

Sussex CCGs Public Involvement Weekly News Briefing on COVID-19 (5th June 2020)

This briefing will be produced weekly, and is aimed at **patient leads, public members, voluntary and community sector (VCS) leads and community group leads in Sussex**, to support the dissemination of information on coronavirus to our wider communities.

The NHS is committed to keeping our people informed during this crisis, ensuring that our communities have the information they need, in the right format, and at the right time. We know that our patient leaders, VCS and community organisations are all working exceptionally hard to support local people, and that they are key to working together to make sure that our communities have the support and information they need.

Local Focus

Volunteers Week 2020



Across the country we are celebrating Volunteers Week (1st – 7th June 2020), that allows us all to recognise, acknowledge and thank the role volunteers play across both the NHS and our wider communities. This has never been more apparent as during the response to the Covid-19 emergency, which has seen volunteers make a vital contribution to how we have managed an unprecedented situation.

Volunteers are a crucial part of so many areas – whether it be those individuals who help others on an informal basis, or those

who regularly formally volunteer at hospitals, delivering thousands of PPE to protect frontline staff, those helping out in the Community Hubs, or those supporting through the Community and Voluntary Sector.

As well as helping others, volunteering has been shown to improve volunteers' wellbeing too.

It's human nature to feel good after helping someone out. Volunteering can also help you gain valuable new skills and experiences, and boost your confidence.

[Hear from Karen Breen](#), the Interim Chief Officer for the Sussex NHS Commissioners on why volunteering is appreciated and valued by the local NHS.

There are several organisations that can help you **find a way to volunteer** that suits you:

[Do-it.org](#) is a database of UK volunteering opportunities. You can search more than a million volunteering opportunities by interest, activity or location and then apply online.

[Charity job](#) is the UK's largest and most specialised job board for the not-for-profit sector and includes volunteer as well as paid positions.

[Volunteering matters](#) have over 80 volunteering projects in the UK that are helping our communities.

Many local Voluntary and Community sector organisations have volunteering opportunities, and you can also contact your local hospital or other NHS organisations to see what opportunities they have for you to get involved.

You could also volunteer at your local Community Hub, which provides support to vulnerable people, using the details below:

- [Brighton and Hove Community Hubs](#)
Brighton and Hove Community Support Telephone: 01273 293117
- [East Sussex Community Hubs](#)
- [West Sussex Community Hubs](#)
West Sussex Support Team Telephone: 033 022 27980
(Lines are open 8.00am - 8.00pm)

Dental practices are set to reopen

Dental practices are beginning to reopen from Monday 8th June 2020. The priority will be to ensure public and patient safety. Whilst they are observing social distancing, you should continue to telephone your practice, rather than attending in person without an appointment.

Your practice will look different as it will be operating in a way that observes Covid-19 social distancing and hygiene rules, as part of measures taken to ensure your safety and that of the dental team. The treatments you will be offered may be different to those you received before 25th March 2020 and may differ from practice to practice. This will depend on the staff and equipment available to the team at the time.

The dental team may also be wearing different protective equipment to what you are used to seeing.

It will likely be some months before the services return to what you previously experienced as normal, and will be dependent on the further easing of Covid-19 control measures.

If you experience problems with accessing dental care which cannot be answered by this information, please email england.southeastdental@nhs.net and the relevant member of the dental team will answer.

Video technology used in GP Practices

Most GP practices in the South East now have the ability to have video appointments with patients, after a programme to introduce the technology was accelerated in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

As part of the Long Term Plan for the NHS, NHS England and NHS Improvement's [Digital First programme](#) was established to make use of technology to provide all patients with access to "digital first primary care". The rollout of video consultation in response to coronavirus has allowed patients to easily access advice, support and treatment they need using digital and online tools. This means patients can now book and cancel appointments, have a consultation with a healthcare professional, receive a referral and obtain a prescription.

You can access further information about this [here](#).

Cancer services in Sussex during Covid-19



In these challenging times, Brighton and Hove Healthwatch, East Sussex Healthwatch and West Sussex Healthwatch are holding a free event for anyone with concerns about cancer

services during Covid-19, including cancer patients and those that care for friends and family with cancer. You can register for the event [here](#).

