

Stakeholder News

Winter 2020

If you would like any further information on the below please contact communications@nwas.nhs.uk



NHS 111 first update

NHS 111 First is a national programme which builds on the existing integrated urgent care (IUC) service accessed through NHS 111. It encourages the use of the NHS 111 online and phone service to access a range of urgent care services including GP appointments, urgent care centres, walk-in centres and, for the first time, direct booking into emergency departments (EDs). This will help patients get the right care for them as well as reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 between patients and to staff by reducing crowding in waiting areas.

More sites are now 'live' with NHS 111 First as we edge closer to the national rollout anticipated in December. The majority of emergency departments across the region are now offering bookable time slots for patients through NHS 111. Patients in the covering areas who require urgent – but not emergency care – are now being asked to contact NHS 111 first before travelling to hospital. The remaining sites are expected to go live very soon and a full list of the sites that are live can be found in the non-emergency (111) section of our website.

Our recruitment drive continues to ensure there is enough capacity within the 111 service to handle an expected increase in calls and we are monitoring very closely the impact on our service ensuring we are still providing the same safe, high-quality care to patients..

999 demand management

Following the recent pressures and demand for 999 services, we have put a number of key plans in place to ensure we are fully prepared to respond to the ongoing demand now and into the winter months. Below are some of the key actions:

- Maximise our staff resources by stopping non-essential trust activities or roles - eg for non-essential training, quality improvement etc.
- Redeploying our clinically qualified staff in non-clinical roles (eg training teams) into patient facing roles.
- The Patient Safety Plan (formally known as the Demand Management Plan) has been reviewed jointly with commissioners and now has new lower triggers to manage pressures and improve patient safety.
- Allocating senior paramedics/advanced paramedics to have more operational time.
- Working hard with acute trusts to minimise hospital transfer times.
- Increasing staff numbers in Emergency Operations Centres and NHS 111.
- Continuing our communications to remind the public to use 999 for only life threatening situations, and 111 online for everything else.

The trust is working closely with our trade union leads and key stakeholders to keep them updated on developments as we manage this rapidly evolving situation. We will continue to work hard with our NHS colleagues to ensure we continue to deliver the right care, at the right time, in the right place.



COVID-19 Update

We are pleased to confirm that we have taken delivery of lateral COVID testing kits.

This will be a big step in pinpointing infection, and we hope will make a real difference in containing the outbreaks that are currently impacting so many of us.

In addition we are working hard to look at what we can do differently in-house to mitigate the spread and an internal campaign has been launched to remind staff to help keep each other safe, as well as our patients.

We have also set up a Test, Track and Trace cell for the purpose of tracing any staff who test positive for COVID-19.

Deputy CEO Retirement

Our Deputy Chief Executive, Mick Forrest, has announced his intention to leave the trust in Spring 2021.

Mick has taken the decision to leave to spend more time with his family and pursue other interests, but will be remaining with us to support the executive team and colleagues throughout the traditionally busy winter period.

We wish Mick all the very best for the future.



Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA) accreditation

We are proud to announce that we have become the first ambulance service in the UK to be awarded 'Veteran Aware' accreditation from the Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA). This is a real honour for us as ambulance trusts have only just become eligible to apply, and our close working partnership with our armed forces has stood us in good stead.



The recognition means that we have demonstrated that we support the armed forces community as an employer, and we also ensure that veterans, reservists and cadet force adult volunteers, plus any other members of the armed forces community amongst our workforce, are well looked after, and that we have good links with other local services and service charities.



Minister of State for Health commends NWAS

Chief Executive Daren Mochrie recently received a letter from the Minister of State for Health, Edward Argar MP, in which he thanked staff for their outstanding efforts over the last year and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr Argar said: "I recognise the great flexibility and resilience demonstrated by ambulance staff who have taken on new roles and adapted their ways of working while under intense pressure.

"The diverse skills and experience of all ambulance staff; whether is be giving advice to people over the phone through 999 or NHS111 calls, assisting with patient transport, or helping patient on scene as part of an ambulance crew; coupled with the amazing dedication and compassion of the teams never fails to strike me, and does to the heart of why our ambulance services are rightly held in such regard and affection by me and the people of this country."



NHS Parliamentary Awards

In June 2020, the trust put forward a number of nominations for the NHS Parliamentary Awards, which are supported and submitted by local MPs.

With competition from all NHS organisations across the country, we are delighted to confirm that two of our nominations; the Care and Compassion Award and Excellence in Urgent and Emergency Care have been shortlisted, and confirmed as regional winners.

The awards were open to any one of the thousands of student midwives, nurses, AHPs and medical students (who started their careers early to support the NHS' response to the coronavirus pandemic). Just 70, out of total of 700 nominations received, were shortlisted

All regional winners will go head to head at an awards ceremony in Parliament in July 2021 when overall winners will be announced.

Congratulations to all those involved. To see the other finalists visit: <https://nhsparliamentaryawards.co.uk/shortlist>

Preparing for a no-deal exit from the EU

As a trust we are keen to ensure that we put in place plans to ensure that the service delivery for our patients does not suffer as a result of Brexit. The transitional period ends on 31 December 2020 and there is a strong likelihood that the UK will exit the transitional period without a deal with the European Union (EU) in place. As such NHS England have reinstated the planning need for trusts across the country to ensure we put in place plans and mitigate any risks.



We are working hard to ensure all identified risks are regularly reviewed and any actions put in place to mitigate them are frequently monitored. Our Executive Leadership Committee recently received an EU Exit progress report and position statement on our plans.

National Friends and Family Test (FFT) to recommence

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) have advised that the national Friends and Family Test (FFT) submission should recommence in December 2020 for ambulance services, following its cessation in March due to the pandemic. December's FFT data will be submitted nationally from the start of January 2021 and will be published in February 2021.

We recognise the importance of providing the opportunity for patients to give feedback on ambulance services if they want to. FFT in particular, allows a focus on a particular aspect of the patient's experience to provide a picture of how patients are finding existing or new arrangements and any consideration to improvements.

Our FFT collection arrangements will shortly recommence and will focus on:

- SMS text responses received on Paramedic Emergency Service (PES) and Patient Transport Service (PTS)
- Digital PTS survey responses
- Digital PES/Urgent Care Service survey responses
- FFT feedback 'Comment Cards' available on all PES and PTS ambulance vehicles

