

## Sussex NHS Commissioners Public Involvement Weekly News Briefing on COVID-19 (24<sup>th</sup> July 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

#### Big Health and Care (Socially Distancing) Conversation

Patients and the public are at the heart of what we do. We strongly believe that involving the public in planning NHS and social care services is key to ensuring that they meet the needs of the population that we serve, which is why we are holding the **Big Health and Care (socially distancing) Conversation** across Sussex.



The Covid-19 pandemic changed the nature of how health and care services are delivered, in a very short time period. Services had to adapt and change to ensure patients and our staff were protected, which meant that the way people accessed health and care services changed, at a time when we were all also adapting to life in lockdown.

The Big Health and Care Conversation is your chance to tell us your experiences, ask questions and share your ideas as we move towards restoring services. Over the next few months, you will have the opportunity to get involved in a number of ways including focus groups, interviews, online debates and through social media.

In this [video](#), Adam Doyle (Senior Responsible Officer for the Sussex Health and Care Partnership) describes how you can get involved in the Big Health and Care (Socially Distancing) Conversation.

Look out for information on these opportunities as they arise on our **website**.

You can also contact us about the **Big Health and Care (socially distancing) Conversation** using the contact details below:

**Phone us:** 01903 708411

**Write to us:** RTUZ-ECYG-ERRK

Attn: Public Involvement Team  
NHS Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group  
Town Hall  
Norton Road  
Brighton  
BN3 4AH

## Keeping Safe

From today (Friday 24th July 2020), [you must wear a face covering by law](#) in England in the following settings:

- public transport
- indoor transport hubs (airports, rail and tram stations and terminals, maritime ports and terminals, bus and coach stations and terminals)
- shops and supermarkets (places which are open to the public and that wholly or mainly offer goods or services for retail sale or hire)
- indoor shopping centres
- banks, building societies, and post offices (including credit unions, short-term loan providers, savings clubs and money service businesses)



Face coverings that go over your mouth and nose should be worn if you go to hospital as a visitor or outpatient. Face coverings are also recommended if you go to your GP surgery or other health care setting and in some case might be mandatory depending on circumstances in each location. If you are unsure, please check with your surgery or other service you are visiting.

You do not need to wear a face covering if you have a legitimate reason not to. This includes (but is not limited to):

- You have a disability that means you cannot put a mask on.
- You have a disability that means you cannot wear or remove a mask.
- Putting on a face mask would cause you severe distress.
- If you use lip reading to communicate, the person supporting you to use public transport does not have to wear a mask.
- You do not have to wear a mask if you are using public transport to escape danger.
- Young children under the age of 11
- To avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others
- To eat or drink, but only if you need to
- To take medication
- If a police officer or other official requests you remove your face covering
- These rules do not apply to a person with dementia if they have a [‘reasonable excuse’](#) not to wear a face covering.

If you are exempt from wearing a face covering, you can use an exemption card or sunflower lanyard to show drivers, conductors and any member of the public who says something to you. This is a personal choice, and is not necessary in law. You can find a list of places to find exemption cards or sunflower lanyards below:

- [Government exemption cards](#) (this is free to download)
- [Keep Safe exemption cards](#) (this is free to download)
- [Alzheimer’s Society Helpcards](#) (this is free to download)
- [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyards](#) (there is a fee associated with this)

There is no need to ask a medical professional to write a letter or certificate of exemption.

If you are a deaf or hearing impaired, staff will have a range of ways to ensure that they can communicate effectively with you. This might include visual aids such as writing things down, speech to text apps and sign language.

Measures can be taken if people do not comply with this law without a valid exemption. If necessary, the police and Transport for London (TfL) officers have enforcement powers including issuing fines of £100 (halving to £50 if paid within 14 days).

If you wear a face covering be careful:

- It may not be comfortable to wear
- Don't keep touching it
- Don't keep taking it off and on
- Make sure you can breathe ok
- Look after the skin on your face
- Remember people cannot see your lips
- Masks do not protect you from coronavirus
- Keep washing your hands
- Follow the rules when you go out

