

Issue 20
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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.



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

For NHS information please click [here](#)

For Government guidelines please click [here](#)

GP Appointments

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, GP practices will in future be using a 'triage' system with patients using telephone and online consultations. Triage means that a health care professional will assess the patient's needs and safely direct them to the most appropriate care. This may be a telephone or video consultation or a face to face appointment. This then ensures that avoidable footfall in practices is reduced and protects patients and staff from the risks of infection. For patients this means there will be more options available to book an appointment and be directed to the most appropriate person.



It is very important that patients continue to seek medical advice for any health concerns.

When patients ring for an urgent appointment, they will be offered a telephone triage appointment, a clinician will then ring the patient back and either offer remote help if possible, arrange a video consultation or if necessary arrange a face to face appointment at the practice.

Non-urgent routine requests should be directed to the practice using the on-line e-consultation request form found on the practice website. These requests will normally be responded to by the end of the next working day.

Please note that there may be variations between GP practices depending on how they decide to manage appointments therefore patients should check their practice website for guidance.

LIVI - see a GP by video

Patients of GP practices in North Tyneside can now see an NHS GP by video using app based LIVI. Patients will be able to get medical advice, prescriptions and referrals on the same day – seven days a week using their smartphone or tablet at a time and place convenient to them.



The service is provided free on the NHS and is a twelve month pilot.

The Livi app can be downloaded to smartphone or tablet, at the App Store or Google Play. Visit www.livi.co.uk for more information. The app requires patients to register and photographic ID from a drivers' licence or passport will be required to confirm identity.

LIVI GPs are all GMC-registered NHS GPs, who (with patient consent) will be able to access medical records and give a considered, in-depth diagnosis based on medical history.

The Patient Forum Innovations working group has been involved during the planning stages of bringing LIVI to North Tyneside and fully supports this initiative.

Influenza Vaccinations

This year the flu vaccine is being offered on the NHS to:

- Adults aged 65 and over
- People with certain medical conditions (including children in at-risk groups from 6 months of age)
- Pregnant women
- People living with someone who's at high risk from coronavirus (on the NHS shielded patient list)
- Children aged 2 and 3 on 31 August 2020
- Children in primary school
- Children in year 7 (secondary school)
- Frontline health or social care workers



Later in the year, the flu vaccine may be given to people aged 50 to 64. More information will be available later in the autumn. However, if you're aged 50 to 64 and in an at-risk group, you should not delay having your flu vaccine.

This year, because of COVID-19, it is unlikely that there will be any drop-in clinics so an appointment will be necessary. Patients should check with their GP Practice for details of availability of appointments.

Adults aged 65 and over are also eligible for a one-off pneumococcal vaccination. The pneumococcal vaccine is also available on the NHS for babies, children and

adults aged 2 to 64 who are at higher risk of developing a pneumococcal infection and anyone at occupational risk. For further information click [here](#)

VODA and the Covid-19 response

North Tyneside VODA have since March been supporting both the voluntary & community sector and volunteering activity in North Tyneside in response to the COVID-19 crisis.



To date VODA's Good Neighbours Project has supported 300 volunteers to respond to over 1,950 requests for help from shielding and self-isolating residents who have no other means of support. VODA, in partnership with North Tyneside Councils Community Hub Teams, Primary Care Networks, Adult Social Care, Community Mental Health Teams and Welfare support, have co-ordinated the delivery of food parcels, essential shopping trips, gas and electric top ups, medication collections and much more.

Good Neighbours – Pause of shielding

Following the pausing of shielding from 31st July, the project will continue to deliver volunteer-led support for vulnerable residents across North Tyneside.

The project will focus on enabling local residents to regain their confidence and independence. It will also seek to address issues of loneliness and isolation by supporting local residents to become more connected to their local community.

Volunteer support to residents on offer will include:

- Carrying out shopping on their behalf (if they are still unable to get to the shops due to ill health, mobility issues or are feeling too anxious) or accompanying them to do the shopping themselves
- Delivering pre-paid for click and collect orders
- Collecting prescriptions on their behalf or accompanying them to collect it themselves
- Connecting with their community through walking buddies
- Offering a time-limited 'buddy service' enabling them to build confidence carrying out independent shopping
- Providing informal social contact with a 'garden gate' buddy

Death Cafés

Death Cafés are an initiative to encourage people to meet informally, socialise and discuss death, not as sombre as this may sound as it is also an opportunity to reflect on life. The cafés are not intended to be support or counselling sessions they are a vehicle to help people make the most of life with a bit of thought to long term planning. In North Tyneside we are thinking of them as Life and Death Cafés.

More information can be found by using this [link](#)

Patient Referrals

There is now advice & guidance available from all specialties in our local hospitals for GPs to check if a patient should be referred or if they want a bit of support with primary care management.

If the GP thinks the patient needs to be referred, they send the referral direct to the relevant specialty at the patient's chosen hospital and the referral will be assessed by the local consultants to ascertain the urgency and the best course of management. The possible outcomes are:

- Advice back to the GP on primary care management
- Telephone appointment
- Video appointment
- Face to face appointment

From the Forum – a member's story

Unsung Heroes

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted many heroes, mainly front line staff within the health services and rightly so. However during my recent journey it reminded me that the NHS is the big cog in the wheel reliant on many components to keep it functioning.

