

## **Sussex CCGs Public Involvement Weekly News Briefing on COVID-19 (26<sup>th</sup> June 2020)**

This briefing will be produced weekly, and is aimed at **patient leads, public members, voluntary and community sector (VCS) leads and community group leads in Sussex**, to support the dissemination of information on coronavirus to our wider communities.

The NHS is committed to keeping our people informed during this crisis, ensuring that our communities have the information they need, in the right format, and at the right time. We know that our patient leaders, VCS and community organisations are all working exceptionally hard to support local people, and that they are key to working together to make sure that our communities have the support and information they need.

### **Local Focus**

A statement in support of our BAME communities

“Over the last few weeks, we have all seen a real drive for change sweep across society, both nationally and globally, regarding the lived experiences of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities.

The shocking death of George Floyd in America, coupled with the evidence of the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on BAME individuals, has rightly given rise to significant hurt and anger.

As leaders of the Sussex Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), we add our collective voice and commitment to the need for change and condemn all forms of prejudice, discrimination and violence against BAME people.

Recent events have highlighted and laid bare issues that are systemic, institutional, personal, ethical and moral and this has made all of us reflect and challenge ourselves and others on what we need to do differently.

As we do so as CCGs, we recognise that we cannot fully understand the experiences that racism creates and we need to do more to continue our learning and take action as CCGs to make a difference for BAME staff and people locally.

As employers, we want to create a safe working environment for our BAME staff where they feel empowered and able to fulfil their potential without prejudice or invisible barriers. As commissioners, we want to improve our partnership working with our BAME communities to understand their experiences and reduce the health inequalities they may experience.

We have more to do to get to where we want to be across our organisations, and we will continue to engage, listen and participate in being part of the change”.

Dr Laura Hill  
Clinical Chair  
NHS West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group

Dr Andy Hodson  
Clinical Chair  
NHS Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group

Dr David Warden  
Clinical Chair  
NHS West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group

Adam Doyle  
Chief Executive  
Sussex Clinical Commissioning Groups

Karen Breen  
Chief Officer  
Sussex Clinical Commissioning Groups

For more information on our Sussex Health and Care Partnership BAME Disparity programme, please [click here](#).

## **Virtual Pride**

This year we cannot celebrate Pride in quite the same way, but you can join the Virtual NHS Pride on Friday 26th June at 6pm. Follow @VirtualNHSPride for updates on how to join in celebrating our LGBTQIA+ staff, networks and allies.

## **Have Your Say**

Health services have changed during the Coronavirus crisis, and many people have had to access care in a different way to how they did before the crisis.

We want to understand, where people have accessed care in a different way, what this was like for them. We also need to understand why people might not have accessed care, and therefore how we need to provide information and support in the

future. We know that some of our local population have been unsure about whether they could access care in the crisis, so we responded by putting some messages through various channels – radio, local newspapers and social media; we would like to know if these have been seen, and whether they have changed behaviour.

We would like to invite you to answer a few questions – this will help us make sure services respond to the needs and preferences of local people, and also that everyone is able to access care in a way that works for them.

Please click [here](#) to complete the survey by **Friday 10th July 2020**.

## Heatwave and Covid-19



There is a 90% probability of Heat-Health criteria being met between 0900 on Wednesday and 2100 on Friday in parts of England.

Hot weather can affect your health. The people most likely to be affected are the elderly, the very young, and people with pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that additional information and tips for Covid-19 and the heatwave has been issued by the government:

- **Fans should not be used** if someone in your home has been confirmed or suspected as having Covid-19, as this could increase the spread of infection

- If no-one in your home has Covid-19 or suspected Covid-19, angle fans away from you to limit the spread of germs. Remember that **fans are ineffective in temperatures above 35°C and cause increased dehydration**
- **Paracetamol (and aspirin) may be used to manage COVID-related symptoms** but it is recommended that they are not used solely to reduce body temperature. Always consult your pharmacist, GP or NHS 111 for advice
- **Keep cool and hydrated by regularly sipping cold water-based drinks** and avoid alcohol
- **Use sponges or cloths** made damp by cold water to help control your temperature
- **Close blinds and curtains to help control the temperature of your home**
- Check on the wellbeing of vulnerable friends and family who may be shielding or who are isolated. Remember to observe [social distancing guidance](#)

Further information can be found below:

- NHS website contains guidance on '[How to cope in hot weather](#)', '[Heat exhaustion and heat stroke](#)' and '[Sunscreen and sun safety](#)'.
- PHE heatwave information including a checklist for identifying and managing indoor overheating is available [online here](#).
- For free medical advice for any non-emergency 24 hours a day use [NHS 111 online](#) or call 111

## **NHS High Street Check-Ups Top 300,000**

An NHS scheme which has seen tens of thousands of people get a fast, safe, face-to-face appointment with a local pharmacist is

accelerating as people start to return to normal life after the peak of the coronavirus pandemic.

