



COVID-19 briefing 3 April 2020

This is the second of our Frimley COVID-19 briefings; aimed to provide you with the latest information on the measures we are putting into place to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on our local health and care services.

The pace of change and level of expectations to respond are increasing each day and we are working together across our organisations and with the NHS England team to ensure our communications are consistent and timely. For the latest local position on COVID-19 please visit this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-track-coronavirus-cases>

Today's update covers:

1. **Changes to our ways of working**
2. **Planning the response for critical care beds**
3. **Personal Protection Equipment PPE**
4. **Workforce Bureau**
5. **Communications**

1/ **Changes to our ways of working in the Frimley Health System:**

Over the last week or two, you are likely to have noticed a marked difference in the way things are being done as we manage Covid-19. We have worked to reduce footfall through our practices, using systems like e-consult, telephone appointments and video consultations, to ensure we continue to provide our local community with the care they need.

Primary care is operating differently and we will be communicating to ensure people understand the new arrangements for their care and support as changes happen.

Our top priority is to keep our patients and staff safe and to ensure patients get the care they need. Keeping our staff healthy is crucial so that they can continue to care for everybody. We have been working together with local surgeries to develop a system which will meet these changing needs.

From now, all patients contacting their surgeries requiring assessment by a doctor or nurse will receive an initial assessment through e-consult (on surgery website) or telephone by a suitably trained clinician.

Keeping people with Covid-19 symptoms separate from people who do not have symptoms is key if we are to help reduce the impact of the pandemic on patients and our NHS staff. Over the course of the next few weeks people may have to go to a different surgery building to the one they are used to, and might see a doctor or nurse who they not familiar with. People with suspected Covid-19 symptoms who, following telephone assessment, need to have a further face-to-face appointment, may not be seen at their usual surgery. Instead they will be directed to a specific site locally that has been set up to better deal with their needs.

Patient records will still be accessible securely and whilst we realise this could be inconvenient, we think it is important to keep people safe, reduce the spread of





Covid-19 and get the maximum benefit from the healthcare resources which will be available.

A home visiting service, for patients who are housebound, will continue to be co-ordinated through the practices and the surgeries will continue to operate in the background. When circumstances change to make it possible, a normal service will be resumed.

Easter

GP practices and the wider NHS will continue to be under ever-increasing pressure over the coming weeks, including through Easter (10 and 13 April) and, looking forward, to May bank holidays (8 and 25 May). To enable this, the April dates will now be identified as normal working days for GP practices. The position for the May bank holidays will be confirmed at a later date.

Changes to Secondary Care in our hospitals

Hospitals have had to change the way they do things to manage the rapidly increasing capacity that is required to treat Covid-19 patients. Hospitals have stopped all non-urgent operations and patients who are medically fit to leave hospital, are being helped to do so quickly. The Government has released funding to support discharge into the care of our community health providers, who will be able to increase their capacity as a result of this investment.

2/ Planning the response for critical care beds:

The NHS is pulling out all the stops but no health care system in the world could cope if steps weren't taken to slow the spread. Nightingale hospitals are part of the NHS's plans to deal with the surge in coronavirus patients. They will bring together the staff and equipment we need to deal with the rise in the number of cases.

The new NHS Nightingale Hospital at London's ExCel centre will become fully operational this week and able to care for patients. The hospital will initially provide up to 500 beds equipped with ventilators and oxygen and care will be of the same standard as that offered in hospital surge units. The capacity will then continue to increase, potentially up to several thousand beds, should it be required.

Because this is a problem not just confined to London but across the country, NHSE have given the go ahead to the building of two further of these NHS Nightingale hospitals in Birmingham at the National Exhibition Centre and at the Manchester Central Convention Centre. Both will start initially with up to 500 beds but have the potential for significant expansion.

Other sites will be considered as required.

3/ Personal Protection Equipment (PPE):

In the past two weeks 170 million FFP3 masks, surgical masks and other protective equipment have been dispatched to 58,000 health services across the country, with every GP practice, dentist and pharmacy getting a delivery of this kit.





Huge efforts are being made with respect to PPE deliveries and fulfilling orders across the Frimley system. Emergency drops of equipment to GP surgeries, social care and other providers using NHS Supply Chain were completed last week.

A new system was put into place this week for Trusts and other organisations, including general practice to manage the scaling up of distribution. Where there are issues with supply then our staff can raise any issues through a dedicated hotline, which is open 24/7.

4/ **System workforce mobilisation:**

Having sufficient staff with the right skills is critical to our response and staff training has already started, with further work underway to identify and recruit additional staff to enable the hospital to expand the number of patients it can look after, if needed.

We have to make sure we're making best use of peoples' skills to support our critical services, so are in the process of establishing a System Workforce Bureau. The Workforce Bureau will provide oversight of system workforce pressures and capacity issues and help support the deployment of additional workforce resource. It will make decisions from all parts of our system, including General Practice and Social Care.

5/ **Our communication messages this week:**

Frimley Health and Care, Provider and CCG websites (including social media) are focused on the message that NHS staff are doing everything they can to ramp up services but the public can help by using them responsibly in line with national directive. We have a communications focus to the general public to say:

- NHS staff are pulling out all the stops to care for patients with coronavirus and prepare for the surge in cases we know is coming, but we need your help: Stay home, save lives
- Not to contact the NHS if you think you have coronavirus. Search NHS and coronavirus online to get support and advice. Only call 111 if you feel you cannot handle your symptoms at home or you do not have internet access.

How people can help

We need people to continue to follow the government advice and comply with social distancing rules and socially isolate where necessary. This will have the biggest impact on the prevention of spread of Covid-19, and support the NHS by reducing the number of patients needing support at any one time. Your support in continuing to promote these messages would be most welcome.

We would also like to ensure you that we are working closely with the voluntary sector who are supporting the increased numbers of volunteer offers which have been so heartening to see. You may also be aware of the government launched initiative via Good Sam which is coordinating offers of support across England.

