

## Sussex CCGs Public Involvement Weekly News Briefing on COVID-19 (3<sup>rd</sup> July 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

### Thank You

Since March this year, our NHS has been facing one of the greatest challenges in its history.

When the World Health

Organisation (WHO) declared Coronavirus (Covid-19) a global pandemic, here in the UK we were asked to stay home so that we could protect the NHS and save lives. None of us knew what we were facing at that time, and how this virus would impact our communities and public services.



So, while we all did our bit and stayed home, our amazing NHS and key workers carried on treating and caring for sick, injured and vulnerable people, to ensure that everyone continued to have access to essential health and care services. Please join us and the nation wherever you are on Sunday 5 July at 5pm to give the biggest Thank You NHS clap.

As we get closer to the NHS's 72<sup>nd</sup> Birthday on 5<sup>th</sup> July, so many people want to say a huge thank you to our wonderful NHS and key workers for all their hard work. You can watch a video [here](#) of the health and social care leaders in Sussex thanking our amazing NHS staff and key workers.

In return the NHS want to thank people for staying home to give us the best chance to look after those who need our services, and to take a moment to remember those who are sadly not with us, both patients and NHS employees.

Here are a few messages and comments from across Sussex to thank our amazing NHS and key workers. You can also watch a video with these messages [here](#).

### **Richard Maude-Roxby**

“I am delighted to share my incredibly positive experience over the last few months with the NHS.

As a diabetic, I am suffering with a condition in my right foot called Chagot foot, where my joints are inflamed and my bones starting to soften. This was picked up in early March by one of the diabetic team working for the NHS at a routine foot check-up and I was quickly referred to a lady called Mika at Eastbourne hospital, she runs the diabetic foot team there and from my first meeting she filled me with confidence about the treatment I need and following an MRI scan she put my foot in a long term plaster cast for up to 10 months which is the only effective cure, the cast needs changing every three weeks, I am on my fifth cast!



Mika and her staff have been outstanding in the care they have given me during this difficult time.

She is always welcoming, cheerful, prompt with appointments and always keeps me informed how I am getting on, I really can't thank her and her staff enough for their fantastic support.

I am now waiting for another scan to see how I am progressing.

The NHS are an outstanding organisation who have worked tirelessly through this pandemic to keep us safe, look after us and risk their lives for us all, they have my total respect and thanks for looking after me so well".

## **Barrie Emmett**

"I have experienced a positive on NHS, other than Covid. Following my annual blood test at The Village, I was asked if I had any health problems. I mentioned trouble with carpal tunnel

syndrome. On advice from the doctor I self-referred to MSK, which I did on line. Monday I had a telephone call from an extremely pleasant and positive lady from MSK.

Triaged and referred to the consultant. Yesterday I received, by post, details of my triage and referral. You couldn't ask for more and most grateful to receive such excellent service during the pandemic".

## **Julie Ward**

"As part of my work as a Parish Nurse working in the Maybridge area I have had 2 or 3 occasions where I have seen someone during these 3 months and been concerned.



I have rung the medical practice and explained my concern and asked for an appointment both times with a nurse. I have explained that I have PPE and masks for the client and that I would personally bring them to the surgery in my car.

My concerns were met with politeness and thanks and an appointment given for that day. Great service from the practice and such relief for the client".

## **Nesta Cook**

“At the end of May I experienced very bad toothache and a swollen face. I was able to consult my own dentist via the telephone. This was very helpful and provided me with the opportunity to also email a photo of my swollen face so that my dentist was able to provide the most appropriate advice. My dentist prescribed Amoxicillin and I was able to collect the prescription and obtain the medication from the local pharmacy. Unfortunately the swelling got worse so I again consulted my dentist, sending an updated photo of my face. We agreed a visit to A&E would be the next best step.



I attended my local hospital, The Conquest in Hastings. The visit was very smooth and safe. I was met at the door, initial details taken and a mask issued. I was then triaged and later seen by a maxillofacial specialist who happened to be on duty. An x-ray confirmed an infection over three of my front teeth that had suffered trauma and been fixed by my dentist back in February. I was prescribed Co-Amoxiclav to clear up the infection until such time I could revisit my own dentist.

I was very apprehensive about attending the hospital especially with the added complication of risk associated with the pandemic; however, I was impressed with the efficiency and kindness shown to me by the staff at A&E department and left feeling safe, very grateful and reassured. Thank you Dental and NHS service!”

**If you need any advice or support and don't know what to do, NHS 111 can help. Either go to [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk) or call 111, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

**NHS encourages personal responsibility as pubs reopen at the weekend**

The NHS across Sussex is encouraging people to enjoy themselves responsibly as bars and pubs reopen on Saturday 4 July for the first time in three months.



#SussexTogether

As emergency services and hospitals prepare for an expected increase in demand, we would like to remind you to:

- **Continue to follow the rules** around social distancing, hand washing and contact beyond family bubbles.
- To **keep hospital emergency departments free** for those who are in **immediate need of emergency treatment or life-saving care**.
- **Use emergency 999 ambulance services** only if someone is seriously ill or injured, or their life is at risk.

