

20 November 2020

Together We're Better Stakeholder Update

On Monday 16 November the Health Secretary, Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, made a statement on the response to coronavirus and provided an update on testing capacity and vaccines. You can read the update by following [this link](#). The Government also published [its response](#) to the announcement by Moderna on the positive efficacy results from Phase 3 studies of their potential COVID-19 vaccine, showing it to be nearly 95% effective in preventing coronavirus in participants.

You may be aware from the media that the position across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent is getting worse. We've had a really difficult couple of weeks and that will remain the case while the numbers of new cases keep increasing at the current rate with the consequent pressure on our hospitals and the workforce. We're hoping that the national lockdown will begin to have an impact over the next couple of weeks, but given that our local rates are so high, it will take some time for numbers to come down to more manageable levels. We're in for a difficult few weeks and months, but we're in this together and if we all stick to the national guidance we can and will get through this.

A further 66 local authorities are to start mass testing programmes like those in Liverpool and Stoke-on-Trent and there is now the promise of two mega testing labs to open in early 2021. These sites will double the current COVID-19 testing capacity and will be based in Leamington Spa and another in Scotland. There will also be 40 new 'long-COVID clinics' set up in England by the end of the month.

The latest developments on safe and effective vaccines are promising, with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines the front runners at present. Both vaccines are reporting success rates over 90% in trials. These are promising steps, however, it's important to remember that the vaccines developed so far have not been approved for use just yet and everyone must continue to follow the Government guidelines. 'Hands, face, space' will be with us for some time to come.



There is now a push for people to get a test who have been feeling unwell, for example with a headache, any aches and pains, feeling lethargic for no good reason, a sore throat, runny nose, sneezing and sometimes 'tummy ache' in children. If you

are showing even the slightest symptoms, however mild, get a test. If you have these additional symptoms you can carry on going to school or work if well enough to do so and only need to self-isolate if the test comes back positive.

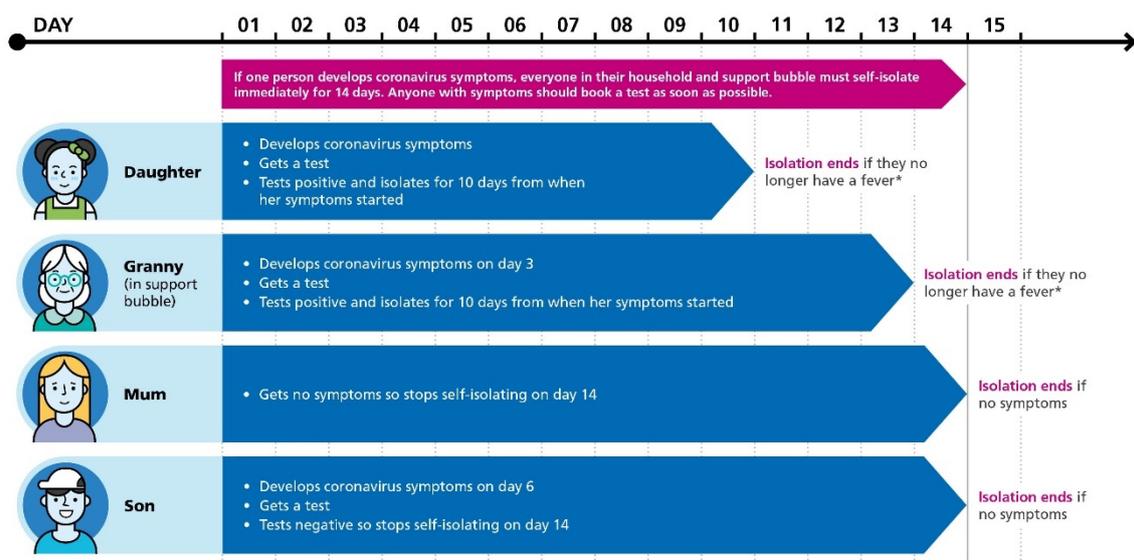
There is plenty of capacity locally in the community and you should get a test as soon as symptoms begin. Remember the community tests can be booked using the Council's Appointment System and national tests can still be booked at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or by phoning 119.

More information can be found [here](#).