This event will include access to advice from experts. The session will try to answer your questions about how to access cancer services during Covid-19 and how to get the support you need during this time. You will hear presentations from:

- [Dr Richard Simcock](#), consultant clinical oncologist at the [Sussex Cancer Centre](#);
- Scarlett Jinman-Dunt, an former oncology nurse now working for [Macmillan](#);
- [Dr Alex Mancey-Barratt](#), a local GP with [cancer specialism](#).

You can [submit questions in advance](#) which our experts will aim to respond to during their presentations. You will also have the chance to ask questions electronically during the event and our facilitator will field as many of these as possible, to our presenters.

A few case studies on how the local people of Sussex have been supported during Covid-19

Supporting Crowborough



Some of the many volunteer groups that have been supporting Wealden households were existing community groups that adapted to the new circumstances. Others were born out of a shared concern for their

neighbours.

Supporting Crowborough is one such group that came from nowhere and has been providing groceries, medicine and other support to hundreds of households in and around Crowborough in the past weeks.

It started out from a post on social media by Spencer Miller, who works at the Jarvis Brook, ticket office and soon became a Facebook group, *Supporting Crowborough*. Using social media, it has enabled people self-isolating to request help, and others - who now had time on their hands because they could no longer work - to volunteer to help.

Volunteer administrators and coordinators, including many local councillors, have helped with the running of group. The town is divided into 22 different areas, each consisting of a number of roads. Each area has a coordinator and a number of volunteers, enabling them to develop an effective support network. Over a 100 people have volunteered to help provide groceries, deliver medicines, post letters or simply have a chat.

Further deliveries of medicine have been provided by the Friends of Crowborough Hospital. They had a driver and passenger assistant who normally brought people to the hospital's day centre. Now they are helping deliver prescriptions.

Together Co



[Together Co](#) help people make connections through befriending, social prescribing and volunteering services in Brighton and Hove.

During Covid-19, the [Together Co Social Prescribing](#) team continues to support clients to link in with a variety of agencies, many of which have changed the way they work in response to the current situation. As well as supporting clients in the usual way, Social Prescribing Link Workers have been spending time researching new offers of support that are now available, and have been reaching out to organisations to find out whether they are offering help and contact online and via the phone. The team has also been helping clients to access help with getting set up online so that they can stay connected with people who are important to them.

Some clients have said they need help with practical matters, so the team has worked closely with organisations and community groups providing food help, including the [Together Co Befriending](#) team, who have been using the befriending infrastructure to match volunteers with people needing doorstep deliveries.

One of the Link Workers was even able to quickly apply for and access a grant so that a client in receipt of benefits could replace a fridge-freezer that suddenly broke down. The client said "I'm so grateful and pleased. I have seen your endeavours when it comes to humanity. Thank you and remain steadfast in this, your charitable work."

You can refer into the service by:

- Calling Together Co on 01273 229382

- Being referred by an agency via the referral form — [click here to download](#).
- Being referred by a GP or health professional.

Adur and Worthing Volunteer Response

Adur & Worthing Councils community response was developed to provide support for those that are vulnerable during the coronavirus crisis. Within days of this crisis unfolding the Councils responded by dividing the 170,000 population into [9 neighbourhoods](#), creating 9 small teams and mobilising a mass volunteering effort by reaching out to local partners and people; over 500 volunteers responded.

The response to the volunteering ask has been fantastic and over 480 volunteers have been recruited to assist the Councils' efforts. A volunteer policy for Covid-19 was produced to support the volunteers, and work is underway with partner agencies to ensure volunteer's skills are not unused. The feedback from volunteers has been really strong, many are enjoying helping and the sense of purpose and community that it has given them.

As a result, the following support has been provided to individuals in the community:

- help with food (access to shopping or emergency food parcels, establishing our own food depot, working with food banks),
- help with prescriptions (working with our NHS),
- support with mental health (with Mind),
- help with money (Citizens Advice and our own Money Mentors),
- someone to talk to (befriending charities),
- digital access support,

- help with safety/scams.

Community Matters

The Covid-19 Community Connectors Team has been answering questions from our communities in Sussex about accessing health and care services at this time – you can read more about this in the attached Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) or by [watching a video](#) of Dr Laura Hill (Clinical Chair of NHS West Sussex CCG), Dr Andy Hodson (Clinical Chair of NHS Brighton and Hove CCG) and Dr David Warden (Clinical Chair of NHS East Sussex CCG) talking through some of the answers.

