

Patient Update

Newsletter for Patient Participation Groups

November 2020



NHS 111 – getting the right care from the right place

People who need clinical advice about an urgent, **but not a life threatening emergency** matter, now need to ring NHS 111 First rather than going straight to the Emergency Department (A&E) at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

A specially trained operator will triage the 111 call and direct the person to the most appropriate medical support which could mean a booked appointment at the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) on the hospital site.

In emergencies, for example, suspected heart attacks, strokes, or serious breathing difficulties, people should still dial 999 for help or make their way to ED immediately.

The new 111 First system, which is being rolled out across the country in December, is aimed at easing pressure on ED teams and making sure people are seen in the most appropriate medical setting. This could be MIU, or the local Walk in Centre in Reading, a GP, pharmacy, dentist or optician.

The cramped waiting area at ED has made social distancing very difficult and the numbers of people attending for medical matters that can be handled elsewhere has also increased pressure on the teams. By triaging patients through the 111 call system, the ED clinicians will be able to devote their care to seriously ill emergency cases.

Dr Zac Etheridge Clinical Lead for Acute Medicine said: "NHS 111 First will help people get the most appropriate care for their medical condition. Many people who come to ED don't have emergency, life threatening conditions and could be treated elsewhere, often more quickly.

"So whilst we still need people to ring 999 and come to ED during emergencies, we would ask those seeking non-emergency care to contact NHS 111 First. They will then receive the best care in a timely and more convenient way," he added.

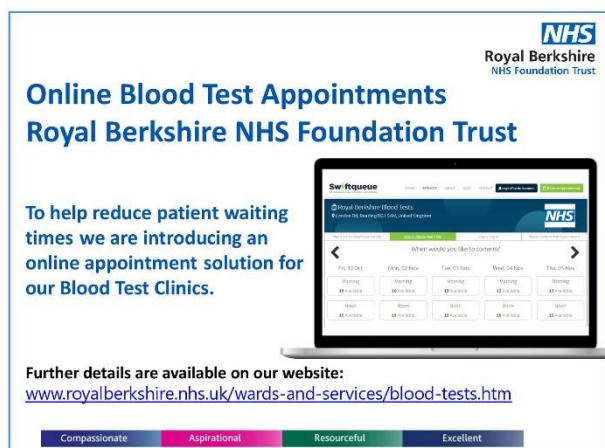
"This new way of working means we can cut the queues, over crowding and longer waits in ED and this will also help us reduce the risk of infection of things like Covid and flu," said Dr Etheridge.

New blood test booking system at the Royal Berkshire Hospital

A new blood test appointment booking system has been launched at the Royal Berkshire Hospital and Bracknell Healthspace.

Patients are now advised to book their appointments via the Royal Berkshire NHS Trust website blood tests page: www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/wards-and-services/blood-tests.htm or call 07795 367864.

Janet Lippett, Chief Medical Officer said: "This new appointment based system will help improve services for all our patients, reducing waiting times and ensure safe social distancing in our patient areas."



The image shows a promotional graphic for the online blood test appointment system. At the top right is the NHS logo and 'Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust'. The main heading is 'Online Blood Test Appointments Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust'. Below this is a laptop displaying the 'SwifQueue' booking interface. Text on the graphic reads: 'To help reduce patient waiting times we are introducing an online appointment solution for our Blood Test Clinics.' At the bottom, it says 'Further details are available on our website: www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/wards-and-services/blood-tests.htm' and features a navigation bar with the words 'Compassionate', 'Aspirational', 'Resourceful', and 'Excellent'.

Prime Minister at RBH to launch food review

Prime Minister Boris Johnson was joined by Health Secretary Matt Hancock and Bake Off star Prue Leith for a behind the scenes look at the RBH's vast catering operation during a visit to Reading to launch the government's Hospital Food Review.

This is an independent study into hospital food which looks at nutrition and hydration, food safety, facilities, technology, sustainability and enforcing standards. It reiterates the message that food should be viewed as medicine and is a key factor in aiding patient's recovery.



Mr Johnson and Ms Leith, a co-author of the report, were given a guided tour of the hospital's kitchens and restaurant area where around 750,000 patient meals and 267,000 staff and visitor meals are made and served each year.

The Trust's Acting Chief Executive Officer, Nicky Lloyd said: "We are enormously proud of the work being done every day by our hard working catering teams to provide our staff, patients and visitors with good quality, healthy, varied and tasty meals. It's a major logistical operation, dealing with 50 deliveries a week, preparing and cooking over one million meals a year, maintaining sufficient supplies and devising menus that are nutritious and cater for a wide range of dietary, religious and ethical needs.

"Our catering systems are already in line with the proposals outlined in the Hospital Food Review - providing nutritious meals to aid a faster recovery, maintaining stringent food safety measures and paying heed to the environmental impact of our food chain," she added.

