

# Stakeholder update from NDHT

October 2020

This update pulls together the latest news from Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust. We hope this update will be useful to our local partners and communities.

## In this update

- COVID-19 at NDDH
- Help Us, Help You
- The NHS in Devon is working together to manage COVID-19 and keep services running
- Update on visiting restrictions
- Our nursing leadership
- COVID-19 testing update
- Free parking for carers at all NDHT sites
- First students start at North Devon's new school of nursing
- Remote appointments: your questions answered
- Flu: get your jab

## COVID-19 at NDDH – update from Dr Andrew Davis, deputy medical director

Earlier this month, I wrote to you about COVID-19 cases at North Devon District Hospital. We were conscious that our community were feeling anxious about this after seeing posts on social media.

I hope my update reassured you that we have really strong measures in place to keep everyone safe. I have seen our message spread far and wide amongst our community, and I'd like to thank you for helping to reassure our patients.



As in other parts of the country, North Devon and Torridge are seeing a gradual resurgence of infections. We are well prepared to handle an increase in COVID-19 cases in northern Devon, and although this winter may prove to be particularly challenging, we have robust plans in place to manage winter pressures alongside.

It is our top priority to keep everyone safe and ensure that we can care for COVID

---

positive patients whilst continuing with urgent care, planned elective procedures and outpatient appointments. Our staff have worked brilliantly to put all the right safety measures in place, and we are working closely with our partners across Devon to plan for the coming months.

If I could ask for your support again, it would be to keep reminding the people in your lives to access care from the NHS when they need it. Other articles in this newsletter will tell you why this is so important and what you can do to help.

The continued threat of COVID-19 is real. Please encourage everyone to follow the government guidelines: Hands, Face, Space. Please don't ignore symptoms in yourself or in your household. We are anticipating a challenging winter, and these are things that everyone can do to help us.

We have a fantastic community here in northern Devon, and I'd like to thank you for your support. We all need to look after ourselves and each other. I hope you are all staying safe and well.

---

## 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'.



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

---

Visit [nhs.uk/cancersymptoms](https://www.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](https://www.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](https://www.nhs.uk/yourhealthmatters) for more information

At NDHT, our staff have worked really hard to put a wide range of measures in place to keep everyone safe.

There is more information about all our safety measures on our website:  
[www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk/our-hospitals-and-community-services-are-open/](https://www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk/our-hospitals-and-community-services-are-open/)

### **What you can do to help**

You can help us, help others by encouraging the people in your lives to access care from the NHS when they need it. If they are worried about coming into hospital, tell them about the safety measures we have in place to keep everyone safe.

If you are able to display [this poster](#) anywhere, we would be very grateful.

---

**NHS**  
Northern Devon Healthcare  
NHS Trust

## Keeping you safe from COVID-19 at NDDH

Our priority is to reduce the risk of our staff, patients and service users from getting COVID-19, whilst still caring for you. We have put in place a range of measures at North Devon District Hospital to keep everyone safe from coronavirus.



**We are practising good hand hygiene**

- ✓ Please don't come wearing gloves as this can increase the spread of germs
- ✓ Wash your hands well for 20 seconds using soap and water or hand sanitiser



**We are carrying out lots of testing because we know that not all COVID-19 symptoms are visible**



**We have separate areas to keep patients who might or do have COVID-19 apart from others**



**Our spaces are less crowded because we're doing more phone and video appointments instead of face-to-face appointments**

- ✓ Help keep our spaces clear by attending by yourself where possible



**We are wearing PPE to protect staff and patients**

- ✓ You must wear a face covering when coming into hospital



**We are supporting patients to follow social distancing guidelines in our waiting areas**

- ✓ Please keep 2 metres apart from others when you come into hospital

For more information visit [www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk)

Can you help us get the message out on social media? Share our posts on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

## The NHS in Devon is working together to manage COVID-19 and keep essential services running

As COVID-19 infections rise across the country, we are working with our partners across Devon to prepare for an increase in patients with the virus at our hospitals in the coming months.

Our team at North Devon District Hospital will be working closely with colleagues at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, Torbay Hospital and Derriford Hospital to share our 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 our emergency departments, we are working together to share inpatient capacity if it is deemed medically appropriate. This approach will help us collectively manage the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, prepare for winter and keep essential services running for the communities of Devon.

This may mean that 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-19 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.

Read more about this on [NHS Devon CCG's website](#).

---

## Update on visiting restrictions

Due to the rise in COVID-19 cases, in order to protect vulnerable patients and staff, hospitals across Devon have taken the difficult decision to further restrict visiting to compassionate grounds and for carers only.

We appreciate how hard separation can be for families and patients and we have a number of measures in place to ensure contact is maintained. These include regular contact from staff to a designated family member, the use of iPads for 'virtual visiting' and our patient experience team can receive and pass on letters, drawings and cards from loved ones to patients.

