

Update on what the NHS in Norfolk and Waveney is doing to respond to coronavirus (15 April 2020)

Testing people for coronavirus

- We have a community swabbing service in operation seven days per week, alternating between Norwich Community Hospital one day and Beccles the next. Arrangements are being finalised to provide testing in West Norfolk, which we expect to be in place from Monday, 20 April. This will make it easier for people in the area to get tested.
- This week the NNUH's testing capacity has risen from 150 tests per day to 1,800 per day. They are now offering tests to help NHS staff beyond the NNUH to return to work, and from next week will be increasing testing of other key workers, such as care home workers and community pharmacists. This is by pre-arranged appointment only to manage demand.
- We are going to receive a significant boost to our testing capacity. It has been agreed that volunteers from all research organisations on the Norwich Research Park are going to be working together with staff at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital to test frontline NHS workers. The additional resource could see testing capacity increase significantly in the long-term, providing thousands of tests each day, while still delivering results within 24 hours.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for health and care professionals

- Our main NHS Trusts, including our hospitals, continue to report adequate stock of PPE. Last week we received a delivery of PPE from the national 'push' out, which contained 14,000 masks, 21,500 aprons, 57,500 gloves and 8,200 goggles. This is primarily for smaller providers, like GP practices and social care. We expect another delivery this week.
- To supplement this, last week the Norfolk Local Enterprise Partnership launched a campaign to ask local businesses to provide details of PPE which they have available in stock or their capacity or capability to produce equipment. 74 businesses have already responded to the Norfolk campaign, and Suffolk County Council has previously also made an appeal to local businesses too. The stock we have secured as a result will primarily be for smaller providers like care homes and GP practices, who have less PPE supplies. As well as attracting additional stocks of PPE, this work will also coordinate the logistics for distributing it. Any support to magnify our PPE campaigns would be welcome.
- There have also been some really excellent examples where our larger NHS trusts have been able to offer mutual aid to by releasing their own stock. For example, in the last couple of weeks the NNUH has kindly supported a number of GP practices in central Norfolk and in the Great Yarmouth and Waveney area who were running low on stock.

How our three acute hospitals are preparing

- The three acute hospitals have put in place measures to significantly reduce planned care in order to create capacity to care for people with coronavirus. We are also seeing a dramatic reduction in number of patients being seen at A&E in all three hospitals – greater than 50%.
- The hospitals have also rapidly rolled out digital solutions, for example the NNUH has made changes so that 60% of first outpatients now happen digitally, the QEHKL are now doing 70% of outpatient follow-ups digitally and the JPUH are also using digital technology for outpatient appointments.
- We currently have good critical care capacity across Norfolk and Waveney compared to other areas. The three acute hospitals have all developed plans for increasing ICU capacity ahead of the expected peak. For example, the QEHKL normally has 13 beds in its ICU, but they have plans in place to quadruple ICU beds to 52 as and when they are needed – this is based on regional planning assumptions. The hospital also has a phased plan to expand their COVID-19 wards (across 12 wards), as they see more COVID-19 positive patients.
- A second Emergency Department opened at the NNUH last week. The Arthur South Day Procedure Unit has been turned into an extra ED to treat patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. The existing ED is being used for non-COVID-19 related illnesses and injuries. Work has also begun on a 10-bed isolation unit to support the Trust's management of COVID-19.

- Our capacity is also being boosted by registered clinicians returning to work. For example, the QEHL has been approached by more than 70 former clinicians who want to return to the front line.

How we are working together to discharge people from hospital

- Local health and care organisations are working together to source further community capacity to help us create space in our hospitals. We are following the national guidance that no-one should stay in hospital once they are deemed medically optimised to leave. Over the past few weeks we have established 153 additional beds at existing sites to support the discharge of patients from hospital.
- We are working to secure further beds within community hospitals, care homes and the hospitality sector ready to meet the forecast demand in the next few weeks. This will help to make sure that we are prepared for the increase in people needing to be discharged from hospital at the peak of outbreak.
- Caring for people in the hospitality sector reduces the time that care staff spend driving and increases the time they spend looking after people. So we are looking at supporting more people in these venues, including some people who under normal circumstances would be supported at home, because it would enable us to provide the best support to people with the resources that we have.

Working with the Spire Norwich and BMI Sandringham hospitals to provide cancer care and other time-critical procedures

- The three acute hospitals are now working with the Spire Norwich and BMI Sandringham to provide the majority of the planned care which has not been postponed. Across the country, hospitals like these are being used for time-critical procedures, including cancer care.
- Activity started being undertaken at the Spire on 1 April. Services that have moved to the Spire include theatre activity across a number of cancer and clinically time-critical procedures, including trauma activity. Day case and outpatient procedures are being undertaken within urology (lithotripsy) and dermatology (skin cancers). Radiology CT services are to commence this week.
- Cancer and critical outpatients that have to be undertaken face-to-face, as well as chemotherapy and midwife-led clinics, are due to start at the Spire within the next two weeks. Work is also being done to establish pathways for cardiology, phlebectomy and gynaecology outpatient services.
- Only breast cancer patients are going to the BMI Sandringham for theatre procedures. This started on 30 March. The site is also being used for some post-operative care for patients who were treated at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and then transferred, however BMI are not undertaking any outpatient activity.