These are the people who have worked behind the scenes to ensure continued emergency, urgent and community care,

My Journey

After experiencing recent numbness and loss of function in my right leg a telephone consultation with a G.P followed by a same day appointment in the surgery. Although helpful and treatments suggested, the pain continued to become increasingly worse. Having been receiving physiotherapy via telephone consultations I rang the department.

Within the hour admission to Northumbria Emergency Care was arranged.

My Heroes

Physiotherapist - A super hero whose quick diagnosis resulted in no further damage and likely severe complications.

Receptionists - Pleasant, reassuring, helpful in giving directions and instructions re hand washing and use of masks.

Porters – Friendly, chatty, reassuring and always maintained my safety and dignity.

Voluntary Worker - Sat and talked while I was waiting for test results and resourced a much needed cup of tea and sandwiches.

Domestic Services - Quickly and efficiently cleaned wards, cubicles, equipment to ensure a safe environment during this difficult time.

Radiologists - Explained in detail what was happening and why. Discussed results of MRI scan in terminology that could be understood.

Transfer to RVI where the Surgeon and all staff treated me with care during examinations, spinal surgery and after care.

Practice Nurse - Removal of staples and post-operative instructions, professional and reassuring.

The overall package of care from admission to discharge was excellent due to teamwork and dedicated patient care.

Patient Forum and Working Groups



End of Life Working Group

Members receive information and are included in the discussions on palliative care services for North Tyneside residents. Recently it was explained where palliative care patients had additional symptoms the appropriate measures were put in place to ensure a high level of patient care during the pandemic. There was an evolving picture and links with the Northumbria Macmillan team, the Rapid Response team and the regional and national End of Life services were as strong as ever.

A network bereavement survey will be taken forward to provide further information similar to the survey carried out during the Sars virus outbreak in 2011



Future Care Working Group

As well as the LIVI development members considered how the falls service for North Tyneside residents is being delivered, strength and balance classes in partnership with Age UK North Tyneside are being held as Zoom (video conferencing) meetings during the pandemic. Residents with frailty issues will also benefit from a new care pathway with care being co-ordinated and clinical systems being shared with a directory of services being explored to benefit patients' wellbeing.



Mental Health Working Group

During COVID-19 all mental health and learning disability services have continued to accept referrals apart from the memory clinic. The majority of appointments are being undertaken via video link or by telephone unless there is a clinical need to have a face to face appointment and this is to minimise infection risk.

A 24/7 all age crisis service is now in place.

Talking Therapies are offering a COVID-19 specific intervention and the service is currently offering anyone registered with a North Tyneside GP who may be struggling with anxiety, panic, OCD, stress as a direct result of the virus, 12 months free access to Silvercloud a computerised cognitive behavioural therapy. A future meeting will include a Talking Therapies update.

NT Life the Recovery College has continued to give support and help their students to self-manage their mental health and wellbeing throughout the COVID-19 crisis by providing resources and Zoom sessions on-line. From July they have returned to the Hub, their home in the Linskill Centre in North Shields and introduced a booking system to follow COVID-19 safety advice and guidance. Find up to date information on courses and sessions available [here](#)



Innovation

Innovations Working Group

This group as the name suggests explores new ways to enhance and improve health care services. During the COVID-19 pandemic the CCG put technology in place almost overnight. This has resulted in new ways of delivering health care in most clinical settings. These will be monitored but already Patient Forum members have reported positive outcomes.

Some of the other areas the group have been kept up to date with are ongoing and future work. Examples of these are:

- Further enhancement of GP services
- Integrated health care
- Work in care homes and frailty services, this is huge area of work which is ongoing
- The development of assessment and monitoring tools which are user and patient friendly
- Mapping of services and pathways of care which are paramount for patient outcomes

As the work progresses information will be shared.



Communications Working Group

This group is the hub of the Patient Forum. Each sub group's information from clinical, voluntary, individuals' experiences and feedback from clinical leads forms the template.

Other up to date topical areas are also important. These are collated and edited so that they reflect current trends within health care. Preparing the newsletter as well as a patient bulletin for distribution to practice patient groups is important in keeping them informed about this forum and initiatives in North Tyneside.

Patient Forum

The next Patient Forum is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 10 September 2020

Eleanor Hayward – Chair of the Patient Forum

I know the 72nd birthday of the NHS is not a usual milestone to be celebrated but I am sure you will agree that 2020 was truly a year to celebrate our unique Health Service and the people who provide all the services within in it. The NHS has risen to the emergency and provided care and assurance through the most difficult time since its inception in 1948. It is now on track to resuming normal service and at the same time endeavouring to keep Covid 19 under control over the winter months.

It's wonderful to see that the Patients Forum is now able to meet face to face for the first time since March in a Covid safe environment. However meetings will still be available on teams for those not able to attend.

The Patients Forum has not missed a beat throughout these difficult times and continues to work at a pace, seeing many new projects coming to fruition. Thank you once again for your enthusiasm and forthright approach to all the issues and initiatives that come your way.

Please stay safe.