try and reduce the pressures by asking members of the public to only call 999 in an emergency and to use the NHS 111 online service when possible to get advice on suspected coronavirus cases.

On 3 April 2020 the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) used to process 999 calls was updated to include Protocol 36: Pandemic, Epidemic and Outbreak. Protocol 36 is a specialist protocol that helps with the triage and management of pandemics, epidemics and outbreaks of flu and viruses including coronavirus (COVID-19). By utilising this protocol, it will help teams to manage resources more effectively when responding to patients.

Treating coronavirus

As you can imagine, our staff in hospital, GP Practices and across our communities have been supporting people who are suffering with coronavirus. As of Tuesday 21 April 2020, 133 people who tested positive for COVID-19 have sadly died whilst being treated in our hospitals. By the same day, 192 people had been discharged home from our hospitals following treatment. We will continue to work hard to treat people across Morecambe Bay.

We're open - let us help you

Health chiefs across Morecambe Bay are urging people not to put off getting help when they need it.

The message is: "we're open, let us help you". There is a worry that people are putting themselves or their loved ones at risk by not seeking urgent help when it's needed.

The people of Morecambe Bay have been brilliant at staying home to save lives, but if you or someone you are with shows signs of a serious, life-threatening illness or injury they must go to hospital.

There's a worry that people who may be experiencing a heart attack or stroke are putting off coming to hospital.

A&E attendances at our three hospitals are now 66% fewer than the same time last year. The NHS is under immense pressure, but these illnesses and diseases haven't gone away.

All of our NHS services are still open and anyone suffering with a health issue and has doubts should not hesitate to seek help. We would rather they called 999 or attended an A&E to find an honest mistake has been made than be too late to save a person's life.

People can be nervous at the best of times about coming into hospital, and we understand the feeling of uncertainty right now during the Coronavirus pandemic. The Doctors and Nurses may look a little different at the moment, but it's for everyone's safety.

If you are seriously ill, please don't let that put you off coming to hospital for an emergency.

We have COVID-free areas to look after people with different needs.

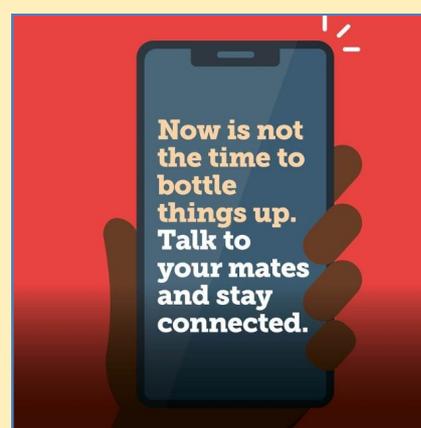
Suicide prevention campaign launches to tackle COVID-19 fallout

Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS) has launched a suicide prevention campaign encouraging residents to "keep talking" throughout the coronavirus (covid-19) pandemic.

Real-time reports of suspected suicides have increased in Lancashire and South Cumbria as people stay home during lockdown and self-isolation. To tackle this, the ICS has created materials to share on social media and via local community hubs asking people to call their friends and family and keep talking by text, phone and video call, while social-distancing measures are in place.

The four main audiences are:

- **Young people and older teenagers used to spending lots of time with their friends**
- **Parents who are juggling home working and home schooling**
- **Men who have been furloughed, made redundant or who are self-employed**
- **Older and vulnerable people who are self-isolating.**



Mental health urgent assessment centres

Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust continues to focus on how to best support people who require urgent mental health support and who attend their local A&E department to access it.

We now have mental health urgent care centres in each Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) locality.

The approach will be for mental health patients to be triaged in A&E and if they have no coronavirus symptoms or physical health symptoms such as self-harm or overdose, dementia or delirium, will be immediately conveyed to their respective centre where further assessments can take place.

People with physical health presentations will remain in A&E to receive input from the appropriate professionals, liaison staff or the acute hospital team.

Locally, these facilities are at Danegarh (Furness Hospital), and Albert View in the grounds of The Orchard, Lancaster.

In addition there are also facilities:

- adjacent to the A&E at Blackpool Victoria Hospital
- In the former ophthalmology unit at Royal Preston Hospital
- In a dedicated space adjacent next to A&E at Blackburn Hospital

There is a clear recognition that from a clinical perspective a more standardised and sustainable provision will be required.



Drive through testing

Social care staff who have been self-isolating for five days or less due to suspected coronavirus infection, and members of their household who have suspected coronavirus infection, are now being offered the opportunity to have drive through testing at hospital sites in south Cumbria to help get people back to work quicker.

Already, more than 1,500 colleagues in hospital have been tested and the move has allowed colleagues who tested negative to get back to work quicker than they otherwise would have been able to.

It is hoped this will help ease any issues with sickness amongst staff and we are looking to expand this facility to other key workers.

Fundraising to help the helpers

Cumbria Community Foundation has launched the Cumbria COVID-19 Response Fund with a target of raising £3 million to support community and voluntary organisations that are helping to feed and protect elderly and vulnerable people as part of the county's co-ordinated response to the pandemic.

In the first four weeks, more than half a million pounds has been given out by the Cumbria COVID-19 Response Fund.

The Cumbria COVID-19 Response Fund has helped to provide much needed food and medicine to isolated elderly and vulnerable people isolating in their homes. It has helped families in poverty and those in temporary accommodation, women affected by domestic violence, and supported isolated and vulnerable young people. Grants have also been given to help charities that have seen a rise in demand for their services, such as mental health provision and carers organisations.

