



COVID-19 briefing 12 June 2020

This briefing aims to provide you with the latest information on the measures we are putting into place across Frimley Health and Care to respond to the impact of Covid-19 and provide you with a key issues update of what is happening across the system.

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/coronavirus>

Today's update covers:

Carers Week

Advice on social Distancing and shared spaces

Help us Help you campaign: Main campaign & diabetes

Children returning to school

New tool for sign language users

Communications

Carers week - June 8th to 14th 2020



This week was carers week and we wanted to take this opportunity to celebrate local carers and the enormous amount of physical and mental effort they put into what they do.

This year, Covid-19 has made life for carers even tougher than it usually is. The theme for Carers Week 2020 is [Making Caring Visible](#). This is even more important at a time when carers could be unable or unwilling to be out and about because they want to minimise the risk of infection to themselves and therefore the person they care for.

There are 6.5 million people in the UK who are carers, looking after family members or friends who have disabilities or mental or physical illnesses or who need extra help as they grow older. They are a hidden army, silently, tirelessly, and selflessly working to support the people they love.

Many carers don't often consider themselves to be carers, and as such they try to shoulder the caring burden on their own and don't look to access the support that is available to them. This can have a negative impact on their own physical and mental health.

We want to raise awareness in the wider community of their efforts and to help carers to realise that they are not alone and that there is help at hand for them. We also want to thank them for what they do, as what they achieve benefits the people they care for, the community and the country as a whole.





Dr Peter Bibawy, who is a GP and the Clinical Chair of the Frimley Collaborative within the Frimley Health and Care System gave us this message:

<https://www.frimleyhealthandcare.org.uk/carersweek2020>

There is wide-ranging support available for carers. [Click here to access our Home and Community Support page](#), which includes links to carers' support organisations.

Social distancing and shared spaces

How we can all do our bit to stop the coronavirus from spreading



Hello. I'm Sarah Bellars and I am the Director of Quality and Nursing for the Frimley Collaborative which is responsible for commissioning services to provide the best possible care for patients from Slough in Berkshire to Farnham in Surrey.

I have been a nurse for thirty years, twenty of which have been as an Infection Prevention and Control Nurse.

I wanted to take this opportunity to write about things we can do to help keep ourselves, our friends, families and colleagues well by reducing the risk of catching the coronavirus.

For the last couple of months, everyone who wasn't an essential worker has been staying at home, except for brief journeys to the shops, to exercise or for medical reasons. When we have gone out, we have been asked to stay two metres apart from others as part of government guidelines. We've been crossing the street when we see someone coming, giving way to others and so on.

It is so important that we continue to practice these social-distancing methods even now that lockdown restrictions are easing. It can be so easy, and there is almost a comfort, to go back to how things were before coronavirus, but doing so while the virus is still out there, could have serious consequences for all of us.

The virus affects different people in different ways, so while one person might experience mild symptoms – or none at all – a person they infect could become seriously ill or even die.

So how can we stay safe out of lockdown?

There are different ways in which bugs like Coronavirus can spread.

Typically, when someone talks, coughs or sneezes, droplets travel in the air for up to around two metres, before falling to the ground. If you walk into this space, you are increasing your chances of catching the bug. That is why all social distancing messages focus on this magic



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number. So, as the rules relax, and if you do go out to work or shopping, please remember to keep two metres apart from others.

If someone else comes into your two-metre space and it looks like you can't avoid them, turn so that your eyes, nose and mouth are facing away from them.

The second way bugs spread is through contact surfaces. If you go grocery shopping and place your hands on a contaminated surface, that bug is then transmitted to your skin and everything you touch as **you** then begin to contaminate surfaces. If you then touch your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands, you have increased your chances of being infected. This is why you may have heard or seen messages advising you not to touch your face, or rub your eyes, and telling you to use alcohol gel on your hands and to wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or more when you return home. This is very important.

