

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

Learning Disability Week

It's Learning Disability Week from 15th – 21st June 2020. Learning Disability Week is a national awareness week which raises awareness of the issues that are important to people with a learning disability and their families and carers. This year's theme is the importance of friendships during lockdown.



Due to [the coronavirus pandemic](#), we have all been living in lockdown. This means that many people with a learning

disability are feeling isolated, as they have been unable to see their friends and families.

We know that people with a learning disability already experience high levels of loneliness and social isolation and that this will only have been made worse by the lockdown.

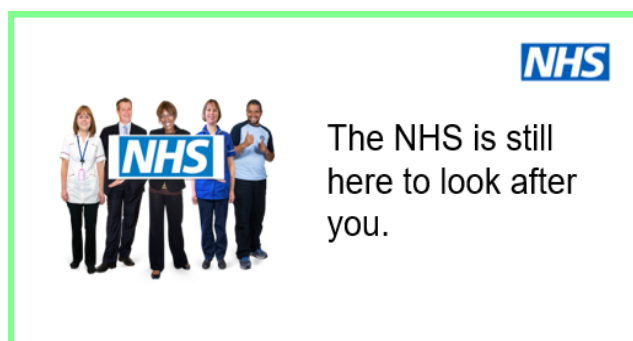
Learning Disability Week aims to show the importance of friendships to help with tackling isolation, as well as exploring the different ways of maintaining friendships during this unusual time.

You can find out how you can get involved with Learning Disability Week [here](#).

You can also find out more about support available via the links below:

- [Amaze](#)
- [Aspens](#)
- [Independent Lives](#)
- [Mencap](#)

Learning Disabilities and Autism



We know that many people with learning disabilities are worried about asking the NHS for help during the coronavirus pandemic.

Some people think their illness is not important enough. Other people are worried it isn't safe to go to the doctor.

Things are a little different if you need to visit a GP surgery but they are safe and they are still open so it is really important to tell a doctor if you are feeling unwell.

This video with Dr Dissanayake explains what is different and what it is like if you need to visit a GP surgery at the moment. You can access the video [here](#).

You can access further information on this in Easy Read by [clicking here](#).

A member of the Involvement Matters Team in East Sussex shares their experiences of lockdown, friendship and staying connected

The Involvement Matters Team (IMT) are the reference group for people with learning disabilities in East Sussex and members of the East Sussex Learning Disability Partnership Board.

Sarah Gordy's story:

Sarah plays Katie in The A Word which has been on BBC 1 during lockdown, Sarah has been busy but continues to meet with IMT weekly & the short blog below outlines her experiences of lockdown



“Hi, this is a little blog about my life in Lockdown. I have a daily routine starting with breakfast and exercising to YouTube videos. I want to keep my weight controlled and keep strong.

My mum and I share the housework, the other day learned how to cook a country fruit cake

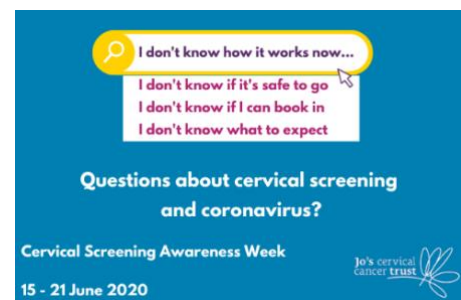
Our daily walk is where the fun begins, in the 1980s there was a big storm, it made a lot of trees fall over but they kept living with half their roots in the soil. They look great now.

By lunchtime we are a bit tired so we have our lunch on a tray and watch TV for an hour.

After lunch we have most of our Meetings with colleagues and friends and I have to work on my drama stuff and social media. Social Media has been crazy busy because of Katie and Ralph’s wedding in The A Word”.

Cervical Screening Awareness Week

Cervical screening has been paused for the last few months due to the pressure that the virus has put on the NHS, so you may have had an appointment postponed or not received an invitation letter that you were expecting.



Screening for cervical cancer is now starting up again in Sussex and you should soon receive your letter if you are expecting one. If you have had an appointment postponed your GP surgery will make it a priority to get you booked in.

This Cervical Screening Awareness Week (15th – 21st June 2020), in a [special video](#) Dr Victoria Beattie asks that you please do not delay booking an appointment when you get your letter. You can also [watch a video](#) of Tracy, a Practice Nurse, explaining what you can expect at your smear test during the pandemic.

It's also really important to see your GP if you are experiencing any symptoms of cervical cancer such as unusual bleeding or discharge, pain during sex or unexplained pain in your lower back or pelvis. You don't have to wait to be invited and your surgery can arrange for you to come in for an examination.

If you have more questions about cervical screening or cervical cancer, the Jo's Trust website is a great place to get the answers you need. Visit the website [here](#) or call their confidential helpline on 0808 802 8000.

Fertility services in Sussex

Fertility services for Sussex patients have now resumed with immediate effect, following a temporary closure during Covid-19.

The national regulator – the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) – confirmed last month that clinics could open if they ensured the safety and protection of staff and patients.

During the past few weeks, Sussex NHS Commissioners have been working with our local fertility service providers to set out a strategy to show they are meeting infection prevention conditions to provide safe and effective treatment, before they were given the green light to restart treatment.

Social distancing will be a requirement in waiting rooms and telephone appointments could be used where suitable.

Appropriate personal protective equipment will also be provided when necessary.

You can read more about the resuming of the Fertility services in Sussex [here](#).

Have you tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 4 months?

