



Partner Update and Toolkit

22 December 2020

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The demand for all NHS services across Sussex has risen significantly with the annual pressures that come with winter and the addition challenge of higher infection rates of COVID-19 in the community in recent weeks. Staff across the NHS are working tirelessly to ensure they continue to provide safe consistent care and roll out the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

This update provides the latest information on the COVID-19 vaccination programme and the challenges faced by the NHS this winter, and includes a toolkit for partners to support us in this good work. Your help with sharing the key messages within your groups and communities would be really appreciated.

1. Update on winter challenges in local healthcare system

The NHS is open and here for you if you need us. Hospitals, community teams, mental health services and GP practices are very busy, and remain open to provide care.

Everyone can do their bit to support the local NHS to overcome the challenges they face this winter and follow the government's guidance to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus - Hands, face, space.

GPs are asking residents get in touch about any health concerns by phone or online for advice now, as spotting problems early is vital, especially for things like cancers.

In hospital, cancer and other urgent operations are continuing and teams are working to carry on providing other non-COVID treatments as much as possible.

People can still travel to medical appointments in and out of Tier 4, and we are urging patients to keep appointments unless they feel unwell or have suspected COVID-19 symptoms.

The NHS is calling on anyone in need of healthcare, which is urgent but not an emergency, to use NHS 111 first online at [NHS.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) or by calling 111. The 111 service should also be called before attending one the NHS services that patients would usually walk into without an appointment.

Your support

The NHS is Sussex is asking partners to support them in this work and make sure everyone use NHS111 first and continue to follow the guidance of maintaining social

distancing, have good hand hygiene and finally wear a mask, unless you are exempt - HANDS. FACE. SPACE.

Key messages to support the NHS

These are the key pieces of information the NHS in Sussex wants to communicate to residents on the challenges we face are set out below for partners to take and use in their communications channels, to support the NHS:

- Local NHS services are currently extremely busy and caring for an increasing number of patients with COVID-19.
- Health and care staff are working tirelessly to provide care for everyone who needs it.
- Please help them by following all the guidance to reduce the spread of COVID-19
- NHS services are open and working to provide safe care for patients.
- At our hospitals all urgent treatments, cancer and diagnostic services will continue as planned.
- Please attend your appointments unless you hear otherwise from the NHS.
- If you think you need A&E, please contact NHS 111 first who can provide advice and support, and advise of the best place to go for help if you need it.
- Please wait for the NHS to contact you when it is your time to get vaccinated against COVID-19. More services are going live over the coming weeks and teams are working hard to make this available for their patients as quickly as possible
- Remember - hands face space and help us all to stay safe.

- The NHS in Sussex is extremely busy. Think you need A&E? Don't just turn up. Call 111 first. They will talk to you about the help you need and can book you a time with the right local service. #HelpUsHelpYou #NHS111First
- The NHS is working extremely hard to provide care, with demand on services rising significantly. To stay safe and help the NHS everyone needs to do their bit. We all need to follow the guidance to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. #keepsussexsafe
- We can all do our bit to keep Sussex safe - remember Hands, face, space, working from home where you can, and all of the requirements of the Tiers where you live. #keepsussexsafe
- Demand for NHS services has risen significantly, is working hard to continue to provide care to patients and we can all help - remember government guidance, and please wait to be about the COVID-19 vaccination – you will be called when it is your turn.
- All urgent operations, cancer and diagnostics are still continuing at hospitals across Sussex, despite the rising demand for services. Please continue to attend your appointments unless you hear from the NHS directly. #HelpUsHelpYou #keepsussexsafe

NHS calls on community to help them meet winter challenges

The NHS in Sussex is calling on residents to remember simple steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19 as demand for services rises in the region.

The demand for all NHS services across Sussex has risen significantly due to the higher infection rates of COVID-19 in the community in recent weeks. Staff across the NHS are working tirelessly to ensure they continue to provide safe consistent care. Hospitals, community teams, mental health services and GP practices are very busy but remain open to provide care.

You can still travel to medical appointments in and out of Tier 4, and the NHS is urging you to keep appointments unless you feel unwell or have suspected COVID-19 symptoms.

The pressure will stay on the NHS as long as the infection rates stay high. To protect yourself, family and friends and help the NHS everyone needs to do their bit to keep Sussex safe.

We all need to follow the guidance– to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Remember - Hands, face, space, working from home where you can, and all of the requirements of the Tiers where you live.

The NHS is also calling on anyone in need of healthcare, which is urgent but not an emergency, to use NHS 111 first online at [NHS.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) or by calling 111. The 111 service should also be called before attending one the NHS services that patients would usually walk into without an appointment.