We are now advising people wear face coverings in enclosed public spaces, where social distancing is difficult, such as shops, trains and buses to help reduce the spread of coronavirus.

You may want to consider wearing a mask if you are out and about, particularly in places where social distancing is difficult.

Face coverings can help us protect each other and reduce the spread of the disease if you are suffering from coronavirus but not showing symptoms. People with coronavirus symptoms, as well as members of their household, should continue to follow the [advice to self-isolate](#). Remember to be very careful when taking a mask off, so wash your hands carefully first.

There are also currently rules in place about the number of people we can meet from another household, and when you do, it's again important to remain at least 2 metres apart. This is to limit the spread of the virus from one household to another. We are advised to meet outside, because it's easier to stay 2 metres apart, there are minimal contact surfaces for us to touch and there is good air flow.

As we relax the rules, social distancing and good handwashing become even more important so we can prevent the further spread of the virus through communities and keep the number of cases and fatalities down too. So remember.....



Stay home if you can

Stay two metres away from others if you are out

Keep washing your hands with soap and water

Stay safe



Help us Help you continues

Your NHS is here for you



Don't delay in getting urgent treatment if you need it – that's the message to members of the public in a major new NHS campaign.

People's concerns about coronavirus and a fear of being a burden on health services have led to a significant drop in the numbers of people seeking treatment in recent weeks.

GP practices have seen a reduction in contact from patients, while around one million fewer people attended hospital Accident and Emergency departments nationwide this April compared to the same month last year.

The risk is that if people with potentially serious conditions don't seek help when they first notice symptoms, their condition can deteriorate and pose significant problems to their long-term health, or worse.

Dr Andy Brooks is a GP and the Clinical Chief Officer of the Frimley Collaborative, a partnership of NHS organisations responsible for funding and planning the majority of health services for 800,000 people, from Farnham in Surrey to Slough in Berkshire. He said: "As local clinicians we want people in our communities to know that we are here for them and that if they suspect that something is wrong and they need to get checked urgently, they can and should still do that.

"Local health services have gone to great lengths to make sure that people can still attend appointments when they need to and that they can do so safely.

"The sooner a problem is discovered, the sooner it can be treated and the better the chances are of making a swift and complete recovery.





People may find that the process of accessing services is different to before the pandemic. All initial contact with GP surgeries is by phone or online. If someone has urgent care needs they can also call 111 or visit 111.nhs.uk.

Since the lockdown began, many people have been able to treat minor ailments and injuries themselves at home, using a well-stocked medicine cabinet or first aid kit. People are encouraged to continue to do this where appropriate but to contact healthcare services for more serious or urgent matters or if they have any concerns. [Find out more about self-care here.](#)

Dr Brooks added: “Many other vital health services are operating, such as maternity, mental health and cancer services, and I would urge people to continue to use these services and contact them in the normal way.

“Also, if you have a child who is due to have routine vaccinations it is important that they receive them. The Covid-19 outbreak should not prevent your young ones from being protected against other viruses and infections.”

Seeking medical care is one of the reasons that people are allowed to leave their homes, under the national lockdown rules.

<https://www.frimleyhealthandcare.org.uk/helpushelpyou>

Help Us Help You

People with diabetes urged to attend their appointments

A leading diabetes doctor is urging people with the condition to attend routine appointments – and for people with possible symptoms to get checked out as soon as possible.

In a short video recorded for Diabetes Week 2020, Dr Nithya Nanda emphasised the importance of keeping in touch with medical services. ([watch the video here](#)).

His message has added importance this year, with fewer people contacting health and care services because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Dr Nanda is the Clinical Lead for Diabetes for Frimley Health and Care – the health and care system which plans and provides services to 800,000 people, from East Berkshire down to Farnham in Surrey.

He said: “I wanted to take this opportunity to reiterate the importance for people with diabetes to attend their routine appointments, or to speak to their GP or diabetes team about any concerns they may have.