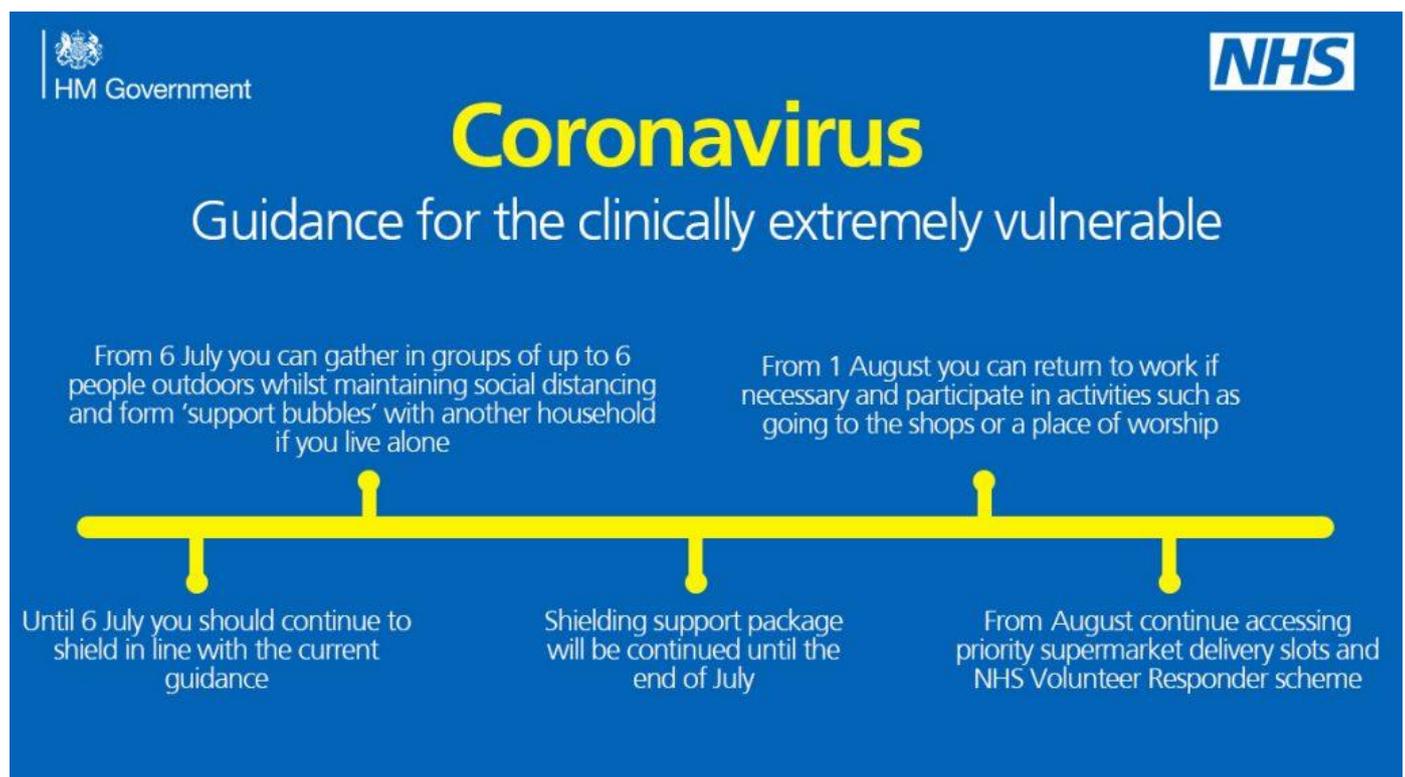
A face covering is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers as part of personal protective equipment. These should continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace

Further guidance on wearing face coverings can be found [here](#).

### Adjusting to life after shielding

In March 2020, over a million residents in Sussex were asked to shield at the start of lockdown. Over this time many of you will have received support from neighbours, friends and family or other volunteers.

New guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people came into effect on the 6 July and there will be more changes from 1 August – you can [read it in full at Gov.uk](#) or by reviewing the below graphic:



From 6 July anyone classed as clinically extremely vulnerable has been able to:

- meet outdoors in groups of up to six people they do not live with, while maintaining social distancing, and;
- create a 'support bubble' with one other household, following the same rules that apply to the public now.
- The guidance will then change again from 1 August when the Government are expected to announce that shielding will be paused.

From 1 August you will be able to:

- visit places of worship and outdoor spaces
- go to the shops yourself to pick up essential groceries (and your favourites biscuits/chocolate/tipple you've been craving)
- return to work if you cannot work from home – just make sure you speak to your employer to make sure your workplace is COVID-safe.

To stay as safe as possible remember to still wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds and avoid touching your face. It's important to still take care to stay 2m apart from those outside your household or support bubble wherever you can or 1m + if this isn't possible.

If you are on the Government shielded list and have been receiving a Government food parcel, these are due to stop at the end of July. Being on this list means you will already be registered to access priority food deliveries from supermarkets. If you are clinically extremely vulnerable but haven't been receiving a food parcel you can still try to access supermarket delivery slots but won't be eligible for priority access.

If you want support or help, **your Community Hub is still here for you**. Contact your local Community Hub, using the details on pages 3- 4 if you need help getting food or medicine or for signposting into other services.