New X-ray aimed at speeding up service

A new purpose built X-ray facility has opened at the Royal Berkshire Hospital to provide a speedier and safer service for local people. It's in the Emergency Department Minor Injuries (EDMU) site of

the Reading hospital which is a short distance from the Emergency Department (ED, formerly known as A&E) building.

It can deal with around 100 people a day freeing up the ED teams to deal with more urgent cases. Not only will it provide a more efficient service for patients, it will free up vital space in ED making it easier for staff and patients to maintain social distancing.

The ED site was originally built to accommodate 80,000 patients a year and is currently dealing with 120,000 which is why hospital teams were keen to provide a minors service outside the main department.

Dr Omar Nafousi, Clinical Lead for Emergency Medicine at the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, said: "This is a fantastic great addition to our ED facility and will give patients an efficient, first class service and means we'll be able to prioritise urgent emergency cases in ED. The EDMU will have dedicated emergency nurse practitioners working within the team and patients will benefit from a quicker, more joined-up experience when they come here, and with its own X ray service, it will allow us to enhance our patient journey and minimise the time a patient has to stay in the unit.



Pic: Former Premier Theresa May visited the new facility during a recent visit to the hospital to be updated on developments by Acting Chief Executive Officer Nicky Lloyd.

GP registration

A major new campaign has been launched to encourage people to make sure they are registered with their local GP. The move is aimed at highlighting the benefits of having your name on the surgery's books and also easing pressure on hospital services.

Fact sheets are being distributed showing how to register. They are also on the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) website: www.berkshirewestccg.nhs.uk/gpreistration.

Please can you help spread the word within your neighbourhoods to make sure people are aware of the benefits of being registered and how to go about it.

The benefits of being registered are that patients can access urgent care when needed and will also be notified by the surgery when they need vital screening or vaccination checks. Over time, surgery staff get to know their registered patients and this gives them a greater understanding of not just their patients' health but also general information about their lives and things that may be affecting their health and wellbeing.

Anyone can register for free at GP practices in England, this includes people who are asylum seekers, refugees, homeless people or an overseas visitor. The NHS website, www.nhs.uk, gives details of surgeries close to people's homes and they can then go on to the surgery website and register online.

Dr Abid Irfan, Chair of the Berkshire West CCG and a GP in Newbury, said: "it really is very important for people to register with their GP and it's a very straight forward process. You may be asked for proof of identify like a driving licence, but you should not be refused registration or appointments because you do not have proof of address or personal identification at hand".

Rebecca Curtayne, communications lead at the patient rights charity, Healthwatch Reading, said: “If you’re unsure about signing up with a GP or need help with the process, call us confidentially on our helpline. We can explain which local NHS doctors are taking on new patients, how to decide which surgery is right for you, and what documents you do or don’t need.”

Healthwatch Reading helpline: Call 07786 476 257 or text us and we’ll call you back.

New videos in foreign languages to spread vital healthcare messages

A series of short videos have been produced in Urdu, Polish and English giving key messages around flu and Covid. They’ve been produced by the RBFT in partnership with Reading Borough Council. Further languages are due to be filmed soon. There’s links here to the videos so please share them with people you think may find them useful: www.berkshirewestccg.nhs.uk/winter

Cancer patient’s powerful story to help others

A woman who has been battling lung cancer for the last four years is fronting a new video stressing the importance of attending hospital appointments during Covid.

Jackie Connor’s film is the latest in a series released by the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust amid concerns that some people are still reluctant to visit the hospital for vital tests, treatment, scans and check-ups.

Hospital managers believe some people are worried they may catch Covid whilst visiting the hospital, or feel they are putting extra pressures on the staff during this very difficult time for the NHS.

In her film, Jackie talks about the stringent infection control measures in place at the Royal Berkshire Hospital and the steps taken by staff to ensure patients are kept safe and protected throughout their visit.

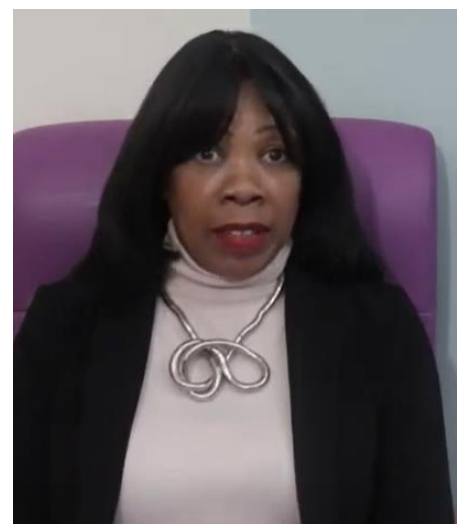
Jackie said: “If you’ve got something like cancer it’s such a worrying thing and something that you really want to have checked and controlled as much as possible by coming to see the nurses and doctors looking after you. It just gives you that little bit of peace of mind. I’m really saddened to think some people are sitting at home, worrying about their illness, or symptoms like a lump, and are too scared to seek medical help.

