

Update on what the NHS in Norfolk and Waveney is doing to respond to coronavirus (19 August 2020)

How we are working to care for patients safely as we restart more local health services

This article gives an update on why the NHS has had to delay some treatments, how we're restarting services and the range of safety measures we have put in place.

When the pandemic started we made more space in our hospitals to treat people with coronavirus, in line with national NHS guidelines. We also changed the way we provide health advice, for example using more video and telephone appointments. This meant that some other health services had to be paused and some treatments postponed. Most urgent and emergency treatments, such as cancer services, still went ahead.

We're now starting to carry out more 'routine' treatments and operations, but in a carefully managed way, with lots of measures in place to keep everyone safe, including rigorous infection and prevention control practices and the use of personal protective equipment.

Here are five ways our hospitals, GP practices and other health providers have changed how they work to care for you safely. Many of these will be familiar to you from your own work or from your experience of just going out for the day.

- 1. Limiting the number of people in our buildings.** Having fewer people coming to us makes it easier for people to keep a safe distance from each other and to keep our buildings clean. This is why we're now using video and phone appointments when we can. Face-to-face appointments are of course available for those patients who need to see a clinician in person.
- 2. Having separate areas for people with and without coronavirus.** Our hospitals and larger GP practices have introduced different areas for treating and seeing those with and without coronavirus. Where this is not possible, for example in a smaller GP practice, we have created designated sites where people with coronavirus who need to see a GP or practice nurse can go.
- 3. Using additional personal protective equipment (PPE).** This is important for both our patients and our staff. Don't forget, if you're going to a hospital, GP practice or another health care setting, you now need to wear a face covering too.
- 4. Extra cleaning.** Our cleaners are playing a vital role on the frontline, making it safe for our patients and staff to come to work. For example, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn has just started using [innovative ultraviolet-C \(UV-C\) decontamination technology](#).
- 5. Testing more people.** Almost 70,000 patients and staff have been tested for coronavirus by our local testing service. We are testing more people, including those coming in for surgery and people being discharged to care homes.

All of these are really important because our number one priority is the safety of patients and our staff.

But while telephone and video appointments can make it quicker and easier to provide people's care, some of these new safety measures, such as extra cleaning of theatres between surgery and using additional PPE, do mean that providing some care takes longer.

They mean that some of our services are currently seeing and caring for fewer patients every day than they used to, and as a result some people are waiting longer. We know that this is really difficult for patients and their families, and we're doing everything we can to make sure people get their surgery or treatment as quickly and safely as possible.

Our hospitals are contacting every patient waiting for surgery or another procedure, checking whether their condition has changed and if so whether their care plan needs to change too.

We are also making changes to increase our capacity so that we can care for more people, for example:

- The Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital has already put in place seven day working and is performing elective work on Saturdays and Sundays.
- As part of our plan to get services back on track, a new orthopaedic surgery service for hand and foot surgery has been set up at Cromer Hospital.
- The James Paget University Hospital has re-commissioned an operating theatre which is due to open imminently and introduced additional diagnostic endoscopy clinics at weekends.
- Arrangements are also still in place with some private hospitals in Norfolk to provide NHS care during the pandemic. Spire Healthcare in Norwich and BMI Sandringham are providing on average 25 cancer procedures, 44 other high priority procedures and 1,000 outpatient and chemotherapy treatments each week.

If you need medical help, the NHS is here for you. You can still contact your GP practice, use 111 online or call 111 for help. If you are told to go to hospital, you must go. They will give you the care you need.

It's really important that you continue to attend your appointments. If you've missed an appointment or had a screening postponed, you should contact your GP practice or clinic to rebook.

We'll continue to keep you updated on how we're restarting more health services, the steps we're taking to keep you safe and how you can play your part in protecting yourself and others.

New funding will help our three main hospitals prepare for winter and the risk from further outbreaks of coronavirus

Last week the [government announced](#) our three main hospital trusts have been awarded almost £6 million of capital funding, which will help to ensure the NHS is better placed for the challenges that the winter months may bring.

The funding will enable trusts to expand and improve emergency department facilities, increase capacity and reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection during the coming months. Here is the breakdown of the funding for each trust:

Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	£1,898,000
James Paget University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	£2,200,000
Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHS Trust	£1,900,000
Total	£5,998,000

And here's how our hospital trusts responded to the funding announcement:

NNUH: The Government has today (11 August) announced that NNUH will receive almost £1.9m of winter funding. Planning is well underway to ensure the Trust is well prepared for the challenges that winter will bring. The national funding will be used to expand Emergency Department facilities ahead of winter and the risk from further outbreaks of coronavirus.

"We have been planning since November last year and there are a number of projects well underway to help manage the usual demands we usually face over winter and with the likelihood of COVID-19 still circulating in the community," said Cursty Pepper, Emergency and Urgent Care Performance and Recovery Operations Director.

“This is an exciting project that will help expand GP streaming at the hospital and work towards the formation of an Urgent Treatment Centre at NNUH, as well as reduce emergency department footfall and redirect people to the best service for their needs as appropriate. We are also working on plans to introduce rapid point of care COVID-19 testing at the front doors,” she said.

Other projects for this winter at NNUH include the expansion of the frailty service, Same Day Emergency Care, and the early supportive discharge scheme for orthopaedics.

QEH: Chief Operating Officer of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital King’s Lynn, Denise Smith said: “We’re pleased to have been allocated nearly £2million to strengthen our planning for this winter. This year more than ever this funding will help us ensure that we can put in place effective measures to allow us treat all of our patients as safely and as quickly possible.

“We will use this funding to make further improvements to our Emergency Department, creating more space and making the environment more comfortable for our patients. These improvements will help support the wider Trust to deliver a high level of care during the busy winter period.

