

Sussex CCGs Public Involvement Weekly News Briefing on COVID-19 (17th April 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

NHS response in Sussex

Thanks to the professionalism and commitment of our fantastic staff, the NHS across Sussex has made astonishing progress in responding to the greatest global health threat in its history.

We have been freeing up beds, expanding capacity and changing how we work to make it as safe as possible for patients and staff and to maintain as many essential services as possible.

Across Sussex we have been pulling out all the stops to increase the number of hospital beds available to support Covid-19 patients with oxygen and ventilators. Work continues to convert more beds to be able to support Covid patients.

To ensure our local NHS can manage the expected increase in infection, we need the public to continue to follow the social distancing rules and stay at home.

Staff testing

More NHS staff and other key workers from across Sussex are getting tested for Covid-19 as new drive-through testing facilities come online. Testing stations are open for staff with an appointment in Bognor and Bexhill, in addition to the testing station opened at Gatwick Airport on 8 April, with further sites in Sussex being planned.

Tests are for self-isolating NHS staff and other key workers, or their household members, so that those who are not exposed to the virus may return to work. All appointments for tests are by invitation only. Mobile testing is also available for those who are unable to leave home.

Hot and cold hubs

Under government guidance, GP-led 'hot hubs' are being set up around Sussex to diagnose and advise exclusively coronavirus (Covid-19) patients who are not in hospital. The 'hot hubs' will also provide care for people with confirmed or suspected covid-19 infection who need treatment for other medical conditions.

The 'hot hub' appointments will be booked by the GP practices. Any patient that has symptoms consistent with Covid-19 will be given an appointment at the 'hot hub' – this may not be their own practice. The GP will oversee the complex cases and provide some appointments. Only patients booked in will be seen and direct booking will be organised.

'Cold hubs' will also be set up to provide care to non-coronavirus (Covid-19) patients. These will be held in existing GP premises in the local area and for those with non-acute illness. Patients will be screened for any fever or cough symptoms on entry. Social distancing measures, including limiting the number of patients on site at any one time, will be followed.

Community Hubs

Local Authorities now have the names and contact details of people that are "**Shielded**"; this group of people will be contacted directly to ensure they are provided with the help they need.

Community Hubs have been launched in each Local Authority area across Sussex, and offer additional help in coping with coronavirus.

The Community Hubs will focus their help on people who do not have an extreme medical condition but may be vulnerable because they are isolated from help, too unwell to buy food or have other pressing difficulties because of coronavirus.

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

Brighton and Hove Community Hubs

Contact details for the Community Support:

[Brighton and Hove Community Support Website](#)

Brighton and Hove Community Support Telephone: 01273 293117

East Sussex Community Hubs

Contact details for the Community Hubs in East Sussex are below:

[Eastbourne Community Hub Website](#)

Eastbourne Community Hub Telephone: 01323 679722

[Hastings Community Hub Website](#)

Hastings Community Hub Telephone: 01424 451019

[Lewes Community Hub Website](#)

Lewes Community Hub Telephone: 01273 099956

[Rother Community Hub Website](#)

Rother Community Hub Telephone: 01424 787000 (option 4)

[Wealden Community Hub Website](#)

Wealden Community Hub Telephone: 01323 443322

West Sussex Community Hubs

Contact the West Sussex Community Support Team:

[West Sussex Community Support Team Website](#)

West Sussex Support Team Telephone: 033 022 27980 (Lines are open 8.00am - 8.00pm)

Mental health support

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has introduced a number of changes to ensure that people with mental health conditions continue to receive the support they need as we respond to Covid-19.

Urgent mental health rapid assessment hubs have been established at five sites (in Eastbourne, Hastings, Hove, Worthing and Crawley) as an alternative to A&E for people in crisis.

Children and young people's liaison teams are providing support remotely enabling children young people and parents to stay at home. Where face to face assessments are necessary these can take place through pre-booked appointments at one of the rapid assessment hubs.

The capacity of the 24/7 [Sussex Mental Healthline](#) has expanded, supporting people of all ages with referrals to a rapid assessment hub where required.

Bereavement during Covid-19

The Coronavirus pandemic is likely to have an impact on people's experience of bereavement and grief. Find information and resources on how bereavement and grief may be affected by the pandemic:

- Coronavirus: [dealing with bereavement and grief](#)
- Coronavirus: [information, advice and guidance on supporting bereaved children and young people during the Coronavirus outbreak](#)

Your local councils have also produced guidance on when a death occurs:

- [Brighton and Hove City Council](#)
- [East Sussex County Council](#)
- [West Sussex County Council](#) .

Resources

Please see attached our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – gathered from comments and questions raised in the community. Section 3 on medicines has been expanded this week, as a response to the many questions we are getting from people and community groups.

Section 10 of the FAQs includes a Resources Section which provides information on additional community support available. You can find further information about support in the local area on the Sussex NHS Commissioners websites – please click below:

[NHS Brighton and Hove CCG](#)

[NHS East Sussex CCG](#)

[NHS West Sussex CCG](#)

National Updates

The action plan to tackle the coronavirus across the adult social care system has now been published on the government website – [click here](#) to access it. The action plan uses a four pillar approach:

1. Controlling the spread of infection in care settings
2. Supporting the workforce
3. Supporting independence, supporting people at the end of their lives, and responding to individual needs
4. Supporting local authorities and the providers of care

Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who completed our short *Covid-19 Public and Key Stakeholder* survey, which asked for people's views on how they are coping during this crisis, how they are accessing information and support, and what further information and support they need.

We received nearly 2,000 responses – which is amazing – and are reviewing the responses at the moment, with a view to updating you on the results shortly.

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 5.

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

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

Healthwatch East Sussex

Telephone: 0333 101 4007

Email: enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk

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

Healthwatch West Sussex

Telephone: 0300 012 0122

Email: 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

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.