Those who do decide to visit pubs and restaurants, are encouraged to take the following steps to ensure their trip is as safe as possible:

- Follow social distancing guidance at all times
- Plan ahead – many pubs and restaurants will be working to a strict ‘bookings only’ policy to limit numbers
- Avoid large gatherings and do not congregate outside licensed premises

If you require medical attention over the weekend:

- **Contact NHS 111 online** ([www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk)) or **call NHS 111 for urgent medical advice**. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, NHS 111 has fully

trained call handlers including health care experts who can review people's symptoms right there and then and will refer you to the right clinician for your health needs, if necessary.

- **Use Improved Access Hubs**, where patients can attend evening and weekend appointments with an appropriate clinician (such as a GP, Nurse Practitioner, Health Care Assistant). You can access these appointments through telephoning NHS 111.
- **Contact your community pharmacist**. You can check the opening times of your pharmacy [online here](#) or phone the pharmacy for details.

You can read further information about staying safe as pubs and restaurants re-open [here](#).

## 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. 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 **mental health**:

### **1. What additional local support is available for people needing urgent help with their mental health?**

People across Sussex struggling with their mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak are being offered additional telephone and crisis support to help them cope.

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has expanded the Sussex Mental Healthline - 0300 5000 101 - to provide a 24/7 service to people needing urgent help with their mental health.

As well as crisis support it will provide psychological support to people who have general concerns about their mental health.

Registered clinicians are at the other end of the freephone number to provide help, support and advice to anyone who needs it, at any time of the day or night, regardless of their age or where they live in the county.

The team at the Sussex Mental Healthline can offer advice and support to callers who are experiencing a crisis in their mental health, and if needed they can refer them to one of five newly created urgent help hubs for assessment and treatment.

General advice about how to manage your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak is available at [www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/coronavirus) as well as through @withoutstigma on Twitter and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/SussexPartnership](http://www.facebook.com/SussexPartnership)

## **2. Where can I get further support?**

It is quite common to experience short-lived physical symptoms when your mood is low or anxious, for example:

- faster, irregular or more noticeable heartbeat
- feeling lightheaded and dizzy
- headaches
- chest pains or loss of appetite

It can be difficult to know what is causing these symptoms, but often people who experience them due to stress, anxiety or low mood find that they get worse when they focus on them. See advice from the NHS on [managing the physical symptoms](#).

If you are experiencing stress, feelings of anxiety or low mood, you can use the [NHS mental health and wellbeing advice website](#) for self-assessment, audio guides and practical tools. [Every Mind Matters](#) also provides simple tips and advice to start taking better care of your mental health.

If you are still struggling after several weeks and it is affecting your daily life, please use [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111.

In a medical emergency [call 999](#). This is when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk. A mental health emergency should be taken as seriously as a physical health emergency.

## 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 government has set out its [plan to ease lockdown restrictions](#) which will apply from 4 July. This includes:

- Meeting in groups of up to two households;
- Non-essential businesses such as restaurants, pubs and cinemas being able to re-open;
- Public places such as libraries, outdoor gyms and places of

worship being able to re-open.

The guidance on getting tested for Covid-19 has been updated to reflect changes to the registration system for these testing kits. Further information can be found [here](#) in the sections on 'guidance on Randox testing' and 'how to use Randox test kits'.

The government has set out the roadmap for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable, outlining a phased easing of the advice. The Government has committed to writing to everyone who has been advised to shield (c.2.2M people) following the announcement to make them aware of the updated guidance. The NHS will continue to maintain the Shielded Patient List and continue to provide targeted advice and support to this cohort and to change advice and support if the incidence was to rise significantly. Further information can be found on the [Government website](#).

The guidance on providing free school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has been updated to reflect the change in annual household income threshold to £16,190 after tax. You can access this information [here](#).

The guidance for parents and carers has been updated with content on summer provision, school uniform and a package of support worth £1billion to support pupils to catch up, and with content on school meals and the Covid Summer Food Fund – which is accessible [here](#).

If you are temporarily not meeting the minimum income requirement for [30 hours free childcare](#) and/or [tax-free childcare](#) as a direct consequence of COVID-19 and would normally meet the threshold for these schemes or you are a critical worker that has temporarily exceeded the maximum threshold, you could still

be treated as eligible. You should continue to apply or reconfirm if you have a childcare account already – this can be done [here](#).

## What you've been telling us

At this time of crisis, the Sussex NHS Commissioners sought the views of our communities through an online survey, carried out between 3 and 12 April, to understand how people are coping during the coronavirus. To better understand how we could best communicate at this unprecedented time and share essential information we were keen to find out:

- How people feel they are coping, and their key concerns
- Whether people feel they are getting enough information on keeping safe, and what to do if they have symptoms
- Whether people know how to access health services for health issues that are non-related to Covid-19
- Where people get their information from at this time
- Whether people are accessing community support, and/or know how to

In total, nearly 2,000 responses were received from across East and West Sussex and Brighton and Hove. [Read the full report](#) of what people told us.

## 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 14.

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.