Throughout the county, thousands of volunteers have come forward to create new self-help groups, alongside support from many of the existing 6,000 charitable groups across Cumbria that are stepping up and working to reduce pressures on the NHS. Teamwork among public, private and charitable organisations means Cumbria now has a call centre and a network of hubs coordinating volunteers and delivery of food and medicines.

In South Lakeland, over a quarter of residents are aged over 65. The funds has helped organisations such as Age UK South Lakeland to offer a variety of emergency services including telephone shopping and befriending, and a prescription collection and hospital transport service.



Much more needs to be done to support families with children in this time of national crisis. As unemployment rises over the coming weeks and months, many more families will require welfare support to get by. 12,000 children across Cumbria live in poverty, and in Barrow it's one in three. Free school meals make a huge difference to those on low income, but we know there have been issues with children receiving the vouchers provided to replace the meals they would have at school. Many more families will need to turn to food banks, which have also been hit by shortages and many are running low on essentials.

Love Barrow Families CIC works with families who live in the most deprived wards in the town. Many have relationship difficulties and mental health issues, which are exacerbated by the virus. The charity received £4,000 to enable staff and volunteers to work remotely and to cover costs associated with the food and prescription delivery service. To make a donation and support local groups, please visit: www.cumbriafoundation.org.

Weekly Mental Health Family Hour Webinar

Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust is working with award winning mental health campaigner Sam Tyrer who is hosting a weekly webinar to support families during the lockdown.

Taking place at **10am every Tuesday**, topics covered have so far included "Communicating about mental health", and "All about anxiety". Videos of past webinars are available online now, and to take part in future webinars just follow @change_talks on Twitter for updates.

A new role for Morecambe Bay

Across Morecambe Bay, four GP COVID Centres have been created, locally known as “Red Hubs”, to ensure patients suspected of Covid19 infection are seen safely, with no risk to other patients.

- Kendal (Maude St)
- Barrow (Bridgegate)
- Morecambe (Morecambe Health Centre)
- Lancaster (University practice site)

These four hubs take suspected COVID patients from a wider group of practices, who feel a patient requires a face to face assessment. The hub will check the patient’s symptoms before inviting patients to the hub as required. Three of the four hubs are using outside tents to allow “drive through” assessments. Where clinically appropriate, the hubs also perform follow-up assessments of a patient’s improvement, or deterioration, over time.

This approach reduces exposure in the other practices, so they can continue to carry out non-COVID practice work. It enables COVID care to continue, should we find some practices struggle due to staff absence or where the GPs or other staff members are particularly vulnerable. The hubs have a rota of volunteer clinicians rotating in from each of the wider practices.

The hubs are operating well, and activity is manageable. We would like to thank every GP involved for their support, it has been a tremendous effort and has only gone well due to your professionalism and kindness.

Should a patient need a face-to-face assessment, there is a safe site they can use, which allows care to continue. Some GPs, due to geography, travel time or other factors are continuing to see patients at their own surgeries.

It is important to highlight that these practices are following national guidance and are use red/amber/green zones to keep COVID patients separate from non-COVID and ensure patient safety. Other measures include isolation rooms that have been set up in the event of COVID patients being present.

It's just another illustration of how your local NHS is collaborating and innovating to tackle this pandemic.



Vulnerable residents who have been advised to 'shield'

Last week the NHS wrote to those people considered to be at the highest clinical risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) tell them they should stay at home at all times and avoid all face-to-face contact for a period of at least 12 weeks. This is to reduce the risk of some categories of patient becoming seriously unwell.

People who have received letters include those who have had an organ transplant, some cancer patients who are having chemotherapy, radiotherapy, or other treatments that weaken their immune system, such as bone marrow or stem cell treatments. It also includes people with cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD2). Women who are pregnant and have a heart condition are included, as are those with conditions such as sickle cell anaemia.

People that live with someone who has been advised to shield can help by keeping to a minimum the time spent in shared spaces (kitchen, bathroom and sitting areas) and keep shared spaces well ventilated, as well as keeping at least three steps away. If possible, shielded patients should use a separate bathroom, or the bathroom should be cleaned thoroughly after use and household members should use separate towels. These are infection control measures aimed at reducing the chance of extremely vulnerable people catching the virus from others.

Shielding is hard work and everyone should weigh up how they can stay connected with others, but still protect themselves while staying at home. Shielded residents can still go out into their garden or private space, as long as they can keep their distance from other people.

GPs are aware which of their patients have been advised to shield and, if anyone has questions, or are concerned, they can telephone their doctor's surgery. If you live alone and need help, there is help available to get shopping or medication delivered to you.

If you can (or someone can on your behalf) you should register with the Government's website: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>.

A separate set of [FAQs for patients](#) have also been developed.

Message from Geoff Jolliffe, Chair of Morecambe Bay CCG

Please [click here](#) to view key messages for the public from Geoff Jolliffe, Chair of Morecambe Bay CCG.



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.com/MorecambeBHCP

facebook.com/UHMBT



Our highly dedicated and caring staff couldn't get through the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic without the fabulous support from local people, businesses, fundraisers and volunteers like you.

During this tough time we are working hard to do our very best for you and your kindness means everything.