

## COVID-19 CORE BRIEF: WEST LANCASHIRE: 4 APRIL 2020

The following contains key messages about West Lancashire which aim to ensure our stakeholders remain up to date.

### CORE MESSAGES

A huge effort is underway with the NHS mobilising to change the way that hospitals and GP practices run, freeing up tens of thousands of beds, bringing in more staff and ventilators, getting protective equipment to where it is needed and ramping up testing.

We cannot do this alone. We need people to save lives and stay at home, so the NHS can provide services for those who really need it.

The NHS – locally and nationally - will also have to deliver care in new ways to deal with the pandemic.

The NHS is working hard to increase capacity, discharge those who are fit to go home from hospital.

There is a national plea for retired or ex doctors and nurses to return to work. There are also thousands of medical students and student nurses joining us.

The independent sector is providing thousands of beds across the country to help.

There are more ventilators being sought and we are increasing the supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

We cannot test the entire population at this time so we are prioritising patients and NHS staff so they can return to work as soon as possible

Please only rely on Gov.uk or NHS.uk. Don't rely on social media for your information.

### COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH MESSAGES

Stay at home (do not leave your property/garden) for 7 days if you have either:

- A high temperature – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back.
- A new continuous cough – this means you've started coughing repeatedly.

Stay at home for 14 days if one of the people in your household has the above symptoms of coronavirus. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house becomes ill.

If you start displaying symptoms within this 14-day period, you need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared. (This applies even if you become ill within an original 14 day isolation period.)

Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital if you have symptoms

You do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home.

Use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service if:

- you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home
- your condition gets worse
- your symptoms do not get better after 7 days

Only call 111 if you cannot get help from 111 online.

Stay At Home advice can be found [here](#)

Always carry tissues with you and use them to catch your cough or sneeze. Then bin the tissue, and wash your hands, or use a sanitiser gel.

Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after using public transport. Use a sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Avoid close contact with people who are unwell.

Follow Public Health England issued guidance relating to [social distancing](#)

Follow current national guidance and only leave the house to shop for basic necessities or pick up medicine, to travel to work when you absolutely cannot work from home and to exercise once a day, alone or with members of your household.

## VULNERABLE PATIENTS

Anyone identified by the NHS as high risk can access practical support around food, medicine and social contact through the Local Support System ran by West Lancashire Borough Council called West Lancs Together [www.westlancs.gov.uk/westlancstogether](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/westlancstogether) 0800 616 667 7am-7pm, daily.

Texts and letters have been sent out to 1.5 million NHS patients, categorised as vulnerable. GPs in the area are checking in with these patients to assess their needs.

## SOUTHPORT AND ORMSKIRK HOSPITAL

We urge the public to follow the advice and avoid accessing any health care services if they have Covid-19 symptoms.

Planned care appointments and non urgent operations have been postponed

The hospital is working hard to ensure there is capacity by discharging patients who are well enough to go home

The trust is delivering respiratory training to those who need it

Southport & Ormskirk has stopped all visitors into the hospital sites, in line with many other trusts UK wide.

The Trust are inviting people to email letters to a loved one being treated to [soh-tr.lettertolovedones@nhs.net](mailto:soh-tr.lettertolovedones@nhs.net) – the letters will then be printed off, put in a special stamped addressed envelope and delivered to the patient

Children's A&E in Ormskirk is closed 10pm-8am (as of Monday 6 April). All patients requiring an ambulance will be diverted to Alder Hey.

## GP PRACTICES

We urge the public to follow the advice and avoid accessing any health care services if they have Covid-19 symptoms.

Please DO NOT attend a GP practice unless you have been telephoned screened and been advised to come in.

Please expect a great deal of our care to be delivered by phone or video, instead of face to face, and at times at a different site than the one you are used to

We will be using our teams in different ways to ensure the well and those with Covid-19 symptoms are cared for separately. This may mean you are asked to access the services in a new way. Community health services and GP practices are working in a more blended way than useful. This is to ensure resilience and to protect our patients and staff

Our healthcare systems will continue to look after those who are elderly, frail and/or vulnerable – all with underlying health conditions.

We will continue to work with colleagues to support home visiting where needed.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

We urge the public to follow the advice and avoid accessing any health care services if they have Covid-19 symptoms.

Staff are carrying out initial screening before patients come to any appointments to ensure they have no Covid-19 symptoms. This applies to home visits as well.

Community services will be changing and working closely with social care to ensure services are wrapped around those patients being discharged from hospital

All non-essential podiatry appointments have been cancelled until further notice, with the exception of high risk and dressing clinics. All new referrals will be triaged and seen if urgent. Non-urgent referrals will be moved to an assessment waiting list until further notice.

Adult community services teams are only making urgent, essential visits to patients to help keep them in their preferred place of care. All other contact is taking place on the telephone.

Please contact Virgin Care's Single Point of Access with any queries:  
vcl.westlancs-spa@nhs.net 0300 247 0011

## WALK-IN CENTRE AND URGENT TREATMENT CENTRE

The Urgent Treatment Centre in Ormskirk and Walk-in Centre in Skelmersdale will be moving to booked appointments only as of Saturday 28 March 2020. Patients should not attend either centre in person without phoning 01695 402180 first. Some patients will be treated over the phone and some will be given an appointment at one of the centres.

The centres are treating minor injuries only.

This change is to protect our patients and staff. Many other areas are approaching this in a similar way during this time.

## MEDICINES

West Lancs Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) is experiencing huge volumes of calls.

Patients do not need to stockpile medicines and there is currently no issue with medicine supply

If West Lancashire patients already use My GP/Patient Access apps, they can use them to order repeat prescriptions

Patients currently on NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications) for other medical reasons (e.g. arthritis) should not stop them. Patients, who have confirmed Covid-19, or believe they have Covid-19, should use paracetamol in preference to ibuprofen, or other NSAIDs drugs. Please be aware that we cannot accept requests for paracetamol, unless you currently receive regular repeat prescriptions for paracetamol.

We will only issue your usual supply of medication, please only call the POD if your repeat prescription is due within seven days

Unless you have a confirmed diagnosis of a chronic respiratory condition, we cannot accept a request for an inhaler at this time.

Please do not contact your GP practice or the local POD for a rescue pack. You should continue to manage your condition in the usual way and if you feel you have symptoms of COVID-19, go to <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> before doing anything else.

## MENTAL HEALTH

CAMHS Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust will continue to offer appointments both initial assessments and follow up appointments. Routine appointments will now be by telephone or Skype where possible. Contact for West Lancashire CAMHS is 01695 684262

Wellbeing and mental health helpline (all age) 0800 9154640 between 7pm-11pm Mon-Fri and 12pm-12am Sat/Sun.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY**

We continue to share and retweet posts by NHS England and Public Health England, and also share a social media toolkit locally. If you'd like a copy of this contact **[meg.pugh@nhs.net](mailto:meg.pugh@nhs.net)**

Can everyone please follow the CCG's channels and share the content so we can reach a broader audience in West Lancashire – Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WestLancsCCG> and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NHSWestLancsCCG/>