2. Update on COVID-19 vaccination programme in Sussex

In Sussex the COVID-19 vaccination programme went live on 8 December 2020 at the Royal Sussex County Hospital – the first hospital hub for our region. The hospital teams have been vaccinating people over the age of 80 year's old who are coming to the hospital for as an inpatient or outpatient, hospital staff and staff from care homes in the area. Latest figures show it is one of the highest performing vaccination hospital hubs in the country.

Following this, the first GP led vaccination services then went live in Sussex last Tuesday 15 December. Nine sites supported by 26 GP practices in the region started to vaccinate their patients who are over the age of 80.

A further two GP led vaccination services go live today in Eastbourne – one in Princes Park and one at Hampden Park. These vaccinations will take place over the next three days for their registered patients over the age of 80.

We are also delighted to announce that two further hospital hubs have received their vaccine and are due to start vaccinating today – The Conquest Hospital in Hastings and Worthing Hospital.

There are sites in Brighton and Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex, and a [full list](#) of the sites which have gone live.

At the weekend, national guidance was shared with all GP practices and Primary Care Networks in relation to the vaccination of care home residents. This guidance explained how the vaccination could take place safely in care homes, in particular in relation to moving the vaccine. We are working with our GP practices this week to

understand who wants to be involved in this element of the programme and how it can be rolled out across our care home sector. We will continue to keep you updated on this area of the programme.

Tier guidance and advice for people in Tier 4

Following the Government's announcement of the new tier guidance at the weekend, we are working with our health and care partners, community and voluntary sector organisations and key stakeholders to share key information relating to the COVID-19 vaccination programme:

- Vaccination services can still go ahead in Tier 4 areas;
- People can travel to medical appointments (including vaccination appointments) and should unless you feel unwell or are concerned you may have COVID-19;
- Patient Transport is still operating in and out of Tier 4 areas to support people to reach medical appointments, including vaccination appointments.

Frequently Asked Questions

We are receiving a high level of enquiries relating to the COVID-19 vaccination programme from members of the public. We are responding to each one, and we are also taking the useful information from our responses to share more widely. [The latest version of FAQs](#)

Your support

We understand the high level of interest in the COVID-19 vaccination programme and the people are keen to understand when they will be able to receive it. Your help with sharing the key messages within your groups and communities would be greatly appreciated.

Key message

This is the key piece of information the NHS in Sussex wants to communicate to residents on the COVID-19 vaccination programme:

The public have an important part to play to help the NHS deliver this vaccination programme:

- Please don't contact the NHS to seek a vaccine, they will contact you;
- When the NHS do contact you, please attend your booked appointments;
- Please continue to follow all the guidance to control the virus and save lives.
- The NHS has started the first phase of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. When it is the right time for you to receive your vaccine, you will receive an invitation to come forward. Please do not contact the NHS to get an appointment until you are contacted.
- The NHS is prioritising the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine. When it is your turn to get the vaccine you will be contacted. This may be by phone or letter from your GP or national NHS booking service.
- The NHS is working to arrange locations for GP led COVID-19 vaccination services across the whole of West Sussex/East Sussex/Brighton and Hove. Detailed planning is underway and more sites will be confirmed in the coming weeks. Please wait until you are contacted with an appointment.
- The NHS in Sussex has asked everyone to help them arrange the COVID-19 vaccinations by waiting until they are contacted with an appointment. Some sites have gone live where preparations were easier to put in place, others

are taking a little longer and these sites will be available soon.

Update on Sussex COVID--19 vaccination

It's fantastic news that the NHS is able to have started delivering a safe, effective vaccine.

This is the biggest immunisation programme in NHS history – and we are delighted to see the progress across Sussex to protect local people. The NHS started vaccinating two weeks ago in our first hospital hub at the Royal Sussex County Hospital, and last week the NHS started the first vaccine services in the community led by GP practices.

In Sussex there are now eleven GP led sites – each supported by a GP practice or a number of GP practices working together. It is a phased roll out with more GP led sites going live over the coming weeks.

It will take time, but as more sites are approved, we'll be able to get more GP led sites up and running, as well as hospital hubs. And, in time, we'll be able to deliver it in care homes and in people's own homes if they aren't able to get to a vaccination centre.

This has been an incredible effort from GP practice teams all over Sussex and credit to them for all of their hard work, whilst they continue to provide day to day care for their patients.

The GP led sites are starting with the most vulnerable – people over the age of 80 – and we hope to have vaccinated people in the most vulnerable groups by the spring. People are being contacted when it is your turn for the vaccine so please be patient. The NHS will contact you when it is your turn to receive the vaccine. You will be contacted by the first NHS service that is able to offer you a vaccination.

And now that we have a vaccine, it does not mean that we can let our guard down. It is just as important as ever that we all continue to wash our hands, cover our face and give each other space.