



Patient Forum Newsletter

Welcome to the latest Patient Forum Newsletter we hope you find it informative. We have many items of news and updates which we hope will be useful to you.

COVID-19 Looking after Mental Health

During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, many of our communities have faced a range of very difficult situations including increased loneliness, lack of personal contact, support and all social activities. There is considerable evidence that the whole population are facing numerous exceptional challenges as evidenced by the increase in demand for mental help services caused by anxiety and depression, social isolation, financial issues, restrictions on movement, domestic including suicide, child abuse as well as issues concerned with addictions relating drugs, alcoholism and gambling.

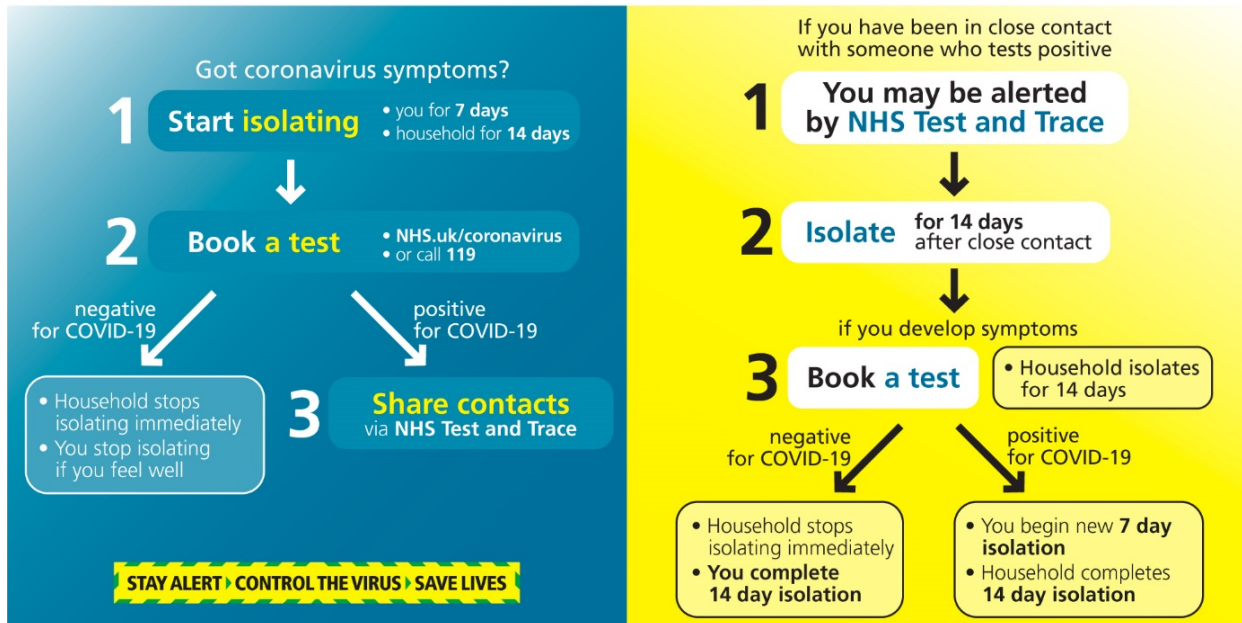


In the present climate it is imperative we make our communities aware of existing services and how to contact them. This could be done by encouraging everyone to refer to the booklet: ***Wellbeing and mental health during Covid-19: A guide to looking after yourself and others*** produced by the North East and North Cumbria Suicide Prevention Network and endorsed by Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust and which has been distributed to all households in the borough.

Access the booklet online at www.stopsuicidenenc.org

As well as giving excellent advice on how to look after yourself, particularly pertinent is the ***getting help*** section which includes: ***Telephone/Text helplines, Advice and Guidance, NHS Support, Covid-19 latest information and Local Authority community support lines.***

Test and Trace



Government launches NHS Test and Trace service

- NHS Test and Trace service to form a central part of the government's coronavirus recovery strategy
- Anyone with symptoms will be tested and their close contacts will be traced
- New guidance means those who have been in close contact with someone who tests positive must isolate for 14 days, even if they have no symptoms, to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus

The new NHS Test and Trace service was launched on Thursday 28 May across England, the government announced.

The service will help identify, contain and control coronavirus, reduce the spread of the virus and save lives.

Anyone who tests positive for coronavirus will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and will need to share information about their recent interactions. This could include household members, people with whom they have been in direct contact, or within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes.

People identified as having been in close contact with someone who has a positive test must stay at home for 14 days, even if they do not have symptoms, to stop unknowingly spreading the virus.

If those in isolation develop symptoms, they can book a test at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119. If they test positive, they must continue to stay at home for 7 days or until their symptoms have passed. If they test negative, they must complete the 14-day isolation period.

Members of their household will not have to stay at home unless the person identified becomes symptomatic, at which point they must also self-isolate for 14 days to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus.

For further information please follow the link www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-nhs-test-and-trace-service

Shared Decision Making

A couple of years ago two members of the Patient Forum were involved in a project with the CCG and Newcastle University exploring Shared Decision Making and how patients can be more involved in decisions about their health. This is still very relevant today and here is a reminder of what it's all about.

When you have a doctor or hospital appointment, there may be decisions to be made about your health and the treatments that might be available to you. When these decisions are made it is important that you are part of that process, so that you are able to come to the best decisions based on what is important to you.

Your doctor or nurse is an expert about health care. You are an expert in knowing about yourself, the impact that any conditions have on you, and what is important to you in treating your condition and in your wider life. When you and your doctor or nurse work together to share what you both know, and then use all of that information to come to a decision together, this is called 'Shared Decision Making'.

In order for you to be involved in decisions about your care there are three key things you need to know.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the possible risks, benefits and consequences of each option?
3. How can we make a decision together that is right for me?



