

THE LATEST NEWS FROM **MID ESSEX CCG**

ENGAGE

SUMMER EDITION JULY 2020

NHS

Mid Essex

Clinical Commissioning Group

**CELEBRATING
72 YEARS OF
THE NHS**

**THE NHS
RESPONSE
TO COVID**



EXTENDED GP HOURS



Patients in mid Essex can still access appointments with a GP or nurse in the **evening** or on a **Saturday or Sunday**

To book please contact your own GP surgery or call **01245 398055***

**Phone line only open Saturday and Sunday*

Consultations will take place via **telephone** or **video**. Where a **face-to-face** appointment is required, this will take place at the North Chelmsford Health Centre



OPENING TIMES:

Monday to Friday,
6:30pm to 8:00pm
Saturday and Sunday,
8:00am to 8:00pm

North Chelmsford NHS Healthcare Centre
Sainsbury's, 2 White Hart Lane,
Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 5EF.



We want everyone
in mid Essex to Live Well



WELCOME



Welcome to the summer 2020 issue of Engage, for everyone living in Braintree District, Chelmsford City and Maldon District.

Since I wrote the introduction to our spring edition at the end of February, our lives changed almost completely. Protecting one another from the COVID-19 coronavirus has been the priority for residents.

Meanwhile, making sure there is capacity to treat people with severe COVID-19 symptoms and anyone else needing urgent clinical care has been the main focus for the NHS. You can read more about that from me later in this edition.

We are hugely grateful to everyone who has taken steps to stay safe and to the host of volunteers who have supported people at greater risk from the virus who have been unable to leave their homes.

There is more good news to share too, about supporting our communities and the way we have been reshaping GP-led services, which I write a little about later in this issue. Stay safe this summer.

Dr Anna Davey
Chair, Mid Essex CCG
Follow me on Twitter
@Chair_MECCG



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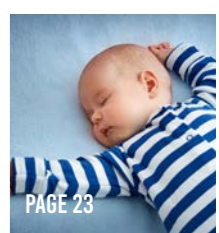
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Engage is just one of the many ways that you can keep informed about our work. Connect with us through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and our website midessexccg.nhs.uk for regular updates. You can also share any feedback on Engage by emailing: MECCG.get-involved@nhs.net with 'CCG Engage feedback' in the subject.

Keep in touch by following us on social media:

- @MidEssex CCG
- /CCGMidEssex
- Mid Essex CCG

The NHS at 72: a time to remember, reflect and say 'thank you'

On July 5 it will be 72 years since the NHS started work.



Over the last few months, the NHS has been through perhaps its greatest test so far. We will continue to deal with the many challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic for the foreseeable future.

This year's anniversary will be one of remembrance and thanks. We want to remember those who have died during the pandemic and say thank you to all the people and organisations who have supported us during these difficult times.

In the run-up to 5 July you can say a personal thank you to someone who has been a hero for you during the pandemic with the template opposite or one you can download from the Together Coalition website. Colour it in, add the name of someone you'd like to thank – nurses and doctors, posties and delivery people, or maybe your mum, dad or a neighbour – and display it in your window.

Then, on the evening before the NHS anniversary, 4 July, we are encouraging people to put a light in your window, too – perhaps an LED candle, lamp or a torch. All the lit windows will commemorate the people we have lost. (If you want to use a candle, please don't leave it unattended.)

National and local landmarks will also be lit up in blue as part of our collective nationwide memorial.

The following day, 5 July and the anniversary of our NHS, let's say thank you together.

5pm: Join a one-off clap for carers – the biggest yet, because this time it is to say thank you to everybody

5.05pm: Raise a glass, mug or cuppa to thank each other – our friends, family and neighbours – for looking out for us, helping the vulnerable, or simply doing the right thing and staying at home

Afterwards: Stay outside for a socially distanced chat to your neighbours, or reach out to someone who is lonely, isolated or stuck in another household to let them know they are appreciated.