“While the extra funding will support our winter planning, the very best thing our local community can do to support us this winter is have their flu jab – the flu jab will help protect them, their families, our Trust and our patients and will reduce the pressure on our hospital.

“We are also encouraging the local community to keep up their good work on social distancing – keeping socially distanced and following the restrictions in place will help reduce the risk of a second wave of COVID-19, particularly during the traditionally busy winter period.”

JPUH: James Paget University Hospital’s Chief Operating Officer Joanne Segasby said:

“Any investment in facilities which benefits our patients is extremely welcome. We will now be accelerating our plans to expand our Emergency Department, in the light of this announcement. These plans will result in an increased capacity in our consultation and treatment areas, creating a more comfortable environment for our patients and staff, as well as expanding the area for those waiting to be seen.”

Supporting the mental health of critical care patients

- Extra psychological help is being provided to critical care patients in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A pilot project has been launched between the Critical Care Complex and the Mental Health Liaison Service at NNUH, which has seen two clinical psychologists working in the unit as part of the multi-disciplinary team.
- The project aims to provide specialist psychological support to patients to those considered potentially at risk of developing mental health problems and support their families and carers.
- Dr John Davies, Clinical Liaison Psychologist for Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT), said: “Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic alerted us to the psychological needs of patients admitted to critical care, it is important to recognise that a substantial body of evidence attests to the impact of critical illness on an individual’s mental health. Our aim is to work in partnership with our colleagues to optimise patients’ recovery through a holistic approach that acknowledges both the mind and the body.
- “This new project is helping us to provide care to patients who might not necessarily come to the attention of mental health services. For us it’s also very important to have a presence on the ward so that colleagues can always approach us if they have any concerns regarding their mental health.”

- It comes as the Trust launches a new [video](#) visit of the Critical Care Complex for former patients and families giving an insight into the department and demonstrating the mechanical support required to treat and rehabilitate patients from critical illness. The video aims to help patients to come to terms with their time on the critical care complex as part of their recovery.
- Deborah Easby, Critical Care Consultant, said: “Despite all the machines and technology we have to help patients recovering from critical illness, as a team we always keep in the mind that we are looking after a person first and foremost as well as their family and friends. That is why we place equal importance on the psychological wellbeing of patients as part of their recovery process.”
- First Response, a 24/7 service for people of all ages in Norfolk and Suffolk requiring mental health care, advice and support, run by NSFT, is available on 0808 196 3494.

Flu update

- Flu planning across the system is now underway with all partners from health and social care involved. Successful uptake of the flu vaccination is paramount this year.
- The best way to help protect yourself and others from catching and spreading flu is to have the flu jab every year. Flu strains can change from year to year, which means last year’s jab may not protect you from this year’s strains. The vaccine usually provides protection for the duration of that year’s flu season.
- Due to the pandemic, flu vaccination clinics may be held in a slightly different way this year. Clinic logistics are still being finalised and updated information will be communicated when confirmed.
- It looks certain that flu vaccines will be released in batches, according to both availability and also the need to prioritise those most at risk. This means flu clinics will be staggered in the months ahead. People who are not eligible for the free NHS vaccination will be able to buy a vaccination from community pharmacies.

Keeping yourself and others safe

- Coronavirus is still with us. Cases in Norfolk and Waveney are low and we want to keep them that way. The best thing to do to protect ourselves and others is to continue to wash our hands regularly, keep our distance from others and wear a face covering in shops and on public transport.
- To protect others, you and everyone living in your house should isolate straight away if you show symptoms. The symptoms are: a new continuous cough; fever; or a loss or change in your taste and smell.
- As soon as you isolate, visit [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or call 119 to book a test. Everyone is eligible to get a test if they have symptoms. You can choose either a drive-through test or a home test kit. Stay in isolation until you receive your results, which will include instructions on what to do next.
- NHS Test and Trace will contact people who test positive for COVID-19. They will ask you about who you have been in contact with from two days before onset of symptoms to seven days after. This will identify people at risk who could pass on the virus before (or without) showing symptoms themselves.
- For more information about how to stay safe and how to get support if you need it whilst isolating visit: [norfolk.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/coronavirus) or [suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus).



NHS

Test and Trace

CORONAVIRUS GOT SYMPTOMS? GET TESTED NOW

PLAY YOUR PART.
PROTECT YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

Do not leave home, except to get a test.

Find out how to get a test at
nhs.uk/coronavirus or call 119

STAY ALERT ▶ CONTROL THE VIRUS ▶ SAVE LIVES

Visiting arrangements for mental health and community health services

- Our local mental health and community health services are continuing to review their visiting arrangements as the situation with the pandemic changes. Take a look at their websites to find out what this means for you if you're planning to visit someone:
 - [Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust](#)
 - [East Coast Community Healthcare](#)
 - [Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust](#)

Mental health support available

- It's important that we look after our mental wellbeing during this time – for tips and advice visit www.everymindmatters.co.uk.
- If you are worried about your own mental health and wellbeing call First Response, a free 24/7 helpline offering immediate support, on 0808 196 3494.
- 11 to 25 year olds in Norfolk and Waveney can get support and online counselling via www.Kooth.com. The service provides support or advice on any topic, including managing your feelings during the pandemic.
- JustOneNorfolk has a wealth of information and links to support the health and wellbeing of your family: www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk.

NHS
Norfolk and Suffolk
NHS Foundation Trust



First Response
Call: 0808 196 3494
(Freephone)

A 24/7 service for people of all ages in Norfolk and Suffolk requiring mental health care, advice and support.

kooth
Lost your routine? We'll be here when you need us

- Discussion Boards
- Kooth Magazine & Help Articles
- Free Counselling
- Journal & Self-Help Tools

Sign up for free at Kooth.com