With shared decision making your doctor or nurse is there to support you by providing good quality information, helping you understand this information, and giving you support and guidance as you think about what is most important to you. This will help you to understand what choices are available to you, the pros and cons of each option, and then use that information to come to a decision together about the best option for you.

Keep safe in the sun this summer

Following recent changes to Government advice regarding when we can leave home, we can now spend more time outdoors. With summer approaching, we all need to be mindful of sun safety guidance from the NHS.



Sunlight contains ultraviolet (UV) rays, which are the main cause of skin ageing and can cause skin cancer.

[Sunburn](#) can significantly increase the risk of skin cancer, so it's important to protect skin against sun damage at any age, but take special care with babies, children and young people.

To help protect yourself:

- Spend time in the shade between 11am and 3pm
- Cover up with clothes, a hat and sunglasses
- Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30

You need to spend some time in sunlight so your body can make vitamin D, which is essential for healthy bones.

To find out more about balancing the need for getting vitamin D and protecting your skin from sun damage, see [how to get vitamin D from sunlight](#).

[Find out more about sunscreen and sun safety](#)

Information for GP Surgery Screens

North Tyneside VODA has been working with North Tyneside CCG to make it easier for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to promote their services to patients. Screens are now widely used to call patients' names. Other advantages of the screens are the publishing of information to improve individual's health and wellbeing, including opportunities around fitness, decreasing social isolation and encouragement to get involved in the community. The aim is to present relevant, advice and information with less written content that is eye catching to the patient, is easily readable and will grab someone's attention.

If you are part of a small group and would like to design information for the screens you can get support by contacting the following:

victoria.logan-coulsey@voda.org.uk

marc.rice@nhs.net

Patient Forum and Working Groups



The Patient Forum last met on 14 May and the meeting was conducted via email with members able to ask questions and raise issues. We were updated on how GP surgeries have been making use of video to consult with patients with good feedback from both GPs and patients. The question of personal protective equipment (PPE) was raised and we were reassured to hear that the CCG are monitoring and supplying PPE to both GP Practices and Care Homes.

Forum members have been able to communicate throughout lockdown via WhatsApp to exchange information and ideas and support each other. Recently they have tested out Microsoft Teams as a means of conducting larger meetings and Future Care, End of Life, Mental Health and Innovations have now all met using MS Teams.



The Communications Group have considered it essential that they maintain the lines of communication throughout the pandemic with members, patients and GP Practices. They have continued with monthly meetings by video call and have produced this June edition by meeting virtually and sharing good ideas.. In addition they have produced a Bulletin for GP practice groups following each Patient Forum meeting to inform practice groups who are unable to meet at the moment. This has been favourably received by GP practices.

So with fewer meetings what have our members been up to during lockdown?

Judy says: I am researching/writing a possible short online course about dementia for helpers at a carers charity (Silverline) and maybe for other front line staff who don't meet the condition a lot or haven't had any training offered - and having some Healthwatch discussions too. I have also had lots of sitting in the sunshine and talking on the phone to family and friends of course!

Patrick tells us: I spend my time on the internet mostly. I have done a four week course on the "The NHS Explained" and am just about to start one on Digital Security. I am very happy and have resigned myself to Lockdown until a vaccine is available.

Susan has been keeping busy by being creative and has been making comfort hearts and mask mates for NHS and a family of frogs for the nurse at the Linskill Centre for their story time.



Matching hearts are given to COVID-19 patients in hospital and their families to help them feel connected. Mask Mates are knitted or crocheted bands which help make wearing a mask all day more comfortable for front line staff.



Anne advises: as a patient member of the CCG Patient Forum, I continue to be involved in activities relating to mental health. As a Carer Governor for Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust I have met nationally with other governors and carers (Microsoft Teams!). We have shared our concerns regarding support for our communities and are discussing how to develop a strategy for dealing with the considerable problems to be faced when the current crisis subsides.

Sandra has written this:

LOCK DOWN

Lock downs nearly over. Hurrah.
Oh that's good no need to knit that sweater.
Can go out, talk and shout.
Kick our heels, ditch that twitter.

Down the park once this is done.
Over the road there's wor Daisy.
What's she doing, off to the chemist?
No one to stop her dyeing her hair

Glad she hasn't changed. Blue rinse.
Our lass off to see her prince.
Now we can all be almost free.
Even though like me you have a wonky knee.

Though there is a rainbow in the sky.
Always stay safe, love each other.
Kiss those close, hold hands.
Egh but only if you know who they are.

Could cause a dilemma in the street.
Although no one can recognise who we are.
Ragged hair, bushy eye brows, who cares.
Everybody stand up, sing, shout, shake it all about.
But not too hard, it may all drop out.

Sandy G

Eleanor Hayward – Chair of the Patient Forum

Today Monday 1 June feels very different. After more than 2 months of being unable to meet with friends and adhering to strict guidelines I think we can all relax a little more and enjoy the sunshine. Sadly after seeing crowds flock to Tynemouth on the metro yesterday and hearing sirens and the police helicopter flying over it brought it home to me that we are far from being safe from this virus.

People need to be out and enjoy the beaches and open spaces after being shut up for so long but it appears that the messages on social distancing is not getting through to a large number of the community.

The Patient Forum has continued to work through this peculiar time using various methods of electronic wizardry and has succeeded in holding a full Forum meeting as well as working groups. People have downloaded programmes and developed new skills in order to make this work. On behalf of everyone at the CCG I would like to thank you all for making this work at such a difficult time. You are an exceptional group of people whose dedication makes a real difference to our community. Stay safe.

Some useful links

www.northtynesideccg.nhs.uk/

www.healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk

www.ageuk.org.uk/northtyneside