“This message is fundamental in light of the current pandemic which has seen a reduction in the number of people accessing NHS services for a range of non covid-related conditions.





“It’s also important for us all to recognise the signs of diabetes, often referred to as the Four Ts, so that help can be sought much earlier on.”

The Four Ts are as follows:

Toilet – going to the toilet a lot?

Thirsty – unable to quench your thirst?

Tired – feeling more tired than usual?

Thinner – losing weight?

Dr Nanda added: “If you you’re experiencing any of these signs, then please do contact your GP or call NHS 111 or visit NHS 111 online.”

Dr Nanda’s message follows the national announcement earlier this week about three new online tools being made available on the NHS for people living with diabetes, to help manage their condition during the coronavirus pandemic.

According to recent findings, people with diabetes face a significantly higher risk of dying with COVID-19 but better management of the condition can help improve control and lead to better outcomes.

NHS investment in the technology means that patients will be offered advice on treatment and care, as well as training to adopt healthy behaviours on diet and exercise.

The remote support will complement patients’ appointments, many of which have been going ahead throughout the pandemic, through video consultations or via telephone, and more recently in COVID protected areas.

People living with Type 1 diabetes can access the following technology from today:

Digibete: Children and young people with Type 1 diabetes and their families will be able to use the DigiBete App and website for a wide range of awareness, education, training and support resources.

MyType1Diabetes: Adults with Type 1 diabetes can access the service directly by visiting myType1diabetes.nhs.uk, it includes videos and eLearning courses, to help people understand more about their Type 1 diabetes and increase their confidence in how to manage it.

People with Type 2 will be able to access the following from later this year:

Healthy Living for people with Type 2 diabetes: The platform provides users with the skills and knowledge to manage their Type 2 diabetes effectively, including advice on emotional and mental wellbeing, and helps users adopt and maintain healthy behaviours around diet and exercise.

Online appointments, routine discussions with GPs and a dedicated helpline for those treated with insulin are among a range of measures that the NHS has already adopted so that diabetes care can go ahead as normal. The NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme is also being delivered remotely using platforms such as Microsoft Teams to continue to help those at risk of Type 2 diabetes to reduce their risk.

Professor Partha Kar, national specialty advisor on diabetes for NHS England and Improvement said: “Living with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes is a daily challenge for millions of people and





knowing they are more at risk if they are infected with coronavirus will be worrying, but the NHS has taken action to help people and keep them safe, including the roll out of these helpful apps.

“Access to trusted information and support is key to helping people manage their diabetes and we are delighted to support these tools which will hopefully empower people to look after their own condition and reduce their risk.”

ICS commissioning lead backs national advice for children going back to school

Lockdown ‘extremely unsettling for children and young people’

A leading local doctor is backing national advice for parents to be alert to children’s mental health as many return to school this week.

Dr Andy Brooks, a GP and the Clinical Chief Officer for NHS commissioners in East Berkshire, Surrey Heath and North East Hampshire and Farnham, supports the need to help children who may be struggling with the confusion of life under Covid-19.



Dr Brooks said: “Over the past few weeks, the coronavirus pandemic has caused major disruptions to family life, through the introduction of social distancing, school closures and lockdown. This has been an extremely unsettling time for children and young people with lockdown also creating increased pressure on families.

“Returning to school may cause anxiety for some pupils heading back to the classroom after months away – and those who would like to return but remain stuck at home feeling left out or isolated.”

Professor Prathiba Chitsabesan, NHS England’s Associate National Clinical Director for Children and Young People’s Mental Health, recently outlined simple steps for parents to take to help their sons and daughters cope with the loneliness and uncertainty of lockdown or fears about returning to school.

Professor Chitsabesan also stressed that NHS mental health services remained available for children and young people and that they were working in partnership with schools and other services to support children and their families.