Each week, we answer some of your questions – please see below this week’s question and answer on **testing for Covid-19**:

1. Can I be tested for the coronavirus and when is best to ask for a test?

If you’re in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland and have any of the symptoms of coronavirus, you can ask for a test through the NHS website [here](#).

You need to have the test in the first 5 days of having symptoms. It’s best to ask for the test in the first 3 days, as it may take a day or two to arrange.

2. Can I request a test for someone else?

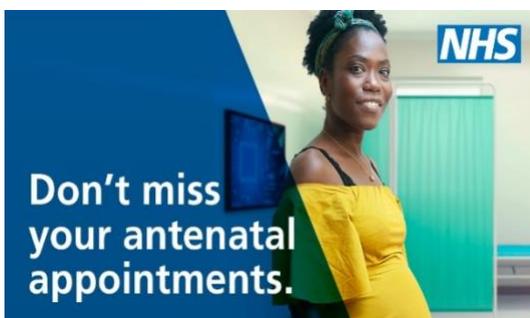
Yes, you can ask for a test for someone you live with, if they have coronavirus symptoms. If you're asking for a test for someone else and the person is aged 13 or over, check they're happy for you to ask for a test for them. You can book a test [here](#).

3. I am an essential worker, can I be tested for coronavirus?

If you are an essential worker in Sussex, your employer can apply for a test for you through the Sussex Booking Hub which will offer a wider range of local options for getting tested than are available through the national website.

NHS Guidance

Pregnancy and Maternity



All pregnant women should follow the government advice on coronavirus as they are considered to be a vulnerable group.

As long as you are well, it's really important that you attend your routine antenatal appointments. If you are unwell, contact your community midwife to postpone your visits until the isolation period is over.

You can access further information via the below links:

- [Looking after yourself and your baby in pregnancy](#)
- [Planning your birth during the pandemic](#)
- [Information for parents of newborn babies during the pandemic](#)
- [Advice on pregnancy during the pandemic.](#)

Top NHS doctor issues advice for children going back to school

NHS England's top doctor for children and young people's mental health has urged parents to be alert to signs that children could

be experiencing anxiety, distress or low mood as some pupils return to school this week. [Follow this link for further detail](#)

National Updates

The latest position in terms of confirmed cases of Covid-19, broken down into total UK cases and local areas, is updated daily [here](#).

On 28th May the Prime Minister announced that groups of up to six people will be able to meet outdoors in England from 1st June, including in gardens and other private outdoor spaces, provided social distancing guidelines are followed. You can read more about the guidance [here](#).

Resources

The Sussex Health and Care Partnership has produced a *Bereavement Guide to Support You During Covid-19*, which provides practical support and guidance. You can access it [here](#).

Please see our FAQs – gathered from comments and questions raised in the community. Section 13 of the FAQs includes a Resources Section which provides information on additional community support available.

You can find further information about support in the local area on the Sussex NHS Commissioners websites – please click below:

[NHS Brighton and Hove CCG](#)

[NHS East Sussex CCG](#)

[NHS West Sussex CCG](#)

Tell us about your experiences and let us know what you need!

The Covid-19 Community Connectors Team are here to help make sure you, and the people you help and support, get the information and support needed. Please do contact us using the contact details on page 6.

Healthwatch

You can also raise issues through Healthwatch, which is an independent body responsible for gathering people's views of health and social care services. Contact details are below:

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove:

Telephone: 01273 234 040

Email: info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk

Website: <https://www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/contact-us/>

Healthwatch East Sussex

Telephone: 0333 101 4007

Email: enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk

Website: <https://healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk/contact/>

Healthwatch West Sussex

Telephone: 0300 012 0122

Email: helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

Website: <https://www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk/contact-us>

Contact Details

If you have any questions, or if you need this brief in an alternative format, please contact the Community Connectors Team:

Email: sxccg.involvement@nhs.net

Telephone: 0127 323 8725

Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users can use a Video Relay Service (VRS) called [SignLive](#) (a free app which connects deaf people to a qualified British Sign Language Interpreter before connecting you to one of the Community Connectors Team). This service is currently available every **Thursday from 14:00-16:00**. Please contact the Community Connectors using the details above if this is not convenient.



Let us know what you need to see in this briefing, give us feedback on services and support related to Covid-19 and let us know about issues you are picking up from your communities.