Almost a third of a million medicine reviews and health checks have now taken place under the new scheme, the majority of which – more than 180,000 – have taken place since the NHS stepped up its response to the emerging threat of coronavirus at the end of January.

The introduction of the NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service was set out in the NHS Long Term Plan, published in January 2019, as one of a number of improvements to the popular 111 service to enable the public to access the right help in the right place.

Available through the fast and free NHS 111 phone or online service, those who would benefit are booked in for a face-to-face consultation with a pharmacist for a range of minor illnesses or to get an urgent supply of a previously prescribed medicine.

With the NHS encouraging more people to come forward for care who might have held back due to Covid-19 concerns, local pharmacies are gearing up to provide an increasing number of consultations safely, so that all those who would benefit can be referred.

## Do you need some help while self-isolating?



**NHS VOLUNTEER  
RESPONDERS**



If you, or someone you know, needs a hand collecting shopping or prescriptions, or just wants someone to talk to, the NHS Volunteer Responders are here to help.

Join the thousands of others throughout England who are already receiving support – even if it is just for a friendly chat.

Call 0808 196 3646 or [click here](#) to access support.

## Community Hubs

Community Hubs are run through our Local Authorities, and District and Borough Councils in East and West Sussex. The Hubs have been supporting those who are on the “[shielded](#)” list by ensuring people have access to food and other support. The Hubs are also a key contact point for other residents who are vulnerable, in order to access wider community support, which may include help with shopping and money, but also support with reducing isolation through access to services such as telephone befriending.

Community Hubs also provide a place for people to find out about local volunteering opportunities.

- [Brighton and Hove Community Hubs](#)  
Brighton and Hove Community Support Telephone: 01273 293117
- [East Sussex Community Hubs](#)
- [West Sussex Community Hubs](#)  
West Sussex Support Team Telephone: 033 022 27980  
(Lines are open 8.00am - 8.00pm)

## Community Matters – Frequently Asked Questions

The Covid-19 Community Connectors Team has been answering questions from our communities in Sussex about accessing health and care services at this time. Sections 1.7, 2.7, 2.8, 5.2, 8.7, 9.1, 9.2, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3 and 13.4 have been updated in this week's Frequently Asked Questions.

You can read the Frequently Asked Questions via the Clinical Commissioning Groups websites:

- [NHS Brighton and Hove CCG](#)
- [NHS East Sussex CCG](#)
- [NHS West Sussex CCG](#)

Alternatively, you can [watch a video](#) of Dr Laura Hill (Clinical Chair of NHS West Sussex CCG), Dr Andy Hodson (Clinical Chair of NHS Brighton and Hove CCG) and Dr David Warden (Clinical Chair of NHS East Sussex CCG) talking through some of the answers.

Each week, we answer some of your questions – please see below this week's question and answer on **primary care**:

## **1. Should I self-isolate after going to the GP Practice?**

Self-isolation for 7 days is not required when attending a GP surgery visit where social distancing was maintained (2m) and any close contact with a healthcare worker occurred while the healthcare worker was wearing appropriate PPE.

## **2. I have an eye problem, what should I do?**

For eye care problems, please contact your Optometrist (optician) first. Please do not visit A&E, your GP practice or Pharmacy.

The Optometrist will assess your situation over the phone, give advice and, if needed, issue spectacles or contact lenses if these have been supplied before. These can be collected from or delivered by a local optician.

If you require spectacles to function with essential tasks such as work or driving as a key worker and it is not possible to dispense spectacles based on a previous prescription, then the Optometrist is able to arrange a face to face consultation at the practice.

This is subject to the Optometrist's clinical view of:

- COVID-19 risk for both patient and practice team
- The patient's essential need for spectacles and/or contact lenses

Anyone without a regular optician can find details of local practices [here](#).

If the Optometrist thinks that urgent or emergency eye care is needed, they will refer you into the local urgent or emergency eye care service so that any necessary treatment can be carried out. This may be carried out by the same optical practice or another local practice.

## NHS Guidance

### Help Us, Help You – Mental Health



The NHS is working hard to manage Covid-19, but we are still here to look after your mental health, as well as your physical health.

If you're experiencing stress and anxiety, please do not wait until you are struggling to seek support. Contact your GP, or visit [Every Minds Matters](#) for your personal action plan. You can also self-refer to psychological therapies online [here](#).

If you are concerned about the mental health of your child, please contact your GP or check online self-referral options for under 18 years olds online [here](#).

The Sussex Mental Healthline (0300 5000 101) provides a 24/7 service to people needing urgent help with their mental health. Registered clinicians are at the other end of the line for anyone who needs support, any time of the day or night.

If you are facing a mental health crisis, use the NHS 111 online service. If you cannot get help online, call 111.