We know that it can be confusing knowing what to do if someone in your household and/or support bubble develops symptoms of, or tests positive for COVID-19. We've created a diagram to try and help explain the process and what to do. This will also be circulated with your email.

Coronavirus isolation timeline

What happens if someone in your household gets sick?



*Must be free of fever for 48 hours, without any medication to bring the temperature down.

To minimise the risk of coronavirus spreading in your household and to others:

- Try and stay 2m away from others in your household
- If 2m is not possible, wear masks in shared areas of the house
- Wash hands and clean surfaces regularly
- Do not leave your house unless for a test, ask friends/family to help with shopping

We are still in a COVID-19 response, so it is even more important to keep staff and patients safe when they visit an Emergency Department (ED). EDs are very busy and this is combined with having less space due to social distancing measures. Lots of patients attending EDs could be treated elsewhere, with much shorter waiting times. The NHS is finding different ways to see patients.

Patients are going to be encouraged to call NHS 111, or visit NHS 111 online, or use the NHSApp before walking into an Emergency Department. NHS 111 can assess a patient's symptoms and refer them to a different service if ED care is not required. These services include GP practices, walk-in centres/minor injury units, hospital

clinics and other same day emergency care services. Patients might also be referred to their pharmacist or asked to self-care. It is a national ambition for all trusts to have in place by December 2020.

Patients who walk into EDs, but who are triaged and deemed to not require ED treatment will be signposted to other services, and in some cases can be booked into appointment slots for those services. A large number of patients who attend an ED do not require treatment or diagnostic tests, these patients will not be turned away, but they might not ultimately be treated in ED and will be signposted to an alternative service.

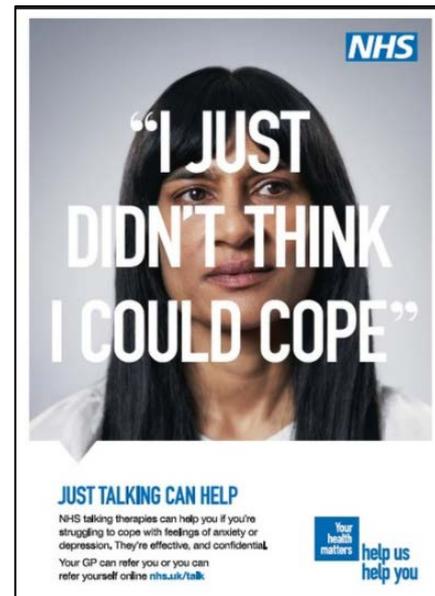
During November we are testing offering timeslots for some Same Day Emergency Care services in preparation for a potential go-live for offering timeslots for EDs in December. This will be subject to completing the assurance process with NHS England/NHS Improvement.

Fear, worry, and stress are normal responses to perceived or real threats, and at times when we are faced with uncertainty or the unknown. So, it is normal and understandable that people are experiencing fear in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Added to the fear of contracting the virus in the pandemic are the significant changes to our daily lives as our movements are restricted in support of efforts to contain and slow down the spread of the virus. Faced with new realities of working from home, temporary unemployment, home-schooling of children, and lack of physical contact with other family members, friends and colleagues, it is important that we look after our mental, as well as our physical, health.

The NHS launched its first national campaign on mental health services on Tuesday 17 November 2020. There has never been a more important time to look after the mental health of the nation – and we want to remind everyone that the NHS is here for mental health, too, even during the pandemic.

Help Us Help You – Mental Health is a two-month campaign aiming at increasing awareness of NHS talking therapies services (IAPT). The campaign will encourage adults with mental health issues to seek help and consider accessing NHS talking therapy via their GP or through self-referral.

Talking therapies, or psychological therapies, are effective and confidential treatments delivered by fully trained and accredited NHS practitioners. They can help with common mental health problems like stress, anxiety and depression. You can find out more [here](#).



Alongside this, local Together We're Better partner, North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust, or "Combined", will soon be launching a local "You're not alone" campaign – look out for this on our social media pages over the next few weeks!

Other local Together We're Better partners, University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHNM) and University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Trust (UHDB) have also launched their local winter campaigns. Look out for the UHNM "Where for Care?" campaign on their social media channels, as well as the UHDB local "Help Us Help You" campaign across all of theirs.