“I’ve been so impressed by everything the staff at the hospital have done to make me feel reassured that we’re entering a safe and protected environment,” Jackie added.

Nicky Lloyd, Acting Chief Executive of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, said: “Our staff are working incredibly hard to keep services running throughout Covid so we are able to treat all medical matters, not just Covid ones.

“However, we do need your co-operation and I’m asking you to please keep your appointments with us so we can continue your treatment, or deal quickly with any problems.

“And if you have found worrying symptoms like lumps, unexpected bleeding or unplanned weight loss, you must seek medical help and contact your GP. The sooner these problems are treated the better,” said Nicky.



“As Jackie says, the hospital, along with our colleagues in local GP surgeries, are doing so much to make sure we meet the extremely strict safety regulations which have been introduced to keep patients, and our staff, safe,” she added.

Jackie’s video can be seen here <https://youtu.be/RytVTCSzte4>

Caring During Covid-19

Many people became unpaid carers overnight during lockdown having to look after older, disabled or seriously ill loved ones. And with day care centres and respite closed down, it placed huge burdens on many people.

This is why Healthwatch Wokingham has launched a ‘Caring During Covid-19’ campaign to give these unpaid carers a voice. They want to hear from people in their areas about the challenges they faced as carers and how things could be improved for them.

Their survey comes in the wake of national figures that most carers – 64 per cent - have not had a break in the last six months. More than half, 58 per cent, have seen their physical health affected by caring through the pandemic and 64 per cent say their mental health has worsened throughout Covid.

You can take part in the Healthwatch Wokingham survey in a range of ways.



Complete the online survey online here www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/5ED21V

Ring: 0118 418 1418

Email: carers@healthwatchwokingham.co.uk

Contact them via Facebook, Instagram or on Twitter

Or write to Healthwatch Wokingham, Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham RG40 1AS

And check out their [website](#) which includes vital sources of information for carers.

My Cancer My Choices

My Cancer My Choices is a local charity that has been providing complementary therapies to people with cancer in Berkshire since 2015. To date the volunteer therapists have treated over 1200 people.

Covid means they can’t deliver their face to face treatments at the RBH, Bracknell Healthspace and West Berkshire or run their mindfulness and Tai Chi courses. However, they have now set up a virtual service to continue supporting people during the pandemic.

This includes free, 30 minute consultations giving people practical guidance on things they can do at home to manage their wellbeing. This could include acupuncture, massage techniques or hand reflexology to manage symptoms such as pain, hot flushes, anxiety and sleeplessness. They are also running free four-week “Introduction to Mindfulness” virtual which last an hour and are for up to ten people.

The sessions are open to any cancer patient in Berkshire either at the start of diagnosis during active treatment, or up to six months of finishing treatment.

For more information, please contact the team:

- Call on 01344 662906
- Email on bookings@mycancermychoices.org
- Fill in a form on the website www.mycancermychoices.org

Stroke sessions to showcase their support.

An award winning stroke recovery project - Stroke Odysseys – is offering taster sessions to showcase the work it does using the performance arts to support people living with the effects of stroke and brain injury. Sessions, which are in groups, are offered online and support is available to help you access the workshop. Please can call Jennie on 07930239005 or email jennierosettalife@gmail.com to find out more. The Reading group can be seen here talking about the work: <https://vimeo.com/420413590>



Join a supportive community of Stroke Survivors exploring music and performance to spark recovery.

- Free weekly workshops
- Meet new people
- Learn new skills with professionals

Call us for a chat on 07930 239005 or email info@rosettalife.org to join a taster session or to refer someone.
www.strokeodysseys.org

Stroke
ODYSSEYS
Recovery through performance arts

Mortimer makes it happen!

More than 2,000 patients came by car, cycle and scooter for special flu clinics run by the Mortimer Surgery and supported by their PPG group last month.

Surgery staff turned out 'en masse' to help at three Saturday clinics held at the Willink School Health and Leisure Centre in Burghfield Common. They administered jabs to patients over 65, Year 8 children and adults under 64 identified as being in the clinical risk group.

PPG Chair Shirley Cullup said: "the PPG were enlisted to help, marshalling cars and other vehicles, ensuring the wearing of masks and social distancing were adhered to and generally pointing patients in the right direction. The beauty of it all was that there was hardly ever a queue, it all ran like clockwork and there have been many compliments from patients.

"As for the PPG we so enjoyed meeting each other and catching up generally with no actual meetings taking place since last February. The general feeling from my team was that they were being useful again, and that said it all!" Shirley added.