[Brighton and Sussex Medical School](#) is conducting research into how our bodies defend against the Coronavirus and are looking for volunteers who live or work in Sussex to donate a one-off blood sample.

Studies could help identify critical patients earlier and also help in vaccine design.

So please, if you've tested positive in the last four months and have now fully recovered, visit oneresearch.co.uk/covid or call 0808 164 1888 for details and to register.

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

The Covid-19 Community Connectors Team has been answering questions from our communities in Sussex about accessing health and care services at this time – you can read more about this in the attached Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) or by [watching 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. Sections 1.6, 2.7, 2.8, 5.1, 9.1, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3 and 13.4 have been updated in this week's Frequently Asked Questions.

Each week, we answer some of your questions – please see below this week’s question and answer on **face coverings**:

1. What is the current guidance around wearing face masks?

From Monday 15th 2020, it is now compulsory in England to wear face coverings on public transport and for hospital staff, outpatients and visitors.

You can read more about this [here](#).

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



2. How can I make my own face mask?

Instructions on how to wear and make a face covering can be found [here](#). The picture on the right of the page also shows how you can make your own face covering.

NHS Guidance

Hospital visiting restrictions

Keeping patients and staff safe is a top priority during the Covid-19 pandemic.

That is why hospitals in Sussex continue to recommend that friends and family use digital services such as Facetime, Skype, Zoom and WhatsApp to stay in touch with loved ones during their hospital stay, to minimise the risk of spreading or contracting the virus. iPads are also available on most hospital wards for use by patients who do not have a smartphone or other mobile device.

The government has announced that hospitals may begin to relax visiting restrictions if local circumstances allow. While the specific rules will differ between hospitals - and also between wards - the following principles are being adopted by most hospitals in Sussex:

- One visitor per day for a one hour maximum
- Visitors must have booked in advance
- Visitors must wear face coverings
- Visitors must wear any additional PPE provided by the hospital.
- Visitors must adhere to the 2m distancing guidance.

Please check with your local hospital in the first instance about visiting restrictions:

- [Brighton and Sussex University Hospital NHS Trust](#)
- [East Sussex Healthcare Trust](#)
- [Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust](#)
- [Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust](#)

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](#).

In recognition of how difficult it has been for people to be cut off from their family and friends in recent months, the government has announced two ways that you can see people outside of your

household. You can meet outdoors in a group of up to 6 people with those you do not live with, as long as the social distancing guidelines of 2 metres is adhered to. Single adult households (adults who live alone or with dependent children) can form a 'support bubble' with one other household, as long as the social distancing guidelines of 2 metres is adhered to. Read more about the changes [here](#).

From 15th June 2020 all staff in hospitals in England must wear face masks, and all visitors and outpatients must wear face coverings while in the hospital setting, to reduce the risk of transmission in hospitals. You can read more about this [online here](#).

There is updated guidance on walking, cycling and travelling in vehicles or on public transport during the coronavirus outbreak), which can be [read here](#)

Staff and volunteers at the forefront of the national coronavirus response across England will be able to access a new online Psychological First Aid training course from this week. You can read about this [here](#).

Resources

Please see our FAQs – gathered from comments and questions raised in the community. Section 13 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](#)

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 6.

Healthwatch

Health and Social Care services in Sussex are changing because of the Coronavirus. Healthwatch in Sussex have produced a survey to find out what people's experiences are about accessing care differently over this period. This helps ensure that people's experiences and preferences are central to any changes that take place. You can complete it [here](#).

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

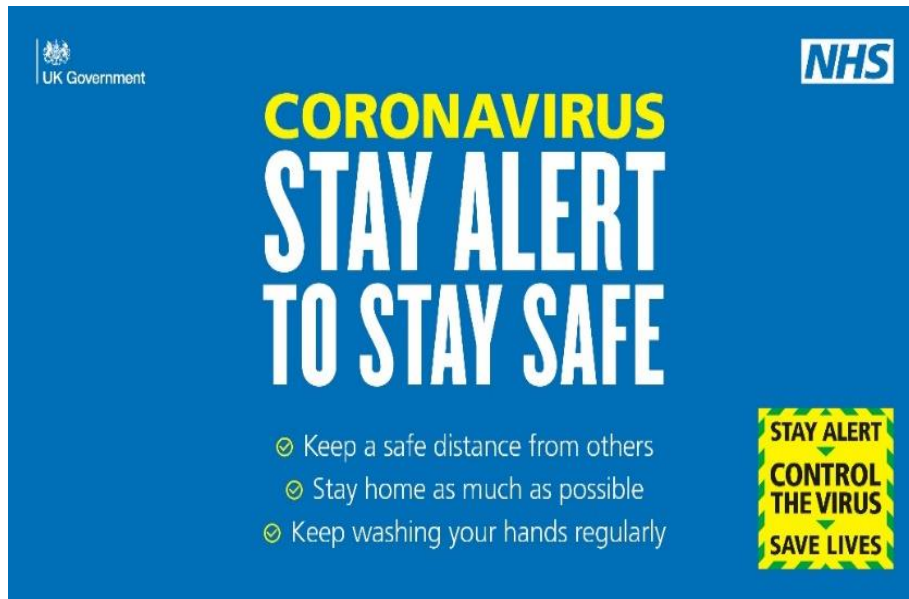
If you have any questions, or if you need this brief in an alternative format, please contact the Community Connectors Team:

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 issues you are picking up about you are from your



communities.