He said: “Children and young people may be experiencing a variety of feelings in response to the coronavirus pandemic, including anxiety, distress and low mood, and it is important to understand that these are normal responses to an abnormal situation.

“The NHS offers a large amount of mental health support for children and young people, and if a child needs urgent mental health support or advice, check [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) for services in your area, including 24/7 crisis support.”





Dr Andy Brooks added: “As parents and carers, it’s crucial to engage how our children are feeling and to seek support if needed. Continuing to look after our mental health is just as important as taking care of our physical health.

He added: “Earlier this month, we launched three #coping guides across Frimley Health and Care to support the wellbeing of children and young people during lockdown and beyond and I would encourage you to refer to these.”

According to the World Mental Health Organisation, one in four people will suffer with some form of mental health issue in their life.

The #coping guides - #Coping – Family life during lockdown; #Coping – Five Ways to Wellbeing and #Coping – Young Person’s guide - contain some of the best reliable and free sources of information and advice. [Click here to view the guides.](#)



#Coping

East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group’s (CCG) Head of Children, Young People and Families, Janette Fullwood, said: “We continue to work system wide across Frimley with colleagues from local authorities and the voluntary sector to ensure a coordinated approach to mental health and support.

“We have a particular focus on crisis mental health support for children and young people; ensuring that children and young people continue to have access to mental health services; close working with local partners to ensure that referral routes are easily understood; and preparing for a possible longer term increase in demand on children and young people’s mental health services as a consequence of the pandemic.”

NHS England has issued step-by-step advice for parents on what to look out for and steps that they can take to look after their child’s mental health, based on advice from clinicians and first-hand experience from patients and parents.

Signs that parents should look out for include:

- You might find they are more upset or find it hard to manage their emotions
- They may appear anxious or distressed
- Increasing trouble with sleeping and eating
- Appearing low in mood, withdrawn or tearful
- Reporting worried or negative thoughts about themselves or their future
- For younger children, there may be more bed wetting

If you are worried about your child’s mental health, then you can help by:

- Making time to talk to your child
- Allow your child to talk about their feelings
- Try to understand their problems and provide reassurance that you have heard them and are there to help
- Help your child do positive activities
- Try to keep a routine over the next few weeks
- Look after your own mental health



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Parents should contact NHS 111 online or a GP immediately if they notice any physical injuries on a child, such as deep cuts or burns.

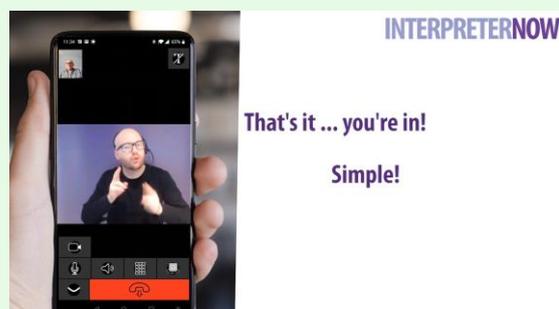
If you, or your child, are experiencing any mental health issues your GP, key worker (if you have one) or NHS 111 are still here to help. This is a difficult time for many of us and it's important that you get the support you need. For more information, visit www.nhs.uk/mentalhealth or the [mental wellbeing section of the Frimley Health and Care website](#).

Advice is also available from Rise Above, a website created with young people, and from MindEd - a free educational resource for parents and professionals working with children.

BSL HealthAccess: A new tool for sign language users

Two organisations: [SignHealth](#) and [InterpreterNow](#), have joined forces to create BSLHealthAccess to support sign language users in communicating with health services during the pandemic.

BSLHealthAccess provides BSL interpreters free of charge to allow service users to speak with health staff at any time of day, every day of the week.



There is a step-by-step video that shows how to sign up and to download the app: <https://vimeo.com/399995581>

Communications

Are you following Frimley Health and Care social media accounts?

Can't wait for our briefings to hit your inbox? Stay up to date with our latest information by following us on social media...

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