How GP services and primary care are changing how they work to care patients

- **‘Hot sites’ for patients with coronavirus (or coronavirus symptoms)**
 - New arrangements are being put in place for people with coronavirus (or coronavirus symptoms) who need to see a GP or practice nurse face-to-face.
 - Most people with coronavirus do not need to see a doctor. They should follow NHS advice to self-isolate and treat symptoms with rest and sleep, drinking plenty of water and taking paracetamol to lower their temperature.
 - Some people will need to see someone face-to-face though, but they won't be so unwell they need to go to hospital. So we've started introducing 'hot sites' where people who need an appointment with a GP or practice nurse can go, if invited for a face-to-face appointment.
 - There'll be some 'hot site' surgeries where only people with coronavirus will go. In larger GP surgeries they will have 'zoned' areas to separate those with and without coronavirus.
 - By designating some surgeries as 'hot sites', it will mean that some patients will need to go to other surgeries in order to see a doctor and possibly have to travel further. We are grateful to patients for their understanding in these unusual times.
 - If people are advised by their doctor or nurse to come in for a face-to-face appointment, they will be told exactly what to do and where to go for their appointment. Upon arrival, a member of staff will invite them in for their consultation or will see them in special drive-through arrangements, which may include a drive through blood test. The instructions will depend on their medical need and what local arrangements have been put in place.

- **Support for high-risk patients**

- We are writing individually to c28,000 people across Norfolk and Waveney who have either been identified by the NHS nationally or by their GP as being at high risk from coronavirus. We are sending these people a guide to effective 'shielding', plus an invitation to send their local Primary Care Network daily updates on their health.
- If a patient's daily update on their health causes a concern, their practice can intervene. If they cannot go online to send an update, or if they haven't sent an update for a week, they will be phoned (by CCG staff) to check they remain well and their update will be entered into the system for clinical review. The first of these calls took place on Saturday, 11 April.
- 80 of our 105 GP practices have signed-up to this so far and the majority of the letters have already gone out. This work is being done using a 'risk stratification' tool called ECLIPSE, which has been pioneered in West Norfolk and is thought to be a unique approach to helping those people at greater risk.

- **Using digital technology to care for patients**

- GP practices across Norfolk and Waveney have undergone a revolution in the last few weeks, shifting to a total triage model to protect their staff and patients. Over 60 of our practices are now offering online consultations, enabling their patients to contact them online via their websites. And 37 of our practices are now offering video consultations, with 40 more practices going live imminently.
- The CCG has provided primary care with a further 400 laptops to enable virtual clinical teams, home visiting teams and care home teams to access clinical records outside of the GP practice and to use digital tools to deliver care and clinical supervision. This is enabling primary care clinicians who have to work from home to continue to provide support to patients. The CCG has also distributed 40 iPads, 200 webcams and 140 headsets to practices.

How mental health services are supporting patients and the wellbeing of our staff

Helpline for people experiencing mental health difficulties

- On Wednesday, 15 April, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT) launched a 24/7 helpline offering immediate support for people experiencing mental health difficulties during the coronavirus pandemic.
- The freephone service, called First Response, is staffed by mental health professionals from the Trust. It provides reassurance, self-help advice, support and signposting designed to avoid the need for people to attend hospital, except in the case of a medical emergency.
- The helpline is available to members of the public of any age, regardless of whether or not they are an existing NSFT service user. The line is also open to other healthcare professionals, such as GPs, ambulance and social care staff, who need to make referrals or seek advice when working with people undergoing mental health difficulties. First Response is available on 0808 196 3494.

Support for children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing

- We have created one place where people can find out how to access mental health advice and support for 0-25's in Norfolk and Waveney: www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/mentalhealth. On the website people can find out how they can get advice and support without the need for a referral. The support available includes:
 - Under-18s can contact Point 1 on 0800 977 4077 or Point1-support@ormistonfamilies.org.uk
 - 18-25 year olds can contact Wellbeing Service on 0300 123 1503 or visit www.wellbeingnands.co.uk
 - Parents and carers needing general advice can phone Just One Number on 0300 300 0123, text Parentline on 07520 631590 or visit www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk

If people need more specialist help, these services will make sure they get to the right person. Please help us by sharing the link to Just One Norfolk with parents, carers, children and young people.