Let us know who is getting your thanks

Don't forget to share your thank yous and images with your local NHS on our social

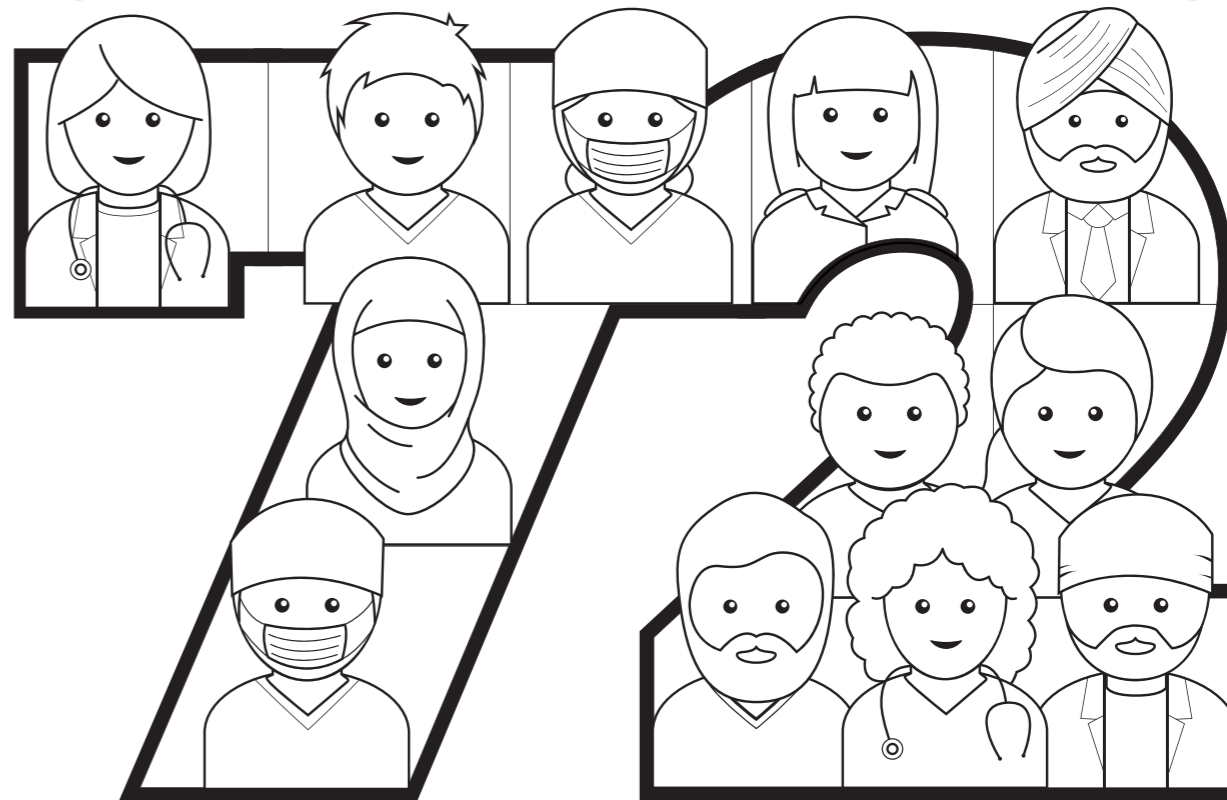
f FACEBOOK – search for **@MidSouthEssexHCP** on Facebook or in Messenger, as well as your local CCG and hospital:

- @BasildonBrentwoodCCG
- @nhscprccg
- @CCGMidEssex
- @ThurrockCCG
- @southendccg
- @MSEHospitals

t TWITTER – find us at:

- NHS Mid and South Essex Health and Care Partnership @MSEEssex_HCP
- NHS Basildon and Brentwood CCG @BB_CCG
- NHS Castle Point and Rochford CCG @CPRCCG
- NHS Mid Essex CCG @MidEssexCCG
- NHS Southend CCG @SouthendCCG
- NHS Thurrock CCG @Thurrock CCG
- Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust @MSEHospitals

CELEBRATING



YEARS OF THE NHS

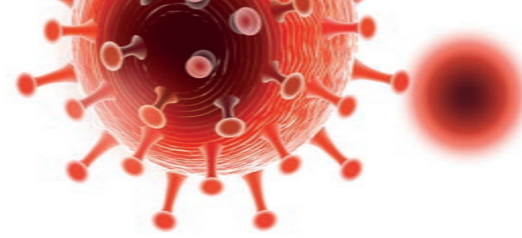
MY HERO IS

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BECAUSE

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The NHS response so far to coronavirus in mid and south Essex



We have all found ourselves in unprecedented times due to the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus). It is perhaps the greatest challenge the health service has faced in its 72-year history.