From Thursday 29 October 2020, to reduce the risk to patients, staff and visitors, no visiting is allowed at NDDH or South Molton Community Hospital except:

- If there are specific reasons of safety – Dementia or learning disability where anxiety would be increased significantly.
- Inpatients under the age of 18 years old – One parent/guardian only (both parents are permitted in the special care baby unit).
- At outpatient and diagnostic appointments where a patient may need emotional support, they can be accompanied by one person from the same household or support bubble.
- A patient receiving end-of-life care can receive more than one visitor from the same household or support bubble within a 24 hour period.

**Please note that there are no changes to maternity services restrictions.** The maternity visiting and appointment restrictions have been in place since 2 October 2020.

Even under these circumstances, people **should not visit if they are displaying COVID-19 symptoms or should be self-isolating** because they live with someone who has symptoms.

We are also advising that people should also avoid travelling where possible, and should not travel to or from areas that have been categorised in the very high alert level .

Full details of our visiting restrictions, including information about alternatives to visiting, can be found [here on our visiting page](#).

---

---

## Our nursing leadership: farewell Darryn, welcome Andrea

Our chief nurse for NDHT, **Darryn Allcorn**, left the Trust in September to take up his new role as chief nursing officer with NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group. We thank him for his extraordinary dedication and support to colleagues and the patients and communities of Northern Devon.

Darryn leaves the Trust with some significant achievements that would not have happened without his efforts. He put a huge amount of energy into establishing a school of nursing in North Devon with Bolton University at Petroc (read more about this below), and he led the launch of new nursing career pathways in northern Devon, including advanced care practitioners and nursing associates.



Darryn says: "I will always look back on my time at NDHT with huge affection. The teams we have here are absolutely exceptional and I feel privileged to have worked with such a passionate and committed group of people. NDHT has some key strengths in things we do really well, and it is important to me that I take the North Devon voice with me to the CCG."

We welcome **Andrea Bell** back to NDHT as our interim director of nursing.

Andrea will be taking on the interim director of nursing role for a period of three months. We will keep you updated as to our longer term plans when we are able.

Andrea first came to NDHT in 2004, as a bank nurse in ICU and cardiology, subsequently moving to Fortescue Ward. She became assistant director of nursing in 2015, a role which evolved into deputy chief nurse. Andrea moved to the RD&E on a 12-month secondment last year and is now back at NDHT in her new role.

Andrea says: "I am delighted to be returning to NDHT as the interim director of nursing.

"I am mindful that staff at all levels have been through a tough time in recent months and I am looking forward to re-joining the Trust to work with teams to support our recovery and move towards winter."



---

## COVID-19 testing update

We are doing lots of testing for COVID-19 to keep everyone safe when using our services. But what exactly does that mean?

---

---

There are two different testing 'pillars' for the tests that show whether a person currently has COVID-19.

Pillar 2 testing is the national testing programme, which is done via regional test sites, home tests and mobile testing units (e.g. the site at North Devon Leisure Centre). These tests are [booked online](#) or by calling 119.

Pillar 1 testing is being carried out by trusts like NDHT and in Public Health England laboratories. This testing helps us to care for our patients and staff, and is really important for running our services safely.

**Lisa Moore, our clinical lead for COVID-19 testing**, explains more about the Pillar 1 testing we are doing.



### **Why are we testing?**

Test results help us make good decisions. For example:

They tell us whether a patient needing urgent care and an overnight stay needs to be cared for on a COVID-19 ward.

For patients coming in for a planned procedure, testing tells us whether it is safe for them to come in or if their procedure will need to be postponed.

Testing tells us whether a member of staff can work or if they need to self-isolate.

### **Who are we testing?**

We have a robust testing programme so that the testing we do informs our decisions.

- We are testing patients with COVID-19 symptoms. If the test shows that the patient has COVID-19, we will make sure they receive the care they need in a separate area.
  - We test all patients who need to be admitted to hospital for an overnight stay. This is because we know that some people may have COVID-19 but not show any symptoms. If the test shows that the patient has COVID-19, they will receive care in a separate area.
  - To give us extra assurance, we regularly re-swab all patients who have been admitted to hospital.
  - Patients who will be having a planned procedure are tested a few days before they are due to come in, including maternity patients with planned C section. We're also asking these patients to self-isolate once they've had their test, so
-

---

when it's time for them to come into hospital, we can all be confident that they do not have the virus.

- Some, but not all, patients who have an outpatient appointment will be asked to have a test a few days before their appointment. Our clinical teams have risk assessed the wide variety of outpatient appointment situations and considered national guidance. They have recommended testing for certain patients in specific situations e.g. patients who will undergo a procedure that generates aerosols, patients who cannot wear a face mask due to the type of procedure.
- Patients who need emergency dental treatment at an urgent dental care hub.
- We're supporting our care homes colleagues by testing individuals who are at home and need to be admitted into a care home. Pillar 2 testing is also supporting care homes with other testing.
- Our testing is available to staff, external contractors supporting our services, and students on placements with us. A positive result means that the staff member will self-isolate and our contact tracing process will kick in.
- We are doing other testing on an ad-hoc basis to ensure that any other critical services for our community can keep running.