## **NHS Blood and Transplant Services**



NHS Blood and Transplant are asking the public who have recovered from coronavirus to donate antibody-rich plasma. The antibody-rich plasma of recovered COVID-19 patients can be

transfused into people who are struggling to develop an immune response to coronavirus.

You can donate plasma in a number of locations – for example church halls, sports centres, mosques, football stadiums and hotels. [Find your local blood donation venue and book an appointment.](#)

## **National Updates**

The latest position in terms of confirmed cases of Covid-19, broken down into total UK cases and local areas, is updated daily [here](#).

The UK has lowered its Covid-19 alert level from 4 to 3. You can read more about this [here](#).

On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020, the Prime Minister announced changes to lockdown measures that would apply from Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July – [click here](#) to read more about this. As of 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020, this will mean:

- **you can meet in groups of up to two households** (your support bubble counts as one household) in any location - public or private, indoors or outdoors.
- when you are outside **you can continue to meet in groups of up to six people** from different households, following social distancing guidelines.
- those who have been able to form a **support bubble (i.e. those in single adult households) can continue to have close contact** as if they live with the other people in the bubble, but you should not change who you have formed a support bubble with.
- additional **businesses and venues**, including restaurants, pubs, cinemas, visitor attractions, hotels, and campsites will be able to **open**.
- **other public places**, such as libraries, community centres, places of worship, outdoor playgrounds and outdoor gyms will be able to **open**.
- **you can stay overnight away from your home** with your own household or support bubble, or with members of one other household (**where you need to keep social distancing**)

- it will be **against the law to gather in groups larger than 30 people**, except for a limited set of circumstances to be set out in law and unless all members of the group are exclusively from two households. Police will have the power to break up groups larger than 30, apart from these exceptions

The government has announced that from 4th July, people should either stay **2m apart or '1m plus'**. These mitigations will depend on the workplace or setting. For example, on public transport, people must wear a face covering, as it is not always possible to stay 2m apart. You can read more about this under Section 3.4 of the Coronavirus Outbreak FAQs – it is accessible [here](#).

People with underlying health conditions who are most at risk from Covid-19 will be able to spend more time outside their homes from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July in England. From Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July, those shielding from coronavirus can gather in groups of up to 6 people outdoors and form a 'support bubble' with another household. You can read more about this [here](#).

Guidance for unpaid carers has been recently updated by the Government – it is available [here](#).

The Government has published guidance on the safe use of places of worship, including the legal reasons places of worship are permitted to open – it is accessible [here](#).

## Face coverings

From 15th June 2020, you will need to wear a face covering that goes over your mouth and nose if you go to hospital as a visitor or outpatient.

Face coverings are recommended, but not mandatory, if you go to your GP surgery. If you are unsure, please check with your surgery.

As inpatients, women in labour do not need to wear a face covering. Neither do babies and children under three years old.

We know that for a few people, wearing a face covering might be difficult. This includes people with breathing problems, learning difficulties or a condition that would make wearing a face covering distressing. If there is a reason that you feel unable to wear a face covering, please contact the hospital for advice before your visit.

If you are a deaf or hearing impaired, staff will have a range of ways to ensure that they can communicate effectively with you. This might include visual aids such as writing things down, speech to text apps and sign language.

A face covering is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers as part of personal protective equipment. These should continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace

Further guidance on wearing face coverings can be found [here](#)

**Tell us about your experiences and let us know what you need!**

The Covid-19 Community Connectors Team are here to help make sure you, and the people you help and support, get the

information and support needed. Please do contact us using the contact details on page 8.

A reminder to complete our survey – this will help us make sure services respond to the needs and preferences of local people, and also that everyone is able to access care in a way that works for them. Please click [here](#) to complete the survey by **Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020**.

## Healthwatch

You can also raise issues through Healthwatch, which is an independent body responsible for gathering people's views of health and social care services. Contact details are below:

### Healthwatch Brighton and Hove:

Telephone: 01273 234 040

Email: [info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk)

Website: <https://www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/contact-us/>

### Healthwatch East Sussex

Telephone: 0333 101 4007

Email: [enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk)

Website: <https://healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk/contact/>

### Healthwatch West Sussex

Telephone: 0300 012 0122

Email: [helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](mailto:helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk)

Website: <https://www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk/contact-us>

## Contact Details

If you have any questions, or if you need this brief in an alternative format, please contact the Community Connectors Team:

**Email:** [sxccg.involvement@nhs.net](mailto:sxccg.involvement@nhs.net)

**Telephone:** 0127 323 8725

Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users can use a Video Relay Service (VRS) called [SignLive](#) (a free app which connects deaf people to a qualified British Sign Language Interpreter before connecting you to one of the Community Connectors Team). This service is currently available every **Thursday from 14:00-16:00**. Please contact the Community Connectors using the details above if this is not convenient.



Let us know what you need to see in this briefing, give us feedback on services and support related to Covid-19 and let us know about issues you are picking up from your communities.