## Community Hubs

Community Hubs are run through our Local Authorities, and District and Borough Councils in East and West Sussex. The Hubs have been supporting those who are on the "[shielded](#)" list by ensuring people have access to food and other support. The Hubs are also a key contact point for other residents who are vulnerable, in order to access wider community support, which may include help with shopping and money, but also support with reducing isolation through access to services such as telephone befriending.

Community Hubs also provide a place for people to find out about local volunteering opportunities.

- [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)

## Community Matters – Frequently Asked Questions

The Covid-19 Community Connectors Team has been answering questions from our communities in Sussex about accessing health and care services at this time through the Frequently Asked Questions. This week's **new information is on face coverings and shielding**, which can be found in Section 2.7 and

8.1 respectively. You can read the Frequently Asked Questions via the Clinical Commissioning Groups websites.

- [NHS Brighton and Hove CCG](#)
- [NHS East Sussex CCG](#)
- [NHS West Sussex CCG](#)

You can also [watch 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.

## NHS Guidance

### Coronavirus Vaccine Studies

The NHS has launched a [new website](#) encouraging people to sign up for COVID-19 [clinical trials in the UK](#).

The initiative has been developed by the UK Government's Vaccine Taskforce, in partnership NHS Digital and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and it is hoped that volunteers could help to find a breakthrough vaccine to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The scheme hopes to get over half a million people registered as potential volunteers for Covid-19 clinical trials which could be carried out over the next few months.

You can [sign up](#) to give permission for researchers to contact you about taking part in Covid-19 vaccine studies in the UK. You can use this service to sign up if you:

- have an email address
- are 18 or over
- live in the UK

### New NHS 'Exemplars' to help close inequality gap for people with a learning disability

The [NHS announced that local NHS organisations across the country will become learning disability 'Exemplars'](#) to improve the health and care of people with a learning disability. The call comes as the [fourth annual learning disability review](#) and [action report](#) are published.

The Exemplars will be:

- Increase the uptake of the annual health checks available to people with a learning disability to at least 75%
- Boost the number of people with learning disability getting the flu jab as respiratory conditions and pneumonia remain the biggest killers.
- Alongside, work to improve uptake of health checks the NHS is taking further action to improve outcomes for people with a learning disability. These include:
- Training 5,000 paid and unpaid carers to spot the early signs of deterioration in people with a learning disability.

While continuing to monitor the number of deaths of people with a learning disability due to coronavirus, the NHS has also commissioned the University of Bristol to review the deaths of people with a learning disability who have died during the pandemic to ensure rapid learning can be implemented to help save lives in future.

## 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](#).

Coronavirus support for clinically extremely vulnerable people is no longer open for new registrations at the moment, because people are not being advised to shield in most of England from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020. The last boxes of food and basic supplies will be sent out by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. Read more about this [here](#).

A team of scientists at Oxford University's Jenner Institute and Oxford Vaccine Group has taken the next step towards the discovery of a safe, effective and accessible vaccine against coronavirus. Trials involving around 1,077 people showed the injection led to them making antibodies and white blood cells that can fight coronavirus. You read more about this [here](#).

The guidance on NHS Test and Trace has been updated, there is a new section on collecting customer and visitor data for NHS Test and Trace. You can read the guidance [here](#).

Guidance for making arrangements for limited visits for care homes has been updated. [Click](#) here to access the information.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for people receiving direct payments](#) has been updated on page 3 to include information on what to do if you cannot talk to anyone.

## Sussex NHS Commissioners Public Involvement Team

In April 2020, the Sussex NHS Commissioners Public Involvement team were repurposed as Covid-19 Community Connectors to support our people and communities across Sussex in accessing health and care services at a time of crisis. The Covid-19 Community Connectors team have now returned to the Public Involvement team, where the team will be working with partners in the Sussex Health and Care Partnership to support the **Big Health and Care Conversation**. The Sussex NHS Commissioners Public Involvement Weekly News Briefing and Frequently Asked Questions will also now be sent out bi-weekly.

You can contact the Public Involvement Team 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](mailto:info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk)

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

### Healthwatch East Sussex

Telephone: 0333 101 4007

Email: [enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk)

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

### Healthwatch West Sussex

Telephone: 0300 012 0122

Email: [helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](mailto: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 Public Involvement Team:

**Email:** [sxccg.involvement@nhs.net](mailto:sxccg.involvement@nhs.net)

**Telephone:** 01903 708411

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 Public Involvement Team). This service is currently available every **Thursday from 14:00-16:00**. Please contact the Public Involvement team 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.