The flu virus kills thousands every year. The flu vaccine is the best protection for you and those around you.

JUST GET YOUR FREE FLU JAB
Ask your pharmacist or GP if you're eligible.

Flu vaccine help us help you

Health teams urge eligible people to take up free flu jab offer

Patients are being urged to seek flu vaccinations from either their GP practice or pharmacy in a bid to ensure everyone who's eligible for a free jab takes up the offer. It's clear there are still many people eligible for a free vaccination who haven't come forward.

Health teams in Berkshire West are keen to encourage those with the following health issues to book for their vaccination as soon as possible:

- Patients with Down's Syndrome
- Patients who are overweight, with a BMI of 40 or over - even if they don't have any other health issues
- Pregnant women
- Patients who have long term health conditions, such as: A heart problem, chest complaint or breathing difficulties, a kidney disease, lowered immunity due to treatment, diabetes, heart or liver disease, neurological conditions

It is also vital to protect health and social care staff who are looking after others, from flu. So health officials are urging anyone who works or volunteers in the following areas to make sure they have their free vaccination:

- Staff working in a care homes, this include all staff, irrespective of their role
- Frontline health and social care workers
- Health and social care workers employed through Direct Payment (personal budgets) and/or Personal Health Budgets, such as Personal Assistants, to deliver domiciliary care to patients and service users
- Carers, receiving carers allowance, or who are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if their carer was ill and couldn't support them

There has been high uptake of the vaccine from these patient groups and this will help protect them this winter. Anyone in these groups who's not yet had their vaccination is being urged to book a slot with their GP or pharmacist

- pre-school children (aged 2 to 3 years on 31 August 2020)
- those aged 65 years and over
- those in long-stay residential care homes
- members of a shielding household. Full [list here](#).

Further details on vaccination arrangements for 50-64 year olds are due soon from NHS England and once this has been sorted GP practices and local pharmacies will publicise availability to patients.

World Antibiotics Awareness Week (18-24 November)

It's World Antibiotics Awareness week (18-24 Nov) which is aimed at alerting people to the risks of antibiotic overuse and misuse and highlighting strains of bacteria which can't be treated by antibiotics currently on the market.

Bacteria are continually adapting to develop new ways of withstanding antibiotic treatment. This is called antibiotic resistance and it runs the risk of spreading between different bacteria in our bodies and being spread to other people.

Overuse and misuse of antibiotics is a major factor causing antibiotic resistance. The more often a person takes antibiotics, the more likely they are to develop antibiotic resistant bacteria in the body. To reduce this risk, it is important that antibiotics are taken only when necessary and patients follow advice given by the doctor, nurse or pharmacist.



- Don't ask for antibiotics if you have a cough or cold. Antibiotics should only be taken for bacterial infections. Many infections get better on their own, without the need for antibiotics. Go to your pharmacist for advice first.
- If the doctor does prescribe you with antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed; never save them for later and never share them with others.
- Spread the word. Tell your friends and family about antibiotic resistance. You can also help prevent infections spreading by:
 - Using tissues and disposing of them when you sneeze.
 - Washing hands thoroughly with soap, especially after you have used a tissue or sneezed into your hand. This is more important than ever now in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - Get the flu vaccine if you or your child is eligible.

Sanjay Desai, Associate Director of Medicines Optimisation for Berkshire West CCG said: "As part of this week we'd encourage people to consider becoming an Antibiotic Guardian to spread the word about sensible use of antibiotics to your friends and family."

There's full information here (<http://antibioticguardian.com>)

South Reading Patient Voice: Help shape the future NHS

Help shape the future of the NHS and take this survey

In English: www.healthsurvey.uk

In Urdu: www.healthsurvey.uk/urdu

Over 50s! ★

Help shape the future NHS

Take this survey ★

All respondents in prize draw ★

£50, £50, £30, £30 to be won

Draw on 18th December ★

Online: healthsurvey.uk ★

اردو: healthsurvey.uk/urdu

or phone: 07762 450 791

or: 07708 573 691

weekdays 10am to 4pm

07923138730 Mon, Tue 10am - 4pm اردو:

South Reading Patient Voice
srpv.org.uk

supported by

Berkshire Community Foundation and
Reading Voluntary Action

Take part in Covid-19 Insights Survey

The Public Health Team in Berkshire is asking for your help on how they can communicate key COVID-19 messages across Berkshire in an engaging and motivating way. This [Insights survey](#) has been designed to understand people's views and attitudes towards Covid-19, national guidance and existing communications.



They are offering a chance to win a £50 shopping voucher as a thank you for taking part.

Please [follow this link to complete the survey](#) in full. There's a link on the page for people to use if they want help with translation. The survey closes on Sunday, 22 November.

This survey is being carried out by Social Change UK, an independent research company. All of the answers will be stored securely and kept confidential.

