



COVID-19 briefing 17 April 2020

This is the fourth Frimley COVID-19 briefing; 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. **National position and need to access care**
2. **Dental service provision**
3. **Staff testing across the Frimley system**
4. **PPE and local community support**
5. **St Marks and walk-in centres/urgent care centres**
6. **How people can help**

1/ **National position and need to access health care**

National data is showing us that the public are following advice on social distancing but because these measures take time to work, the number of hospital admissions and deaths are still going up. When the peak of the epidemic will be will depend partly on how well social distancing measures are adhered to.

We are hearing that fewer people are seeking help for their immediate health needs. While staff are pulling out all the stops to care for coronavirus patients and prepare for a potential surge, they are also working hard to keep services in place for patients who do not have coronavirus. We are developing new models of care and anyone needing urgent or emergency care should seek it.

Across Frimley Health and Care ICS, our health and care services are working together to ensure that people can still access urgent healthcare for other symptoms, not just the coronavirus. Our message is that 'the NHS is open for business' and that people should not hesitate to seek medical support when they need to. There are a range of services open which mean we can still protect the NHS and get people the support they need.

2/ **Dental service provision**

During the Covid-19 pandemic all routine NHS and private dentistry has stopped. Patients who had scheduled appointments in the coming weeks are being contacted by their dental practice. The NHS is continuing to provide urgent and emergency dental care, which will be available to both NHS and private patients.

A member of the team at each dental practice will carry out a telephone assessment to assess people's dental needs. They will be able to offer remote advice, or prescribe medication to relieve any pain or to treat an infection.





In addition a network of Urgent Dental Care hubs are being established to provide urgent treatment when it is required.

Referral route (in-hours): If patients have a dental emergency they should call their usual dental practice during opening hours for further advice. If they do not have a regular NHS dentist they can search for a local dentist on the NHS website at www.nhs.uk and call them. If patients are unable to contact their dental practice they should ring NHS 111.

Referral route (out of hours): In the evening and at weekends patients can contact NHS 111 who will provide advice and direct patients to an out of hours service if necessary.

Both of the above routes will have the ability to signpost to the new urgent dental care hubs. Across the South East region there will be 38 hub sites including 24 community dental services for shielded and vulnerable patients.

For East Berkshire only: The emergency dental number for patients is 01344 458115, for triage available Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4pm and Sunday 8.45am to 12.30pm.

3/ **Staff testing:**

NHS and Public Health England labs have increased their testing capacity across the country to more than 10,000 checks a day. This increase means the local offer for tests has been expanded from hospital to any symptomatic ICS staff member or member of their household.

Frimley Health and Care ICS has partnered with Berkshire Healthcare as a health and care staff testing provider, to provide three drive-through testing stations. These will operate at the University of Reading, Ascot Racecourse and West Berkshire Community Hospital (Newbury).

These testing facilities are intended to complement the testing being offered directly to partner organisations through the national testing programme, and are available to a wide range of health and care staff including those working as carers and in the voluntary sector. Testing key workers and other key individuals for the presence of COVID-19 will ensure we can maintain critical services and prevent the spread of infection.

4/ **Personal protective equipment and local community support**

The supply and usage of appropriate PPE situation remains a critical issue for front line services and we are working with the Local Resilience Forum and NHSE to ensure supplies are adequate and reach the essential services within our system. We have established with our partners a well-functioning of mutual aid system which where needed can provide emergency support across health and care settings.

We are extremely grateful to our local schools and communities across the system who have joined forces to support the local coronavirus effort, and who have donated essential equipment usually used for science or technology work such as safety goggles, aprons, boxes of masks and over-shoes. Some schools have also used high-tech 3D printers to create safety visors using their design technology equipment.





The support doesn't stop there; we've had offers of accommodation, food, and support from lots of local businesses, particularly for our front line staff and we would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude and thanks for such an overwhelming response during this unprecedented period.

5/ **St Marks and walk-in centres/urgent care centres**

Since the introduction of the national 'lockdown' by the Government, the number of people attending St Marks Hospital in Maidenhead for minor illness or injury care has decreased by 74% compared to activity in the preceding months.

The CCG has temporarily suspended the service provision of minor illness and minor injury at St Marks Hospital on Thursday 16th April, to make the best use of resources and reallocate the expert clinicians and other resources currently in place there to critical points of care locally. The service will remain suspended until the pressures caused by the current Covid-19 pandemic have ceased.

Patients needing treatment for injuries such fractures should attend their local Accident and Emergency unit in the normal way (Wexham Park Hospital, Slough, Frimley Park Hospital, Frimley, or the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading).

This temporary change will ensure that patients in East Berkshire continue to be able to access timely same-day care for minor illness and injury while providing the NHS with the most resilience. The change will mean some patients will have to travel further for treatment for fractures. However, this is a temporary measure aimed at making the best use of valuable clinical expertise and resources during extraordinary times.

6/ **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. NHS staff are doing all they can to care for patients with coronavirus and to prepare for the surge in cases we know is coming - but we need your help: Stay home, save lives.