### **You said, we did!**

We have a fantastic team of staff running this service at NDHT, and we are always looking at what we can do to make our service better. We are listening to your feedback.

#### **You said:**

"When I've come to Barnstaple hospital for a covid test, I wasn't sure where to go."

#### **We did!**

We have put clearer signage in place so that it is really clear where to go at NDDH. We are also doing what we can to make directions as clear as possible in our letters, leaflets and phone conversations.

---





**You said:**

“I passed Barnstaple Hospital (20 mile round trip from me), and travelled nearly 100 miles for a one minute swab at Exeter Rugby Club. This needs sorting out.”

**We did!**

We now have an agreement in place to prevent patients having to travel to other Devon hospitals for a COVID-19 swab. Any northern Devon patients who are due to have a procedure or treatment at Plymouth, Exeter or Torbay hospitals, can be referred to our testing service so that they can have their pre-procedure swab closer to home.

We really value your feedback. You can share your experience of our services via Care Opinion: [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk)

**Roche supplier update**

There has been a national supply issue with Roche, who provide some of the products we use for tests in our laboratories. This has meant that some GP practices and hospitals across the country have had to postpone some routine testing. Urgent tests have continued as normal. We expect that routine testing will start again from next week.

---

---

## Free parking for carers at all NDHT sites

We recognise that carers are a vital partner in the care and support of our patients.

We are delighted to announce that we are now offering free parking for carers when the person they care for is staying in or visiting any Trust sites.

Free parking is available to carers at the sites where we charge for parking – North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple Health Centre and Bideford Community Hospital.

Parking is free for all visitors at other Trust community sites.

To claim, carers must be on Devon Carers' Register. Details on how carers can claim free parking is on our website: [www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk/patient-information/nddh/carparking/](http://www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk/patient-information/nddh/carparking/)



---

## First students start at North Devon's new school of nursing

Thanks to a ground-breaking new partnership, North Devon now has its very own school of nursing, allowing local people to gain a nursing degree closer to home.

We have teamed up with Petroc and the University of Bolton to support people to study for a nursing degree locally instead of travelling outside of the area. Before this, the closest locations where people could study for a nursing degree were Exeter, Plymouth or Bristol.

Twenty student nurses began their placements at NDHT in September, with another 21 due to start in November. As well as gaining hands-on experience through these placements, the students will train using a new simulated bedded environment that has been developed at Petroc's North Devon site.

Following three years of study and successful completion of the assessments, the students will attain a BSc (Hons) Nursing (Adult) degree and will be able to register as a qualified nurse.

[Visit our website](#) to hear from some of the new students and the staff involved in setting up the North Devon school of nursing.

---



**Students and teaching staff pictured outside North Devon District Hospital**

## **Remote appointments: your questions answered**

We've been engaging with patients and staff to understand your experiences of video and telephone appointments. The majority of feedback has been very positive, but as with any new ways of working, there is a lot to learn and there are ways we can improve. Your feedback and questions are helping us focus our efforts in the right places.

**Dr Stuart Kyle, consultant rheumatologist and deputy medical director**, is leading the Trust's work around recovering our outpatient services following the first peak of COVID-19. He has been listening to questions we're being asked about video and telephone appointments.

Read his answers to your questions in a [blog post on our website](#).



1. Why are you doing appointments by phone and video?
2. Is a remote appointment right for me?
3. Are you seeing any patients face to face?
4. Can I get help to do a video appointment?
5. How are you safeguarding patients?
6. How are you making sure that telephone and video appointments are actually working well?



**Our cancer care counselling service is using telephone and video appointments**

---

## **Flu: get your jab**

We launched our flu vaccination campaign this month. It's really important for staff to have the jab, as it protects them, their colleagues, their families, and most importantly, their patients.

That's why we encourage everyone to have the jab. For most healthy people, flu is an unpleasant but usually self-limiting disease with recovery generally within a week.

However, there is a particular risk of severe illness from catching flu for:

- older people
- the very young
- pregnant women
- those with underlying disease, such as chronic respiratory or cardiac disease
- those who are immunosuppressed

This year you are also recommended to have the flu vaccine if you are:

- the main carer of an older or disabled person
  - a household contact of someone on the shielded patients list for COVID-19
  - a child aged 2 to 11 years old on 31 August 2020
-

---

The flu vaccine is the best protection for you and those around you. It's available for free to those most at risk. Ask your GP or pharmacist.



**JUST GET YOUR FREE FLU JAB**

Ask your pharmacist  
or GP if you're eligible.



---

## Follow the Trust on social media

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



You have received this email because you are on our mailing list for news.

If you would like to stop receiving news updates from the Trust, please email [ndht.communications@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.communications@nhs.net) and ask to be removed from the mailing list.