

Issue 16 – 30 October 2020

Latest news from Torbay and South Devon

We are sending you this update to keep you informed about Trust developments. Please feel free to share these updates amongst your networks. If you wish to unsubscribe, or you have been passed this update by someone else and you would like to subscribe please email: communications.tsdf@nhs.net

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](#)

Message from Ian Currie, Medical Director for Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust

As you will be aware, the number of people with the COVID-19 virus is rising across the country. Thankfully in Devon we are seeing lower numbers, but they are rising and we are caring for more patients who have become unwell. Our staff are working very hard to ensure all our patients continue to get the best possible care.

During the first phase of the pandemic we had to step down all non-urgent work. In the summer our teams worked hard to catch up on the backlog. Even though we are now experiencing increased pressure, we are continuing to carry out some planned surgery but we know patients are waiting longer than we would like and we are sorry about this. We want to assure you that we are doing everything we can at this difficult time.



We would like to thank you for your support over the last few months. The comments and feedback we have received and the kind gestures from members of the public have been fantastic. There are a couple of things you can continue to do to help us to help you and they are:

- If you need to access healthcare please do, but please consider the best way to do this as there are plenty of options such as a local pharmacy, your GP practice and the Urgent Treatment Centre at Newton Abbot. My advice is to make good use of the 111 phone line or website for advice when your need is

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urgent but not an emergency. By doing this you will help us keep our Emergency Department for emergencies as much as possible.

- I cannot stress too much how important it is that we all continue to follow the guidance to break the chain of infection. By following the guidance of Hands – Face – Space we can keep ourselves and our families as safe as possible.

Once again thank you for your continued support and I hope you find the information in this Update useful.

Ian Currie
Medical Director

Visiting Patients

Whilst the prevalence of COVID-19 in the local community is lower than the England average we are caring for a relatively high number of people who have tested positive.

In view of this we have had to take the difficult decision to review our visiting policy. We know that visiting is extremely important for patient recovery and wellbeing and also very important for families. We have therefore aimed to continue some limited visiting as set out below and we will also support digital ways that people can keep in touch.

General areas

- Patients in the final days of life will be able to receive visitors on compassionate grounds as agreed with the ward
- One carer who is supporting someone with a mental health issue such as dementia, a learning disability or autism, where them not being present would cause the patient to be distressed

Paediatrics areas

- In the neonatal unit fathers / guardians can visit for one hour per day and be with the mother. There is a rota in place to support social distancing which will be monitored by the ward staff.
- On our children's ward, Louisa Cary, one parent / guardian can visit and they are swabbed so this person becomes the key parent on the ward during the stay. If there is a need to change then other parent / guardian is swabbed prior to visiting.
- Unfortunately, only one parent will be allowed into children's theatres, due to lack of space, and sadly siblings are not able to visit at this time.

Maternity ward

- One nominated individual per patient will be allocated a 1 hour time slot to see women who have given birth in our postnatal ward.
- One birthing partner will be able to stay during the time on central delivery suite.
- A nominated individual living in the same household is able to attend the early scan (undertaken at approximately 12 weeks gestation and also referred to as the dating or screening scan).
- A nominated individual living in the same household is able to attend the anomaly scan (18-20 weeks gestation) with expectant mothers. This will mean that for both routine scans, someone can attend alongside expectant mums.
- A birth partner can join expectant Mums when they attend for assessment because they are possibly in labour.

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](#).

Travelling around the country during COVID-19

Devon is at the 'medium' tier alert level. So is the rest of the South West.

Movement around the region is pretty straight forward.

Everyone still needs to follow the guidance on social distancing, hand washing regularly and wearing of face coverings, wherever you are in the country.

And please don't travel at all if you have symptoms, however mild - a high temperature, new and continuous cough, or loss or change to your sense of taste and smell - or if you've been advised to self-isolate.

The general principle is that you must follow the rules of the tier you normally live in, regardless of where you are in the country. That's the general principle, but there may be local restrictions on top of that which you need to know about.