Locally the NHS has well-rehearsed procedures in place to respond to major incidents. We have been using our full emergency preparedness plans as part of the greater Essex Resilience Forum alongside local government, police and fire services from the start.

This has seen our hospitals, GPs, community services, local authorities, voluntary sector, charities and the independent sector all united. With great speed they have worked together to change and re-align how we provide services to meet our residents' immediate needs during this pandemic.

The scale and depth of the steps taken are exceptional. The NHS has put a wide range of measures in place to ensure people stay as safe as possible while we maintain essential health services for those who continue to need them outside of COVID-19 care.

Working alongside local authorities to identify and protect our most vulnerable residents through Operation Shield is something that will leave a positive legacy for our communities. It has helped show how we can work together in the future to support our residents' needs across health and social care.

One of the first things to happen in response to the outbreak was our GP practices' speedy adoption of digital consultations, from telephone triage and use of email to video consultations. These have meant people do not have to go to their GP surgery in person, and clinical staff can work remotely if needed.

Digital consultation in general practice isn't new, but its use had been fairly limited prior to COVID-19. Now every GP surgery in mid and south Essex is offering remote consultation, with more than 25,000 appointments already held this way. Surgeries are also working together in the communities they serve to provide care for people suspected of having the virus at a single clinic away from others.

Meanwhile, our hospitals have reorganised outpatient services and planned surgery, again to offer telephone or video consultations where needed and free up capacity to care for COVID-19 patients. Each of

the three main sites run by our local hospital trust – Basildon, Broomfield and Southend – has substantially increased its intensive care capacity. This included buying additional ventilators to care for the most seriously ill patients and retraining staff to deliver intensive care.

Recently retired clinical staff have been invited to return to work and the NHS has enlisted medical and nursing students to work in frontline care. Colleagues from local private hospitals and facilities have been redeployed to work among NHS teams.

And some private hospitals have opened up their facilities to NHS patients so the most urgent treatments such as cancer surgery can still take place. This is helping to keep those at greatest risk away from the main hospital sites where COVID-19 patients are being treated.

Working as a team, local NHS community services set up new wards and beds at our community hospitals in Brentwood and Braintree in just a few days. These extra beds are for patients requiring 'step-down' and rehabilitation bed care after a stay in one of the three acute hospitals. The additional capacity is vital in helping hospitals to free up the space to treat the most ill patients.

Mental health services in mid and south Essex have remained available, though there have been fewer face-to-face appointments to reduce the risk of spreading the virus. The people with the most urgent and severe mental health needs are being prioritised while direct access to online support has remained available to everyone.

Vital support for all these efforts has come from our local communities – from you, your friends and neighbours. Volunteers have come forward to deliver medicines and food to people who are most vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19. They have worked side by side with other partners such as Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue and the British Army to help rapidly redesign our buildings to accept more patients.

As our response to the coronavirus pandemic continues, we are now starting to see the number of hospital admissions come down. So, we have begun to reschedule both inpatient planned surgery and postponed outpatient appointments within the three main hospitals at Southend, Basildon and Broomfield. These will be rescheduled and prioritised according to clinical need and length of wait.

For the moment, we continue to ask that people go to their GP surgery or hospital for planned care only when really necessary. People in need of medical help should continue to contact their surgery, use the online service at 111.nhs.uk or call 111.

GP surgeries and the 111 service will initially assess patients over the phone or online to make sure they are cared for by the right person, in the right place

for their illness. Where possible, appointments will continue to be offered using remote services such as a video or phone consultation.

What is COVID-19

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus strain that first emerged in China late last year. Several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections in humans, ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases.

The most important symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

The severity and duration of symptoms for people who have COVID-19 can vary. Most people who get infected have mild symptoms, and in general symptoms are expected largely to disappear within 7 days of first experiencing them.