In support of the recruitment drive underway locally, the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Health and Care People Hub workforce campaign, 'Step Forward', is still very much in motion. We've had a fantastic response to some of the roles so far, thank you to everyone who has helped support the campaign. A compilation video of our dedicated workforce sharing their experience of working in the system has been created. Please use this video to promote the campaign message across your existing channels: <https://youtu.be/D-gCj1-UaAY>. Further information can be found on our website, [here](#).

Other news is that NHS wheelchair users throughout Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are being asked for their opinion of the service they get. An online survey has been launched to try and find out what people find is good, what is bad and what could be done better.

The engagement will also seek to gain views from voluntary sector organisations representing wheelchair users throughout the area.

All feedback is completely confidential.

The online survey runs until midnight on Friday November 27 and can be accessed [here](#).

The results of a major engagement exercise which was held earlier this year by the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent CCGs have now been published. The Difficult Decisions programme sought views on ending the postcode lottery that exists across parts of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to access treatments and services. It looked at five specific areas where NHS commissioning policies are different depending upon where in the area you live. This was a comprehensive engagement that was completed just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit and it was announced in April that work would be suspended as all our efforts needed to be put into fighting the pandemic.

The independent engagement report highlights all the feedback and the comments that were collated during the engagement work. There is also a summary version demonstrating the key themes from each of the five service areas.

The next stage of the engagement process is deciding on the options to take forward for each service based on this feedback. However, this requires direct input from clinicians, and at the moment they need to be concentrating on continuing the fight against the pandemic and preparing for winter. It's a case of prioritising clinical resources and the CCGs are unable to commit to a timescale for when this work will continue.

For more information about the Difficult Decisions work, and to access the findings report and summary, please visit [a CCG website](#).

You may also have seen or heard this week that the HSJ Awards 2020 finalists have been announced. We would like to say congratulations to each of the Together We're Better provider trusts, as they have all been selected as finalists in this year's awards. We look forward to hearing the winners announced in March.

Useful resources

National lockdown restriction resources can be found [here](#).

Materials are available for the following campaigns; please can we ask for your help to promote them across your networks:

- [Local Alert Level resources](#)
- [Hands. Face. Space. resources](#)
- [Help Us, Help You – Accessing NHS Services – Mental Health](#)
- [Help Us, Help You – Abdominal Symptoms of Cancer](#)
- [Help Us, Help You – Accessing NHS Services – Cancer \(general\)](#)
- [Help Us, Help You – Accessing NHS Services – Maternity](#)
- [Public flu vaccination campaign](#)
- [Stay Alert to Stay Safe – new youth focused 'consequences' social animations](#) are now available on the campaign resource centre.
- [Stay Alert to Stay Safe posters](#): White background easy print for face coverings and distance
- [NHS Test and Trace posters](#): White background easy print for drive through testing and self-isolate
- [Symptoms posters](#): White background easy print for taste and smell

[NHS COVID-19 App resources](#)

[Wearing a face mask – translations](#) (Arabic/French/Kurdish/Lithuanian/Pashto/Polish/Portuguese/Romanian/Russian/Spanish/Tigrinya)

[Test and Trace materials](#) are available to use on the Public Health England Campaign Resource Centre. This includes BSL, easy read and large print formats [here](#).

[Signposting materials](#) with useful information on how people can contact their GP, order repeat prescriptions and manage wellbeing and existing conditions at home:

<https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/nhs-resources-facilities/resources/health-at-home/>

[Public Health England guide on how older adults can stay active at home during coronavirus to maintain strength and balance](#)

[Translated information leaflets for parents with new-borns during coronavirus](#)

[Mental wellbeing whilst staying at home](#)

[North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust mental health support and advice guide](#)

[Guidance on shielding](#)

[Blood donation materials](#)

Public Health England has updated its coronavirus guidance in light of changes to the government's advice and continue to ensure guidance for the public is timely and up to date. All guidance for members of the public, as well as for people in clinical and non-clinical settings, is published and updated regularly on the GOV.UK collection page.

For the latest information on coronavirus, please visit the [NHS](#) and [government](#) websites.

Together We're Better is the partnership of NHS and local government organisations, alongside independent and voluntary sector groups, that is working together to transform health and care services. You can find out more about us on our website: <https://www.twbstaffsandstoke.org.uk/>