

Issue 15 – 16 October 2020

Latest news from Torbay and South Devon

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We are ensuring our website has the latest information on it so please do look there for the most up-to-date information www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk. You can also keep up-to-date by following us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

Campaign urges public to get cancer symptoms checked

A major new campaign is urging anyone concerned about cancer to get checked and to keep routine appointments, as new research found that even now, nearly half (48%) of the public would delay or not seek medical help at all. A fifth (22%) would not want to be a burden on the health service while a similar number said that fear of getting coronavirus or passing it onto others was a major reason for not getting help.

More than four in ten people would leave it longer to get health advice than they normally would have before the coronavirus outbreak, however delaying can have serious consequences for some cancers.

The NHS's Help Us Help You access campaign will use TV adverts, billboards and social media to urge people to speak to their GP if they are worried about a symptom that could be cancer, and also remind pregnant women to attend check-ups and seek advice if they are worried about their baby.

People with mental health issues are also been encouraged to access NHS support.

The cancer Help Us Help You advert is airing on TV now.

What do local COVID alert levels mean?

Local COVID alert levels set out information for local authorities, residents and workers about what to do and how to manage the outbreak in their area.

It lets you know what you can and cannot do if you live, work or travel in each local COVID alert level.

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You can [find out the alert level of your local area by using your postcode on the government's website](#). Devon is at 'medium' alert.

[There's also an interactive map of the UK to show what rules apply where.](#)

Devon is 'medium local COVID alert level'. What does that mean?

Medium alert level areas are subject to the national restrictions that continue to be in place.

This means:

- you must not socialise in groups larger than 6, indoors or outdoors (other than where a legal exemption applies)
- businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a COVID-secure manner, other than those that remain closed in law
- certain businesses are required to ensure customers only consume food and drink while seated, and must close between 10.00pm and 5.00am
- businesses and venues selling food for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10.00pm as long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through
- schools and universities remain open
- places of worship remain open, subject to the [rule of six](#)
- weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on numbers of attendees
- exercise classes and organised sport can continue to take place outdoors, or indoors if the [rule of six](#) is followed.

You must:

- [wear a face covering in those areas where this is mandated](#)

You should continue to:

- follow social distancing rules
- work from home where you can effectively do so

- when travelling, plan ahead or avoid busy times and routes. Walk or cycle if you can.

Full guidance on the restrictions in place to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in an area where the local COVID alert level is medium is [available on the government website](#).

Could you donate plasma to help treat COVID-19?

The NHS needs people who have had coronavirus (COVID-19) to donate blood plasma to potentially help others.

Blood plasma is a yellowish liquid that makes up about half your blood volume. After a virus, your plasma contains antibodies that help fight infection.

A transfusion of plasma from someone who has recovered from coronavirus may help people who are still ill.

Trials are underway to understand the effectiveness of this treatment. Donated plasma is being stored so that if the trials show benefits to patients, there are stocks ready to use at hospitals around the country.

You can donate 28 days after you feel better, but you can [register your interest in donating now](#).

Your body quickly replaces the antibodies and plasma you donate so you may be able to give regularly and potentially help more people.

[You can register your interest on the NHS website here](#).

Get your flu jab!

Flu spreads easily and you could have it without any symptoms. You might think it's 'just the flu', but it kills on average 11,000 in England each year and hospitalises many more.

Adults at high risk from flu are also most at risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), and research suggests that the risk of death more than doubles for people who catch both.

So [the free flu vaccine](#) is more important than ever to help protect people in Devon from a double threat this winter and ease pressure on the NHS.

People aged 65 and over, those with long-term health conditions and pregnant women will be offered the flu vaccine first through their GP or pharmacy, along with two and three-year-old children.

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All primary school children and, for the first time, Year 7 children will be offered the flu 'nasal spray' in schools to reduce community transmission.

The flu vaccine will also be offered to household contacts of people on the NHS Shielded Patient List and all health and social care workers who have direct contact with the people they care for.

Once the most at-risk groups have had their free flu jab, the newly eligible 50 to 64 year olds will be invited to get theirs later in the season.

Face coverings now compulsory on school transport

Pupils in Devon are being told they [must wear face coverings when travelling on school transport](#) to ensure that they all have as safe a journey as possible.

Since the start of term students aged 11 and over have been advised to wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated school transport, unless they are exempt.

With immediate effect, it will now be compulsory to wear a face covering when travelling on school transport, and from Monday, 2 November it will become a condition of travel.

Those travelling on 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) transport will not be included in this new policy, as the majority of children are exempt from wearing face coverings. However, those who can wear a face covering are encouraged to do so.

All secondary schools and colleges are being issued with our exemption cards which they will give to exempt students upon parental request. Failure to produce this exemption card when boarding school transport without a face covering could result in a warning and ultimately a refusal to allow the student onto the vehicle. SEN school students will not require an exemption card.

Consultation update: Teignmouth and Dawlish



There are still opportunities to take part in the consultation about proposed changes to services in our Coastal Locality, which includes Teignmouth and Dawlish. The Trust is supporting Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) with the consultation, which is running until 26 October 2020. The consultation is being run differently from normal because of the need to socially

distance. Meetings have been held remotely using online video and 'chat' technology, with the last meeting running on Saturday 17 October 11am – 12:30pm.

Joining information, as well as details of the many other ways to have your say, are on the [CCG website](#).

Healthwatch Devon (covering Plymouth, Torbay and Devon) is independently overseeing the consultation and evaluating the proposals.

Changes to outpatient appointments

The coronavirus pandemic has changed forever the way we will be delivering services in 2020 and beyond. Social distancing and infection control measures have impacted our service delivery capacity. During the pandemic, we have seen teams completely adapt to using technology to continue to support people and come up with innovative ways to offer high quality services.

The number of out-patient appoints is rising and we are on track to achieve 92% by November. As a key part of this we are working hard to increase the use of virtual appointments and are doing this by offering telephone or video appointments if a face to face appointment is not absolutely essential.

What's happening in Exeter is not unexpected and has been planned for" says Dr Pearson

Dr Virginia Pearson, the Director of Public Health Devon, was asked this week whether Exeter is likely to be locked-down anytime soon.

She said, "Exeter has seen a recent sharp spike in cases, most of which are in the university student population. The outbreak is currently contained, and so [Exeter is not in the territory for broad lockdown within the city at this time](#)."

She went on to say that what's happening in Exeter was expected and has been planned for; and that what we're seeing here is the same as elsewhere in universities across the country.

"The university has a comprehensive set of measures in place to reduce transmission among its students and staff population," she said, "and their planning has enabled early visibility of the issue and enabled a swift response."

Test and Trace app

The NHS Covid19 app is now live, with an important feature as part of NHS Test and Trace programme. Visitors to some of our buildings, where people visit and gather in close contact, can now 'check in' from the app by scanning a QR code, which is displayed on posters at entrances.

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The QR code posters are a quick, simple and secure way for visitors to 'check-in' and avoids the need by venues to collect visitor details, which are a crucial part of the Track and Trace programme. For more details visit the [NHS Track and Trace](#) website.

Stay safe during the pandemic

Although incidence of COVID-19 remains low compared to much of the country, we are seeing an increase in cases across our community. Health and care services are well prepared to manage a surge in cases. We are also working together to try to keep as many services as possible running alongside emergency services in any future spike. In the meantime, we are asking everyone to continue to follow the government guidance on hand-washing, wearing a face covering and social distancing.



For the latest guidance please visit the Government guidelines on the [GOV.UK website](#)

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