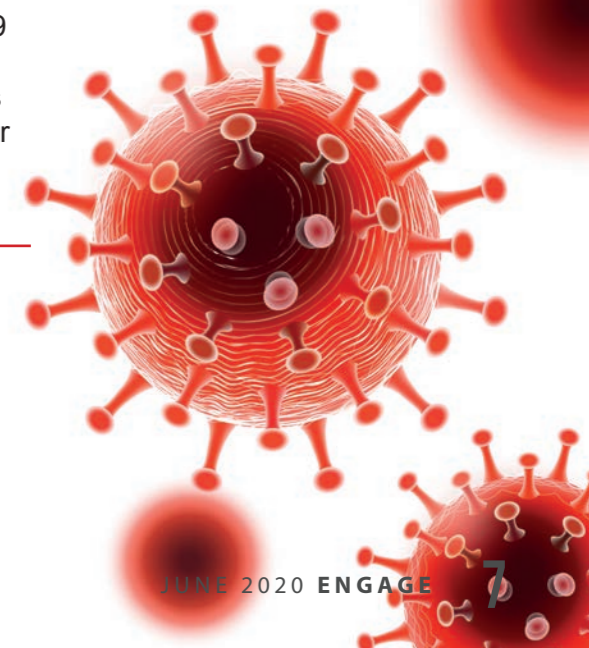
Most people who get COVID-19 will not need to go into hospital. Others may need monitoring as an inpatient and a small number will need treatment in intensive care.

Coronavirus in mid and south Essex facts and figures

An average of 136 COVID-19 patients a day have been in our local hospital beds between 22 March 2020 and 14 June 2020.

The highest daily number was 276 on 8 June, with the 10 days before this article was written showing a much lower average of 62 patients with coronavirus.

The number of confirmed COVID-19 patients occupying critical care beds **averaged 34** over the same March-June period and **peaked at 78** on 20 April. The last 10 days before writing saw the average number of COVID-19 patients in critical care fall to 9.



A message from our Clinical Chair



Hello – Dr Davey again! As well as chairing NHS Mid Essex CCG I'm a practising GP in our area. With coronavirus in the news headlines every day, we have all had to adapt how we live, work or study at a rapid pace.

Health and social care services have had to change and adapt how they work quickly and effectively to respond to the pandemic. The way people have accessed local health and care services has also changed.

In the past few months GP practices across mid and south Essex have carried out more than 25,000 video consultations. Local hospitals have begun to offer virtual consultations with patients where safe and appropriate to do so. Digital tools have also helped identify and support the most vulnerable people in our community.

New smartphone tools like the NHS App help people to order repeat prescriptions from their own home. Other new apps are also now available to help support those with particular conditions such as diabetes (MyType1Diabetes and DigiBete), which means many people can get support in different ways.

People visit their GPs for a range of different reasons. Sometimes issues that affect a person's health may be caused by non-medical matters such as loneliness, worry, unemployment or debt. A new role, called a 'social prescriber', or Link Worker, has come to GP surgeries. Link Workers give people confidence to seek appropriate support in the community and make positive changes for their wellbeing.

It is essential that we learn from the times we are living in and embed any positive changes in how local residents get the best possible care and support to lead fulfilling, independent lives. To help us learn, it is important that we capture information about how new services are being received as the local NHS continues to adapt, respond and reshape to current challenges.

We have recently undertaken a survey to better understand how we can continue to support local people and communities during the coronavirus pandemic and beyond. The results of this survey will be analysed and, alongside insight from our three local Healthwatch organisations, we will gather some key themes and actions that will inform our next steps. A report will be available on the CCG's website in due course.

Finally, I would like to say a big thank-you to the many volunteers who have been supporting local people through this difficult time, and who continue to do so. When faced with a crisis like coronavirus, it is really incredible to see people come together and make such a difference.

We appreciate your ongoing support in tackling coronavirus so much. Stay safe!

Dr Davey

Hundreds of volunteers make a difference in mid and south Essex



As Dr Davey wrote, the districts within mid and south Essex have a wealth of voluntary organisations and dedicated volunteers who support their local communities. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic there has been an even greater sense of pride in volunteering, with hundreds of people lending an extra hand.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on everyone, young and old, across the entire world. Here in Essex, volunteers have shown that, when faced with the challenge of a national crisis, people come together and can achieve amazing things.

Professor Mike Thorne is Independent Chair of the Mid and South Essex Health and Care Partnership. He asked us to pass on his sincere thanks to all of the amazing volunteers on behalf of everyone working in the NHS in Essex.

Prof Thorne writes:

"Volunteers are often the unsung heroes in our communities, and we want to make a special effort to say thank you. Volunteers from all kinds of backgrounds with a range of valuable skills have come together to support the NHS, local authorities and providers as we deal with coronavirus."

"It's so humbling to see the speed with which volunteers have stepped in to help us make some major changes to health and care services in the community. Their commitment and willingness to help, often with something they've never done before, has been just brilliant!"