Working together to keep essential services running

NHS organisations across [Devon are sharing their resources and expertise to manage the impact of the coronavirus pandemic](#) prepare for winter and keep essential services running.

As coronavirus infections rise, health and social care partners are preparing for an increase in patients with the virus at hospitals in coming months.

Devon's four main hospitals (Derriford, North Devon District, RD&E and Torbay) will work closely as a network to manage resources in the most effective way to deliver a range of services as safely as possible.

While all four hospitals will continue to see and treat patients with COVID-19 who present in their Emergency Departments, they are working together to share their inpatient capacity if it is deemed medically appropriate.

This may mean in some cases, to receive the most appropriate care, patients may be cared for in, or transferred to, a different hospital. This will allow the NHS in Devon to do all it can to treat COVID patients at the same time as continuing to provide planned and urgent care. The NHS Nightingale Hospital Exeter is also on standby, ready to receive COVID-19 patients, if needed.

Doctors are also calling on local people to do play their part by keeping their appointments and choosing the right service for their needs.

In light of the rising number of cases, local hospitals are also having to introduce tighter visiting restrictions to keep patients and staff safe.

And the NHS is reminding local people that they need to play their part by continuing to follow Government's 'hands, face, space' guidance on good hygiene, wearing a mask where needed, social distancing and limiting the number of people they meet with.

Consultation update: Teignmouth and Dawlish



The public consultation closed on 26 October – thank you to everybody who took part and gave their views. It was really good to see so many people take the opportunity to take part whether that be by completing the online survey, sending in a paper version, taking part in an online meeting or posting, emailing or phoning with their comments.

Healthwatch Devon, who are independently overseeing the consultation, are collating the feedback and evaluating any alternative proposals submitted.

We will update you on the progress towards a decision being made by the Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and you can also find out more on the [CCG website](#).

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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.

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.

Help Us, Help You

[New national research](#) has 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 has introduced a range of measures to ensure the safety of patients. Your NHS is here to see you, safely. Now, we are asking you to 'Help Us, Help You'.

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- 'Help Us, Help You' by contacting your GP if you are worried about a symptom that could be cancer.

Visit nhs.uk/cancersymptoms for more information

- If you're a pregnant woman, 'Help Us, Help You' by keeping appointments and seeking advice if you are worried about your baby.

Visit nhs.uk/pregnancy-and-coronavirus for more information

- If you are already being treated for a health issue, 'Help Us, Help You' by keeping your routine appointments.

Read [our patient information leaflet](#) for more information

- If you are experiencing mental health issues, 'Help Us, Help You' by accessing NHS services and support.

Visit nhs.uk/yourhealthmatters for more information

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.

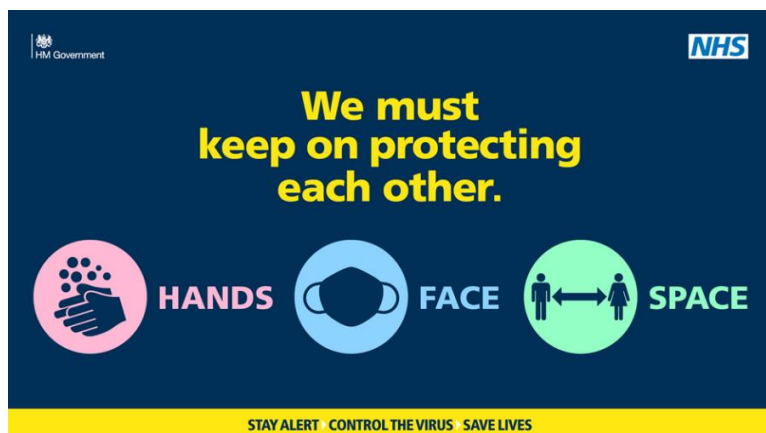
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Update

Helping people stay well, supporting those in need



Torbay and South Devon
NHS Foundation Trust



For the latest guidance please visit the Government guidelines on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk)

Follow the Trust on social media

Click on the icons to view our social media profiles. Please follow us to receive our latest updates in your social media news feeds. You will find personal and professional stories from our staff, our patients and news about your local services.



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