Changes have been made in community hospitals across mid and south Essex so more patients can be cared for. Volunteers from all walks of life have been helping get things ready – and whether they have been moving equipment, cleaning and setting things up, they have all played an important part.

For some people, volunteering is a regular part of their lives, but others have got involved for the first time as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

Jennifer usually works as an Ofsted registered childminder, but her business was seriously affected by the pandemic, so she took the St John's Ambulance COVID-19 Care Module training in the hopes she could help. Soon after, she was asked to volunteer at Brentwood Community Hospital.

Jennifer said:

"The work took me right back to my nursing days from 20 years ago. I met some amazing people and was treated as one of them from the very first day. The public dropped off food and snacks as well as the odd treat – I found that so lovely."

Volunteering had such a positive impact for her that Jennifer is now considering a change in career. She said: *"I was disappointed when my volunteering came to as I enjoyed it ... so much so, in fact, that I've made the decision to change jobs. Who knows, I may even end up working back at Brentwood Community Hospital!"*

The list of organisations and partners working with us at this challenging time is huge. St John's Ambulance, Essex Fire and Rescue, the Territorial Army, the military veterans' disaster response charity Team Rubicon and many Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) that be found across mid and south Essex are just some of them.

If you'd like to find out more about volunteering in your area, you can start by visiting the National Council for Voluntary Organisations website to find a volunteering opportunity near you. www.ncvo.org.uk

NHS Test and Trace

The NHS test and trace service aims to help control the coronavirus rate of reproduction (or 'R' rate), reduce the risk of infection and save lives. We all have an important role to play in helping to limit the spread of the virus across Essex and beyond.

The NHS test and trace service aims to:

- ensure that anyone who shows symptoms that may mean they have COVID-19 can quickly get a test for the virus
- help trace recent close contacts of anyone who tests positive for coronavirus
- if necessary, tell people who have been in contact with someone carrying COVID-19 that they must self-isolate at home to reduce the virus's spread

Here are some links to information about testing for coronavirus and what to do if you're contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service.

- Ask for a test to check if you have coronavirus
- What your test result means
- NHS Test and Trace: if you're contacted after testing positive
- NHS Test and Trace: if you've been in contact with a person who has coronavirus

How do I ask for a test?

You can ask for a coronavirus test online. The service will ask you:

- how you want to get the test – you may be able to choose between driving to a regional testing site or getting a home test kit
- for details such as your name, mobile phone number and address

If you have been identified as having symptoms of the COVID-19 infection

You need to go home straight away and **self-isolate for 7 days** from when you first showed symptoms.

Anyone you share a home with will need to self-isolate for 14 days from the day you showed symptoms. If anyone else in the household starts displaying symptoms, they also need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of how far into the original 14-day isolation period they are.

There is a risk that other members of your household or others that you have been in close contact with over the previous 2 weeks have been exposed to the virus, but it is possible that they have not.

Each of you should follow the Government's isolation guidance: www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection

Protecting yourself and others from coronavirus

 <p>Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, for at least 20 seconds. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.</p>	 <p>Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then throw this tissue in the bin and wash your hands. Alternatively, cough or sneeze into your elbow.</p>	 <p>Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands</p>	 <p>Avoid close contact with people who are sick, sneezing or coughing</p>
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How NHS Test and Trace will contact you

You will receive an email, text message or phone call. Text messages will come from "NHS Tracing" and calls will come from 0300 0135000.

You'll be asked to sign in to the NHS Test and Trace contact tracing website at <https://contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk> (you should be sure you are logging into the right site and never give any financial information to the service).

If you cannot use the contact tracing website, NHS Test and Trace will phone you.

If your symptoms get worse, visit the NHS 111 online coronavirus service or call 111.

Call 999 if you feel very unwell or think there's something seriously wrong.

NHS Health at Home

To maintain social distancing and prevent the spread of the coronavirus, you are advised to stay at home as much as possible. While you are at home it's still easy to get NHS help and support using your smartphone, tablet or computer. The NHS Health at Home webpage has information letting you know how to access a number of NHS services.

Contact your GP: Most GP surgeries can be contacted online. You will be able to tell your GP about your health using an online form or by speaking to someone online. This is called an online consultation.

Order repeat prescriptions: Did you know you can order repeat prescriptions online, without needing to go to a GP surgery or pharmacy? You can collect a prescription yourself, or ask a friend, relative or volunteer to collect it for you. You could also speak to your pharmacy about delivering your medicine to your home, rather than needing to collect it.

The NHS App also allows you to set and change which pharmacy your prescription is sent to, so you could pick one that will deliver your medicine.

Manage long-term conditions: While staying at home, it's important to keep managing any physical or mental health conditions you may have. The NHS Apps Library has a wide variety of apps and online tools that can help with this, covering different conditions and categories like diabetes, pregnancy and maternity, and mental wellbeing.

Maintain your mental and physical wellbeing:

From health communities and forums to eating and indoor exercise resources, there is plenty of online support out there that can help you take control of your health from home.

If you need an NHS service, try to do it online first. If you cannot get what you need this way try asking a friend or family member to help you, or speak to your GP surgery on the phone. Find out more at: nhs.uk/health-at-home



An update from Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

It's a challenging yet exciting time for your local hospital trust, which is now one of the largest trusts in the country following a merger on 1 April this year.



Tom Abell

The newly formed organisation is now called Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust or MSEFT for short. It takes in acute hospital sites at Broomfield in Chelmsford City, southern Basildon and Westcliff-on-Sea in Southend Borough, plus community hospital sites such as Braintree, Brentwood and Maldon.

MSEFT is determined to provide the best health services for its local population.



Improved services and care

With about 15,000 staff, the hospitals can now do more and go further in delivering excellent care to local communities across mid and south Essex. The new, larger trust size will bring more opportunities for development, research, networking and innovation, plus more specialist care region-wide.

Staff

The MSEFT team know that happy staff mean better care for patients. So, the trust is also focused on ensuring its premises offer vibrant base from where hospital staff can develop and build their careers. They will have plenty of opportunities to work across the different sites and share best practice, building new friendships in the process.

COVID-19

The strength of the new organisation has been immediately tested with the coronavirus pandemic. It has been a very challenging time and staff have worked above and beyond to care for all patients. Many frontline medical staff have undergone refresher training so they can support critical care clinicians in caring for very ill COVID-19 patients.

As the trust continues to adapt and use new technology-driven approaches to care for patients remotely, it's clear that the pandemic has played a key role in accelerating changes to the way healthcare reaches patients.

As routine outpatient appointments restart, many of the telephone and virtual consultations that have been taking place in order to reduce footfall to the hospitals will stay in place.

Tom Abell, who is Deputy Chief Executive at MSEFT, said:



It's hard to believe we are moving into the reset phase and restarting some of the services that were paused.

COVID-19 has been tough, but we've also discovered ways to create more efficient and effective services using digital technology. The merger of our three hospitals has demonstrated that we are stronger together.

We are also incredibly grateful for all the support we have had from local businesses and our local community. The warmth, kindness and generosity we have received has really helped to keep us all going.



Keeping Essex active

Undoubtedly our lives have changed in the past few months, but we still need to think about physical activity.

As we adjust to new ways of living and people spending more time at home, it could have a significantly negative impact on the county's physical activity levels.

Keeping physically active and well is being championed at the highest possible level, with the Prime Minister and Chief Medical Officer for England stating jointly:

“Right now, exercise is one of the best things you can do to help fight diseases like the coronavirus and other health conditions.”

A high proportion of Essex residents are inactive, meaning they do less than 30 minutes of physical activity each week. Experts recommend we should ideally be aiming for to 150 minutes (two and a half hours) a week of moderate physical exercise, at least as energetic as walking.

Introducing regular physical activity as part of our everyday lives will help us to support and maintain our wellbeing and offer us immediate and long-term health benefits. The physical activity partnership for our county, Active Essex, wants to continue to help our communities become more resilient through being active.



Active Essex's Active at Home webpage holds tips and guidance for your mental wellbeing, gentle inclusive exercise videos and ideas to keep the whole family engaged in moving more.

On this page you will find downloadable booklets you can share with people who can't access online resources.



The Keep Essex Active YouTube channel also features free workouts delivered throughout the day by top Essex instructors.

With an easy colour-coded timetable released each Sunday, you will be able to see what activities are going on to suit your needs; from tai chi and yoga to HIIT and an "abs blaster" workout. All activities are saved to the channel to create a library of sessions for everyone to continue to enjoy.



For additional information, guidance and ideas please visit www.nhs.co.uk/live-well/exercise that contains gentle exercises to adopt during the day whilst at home.

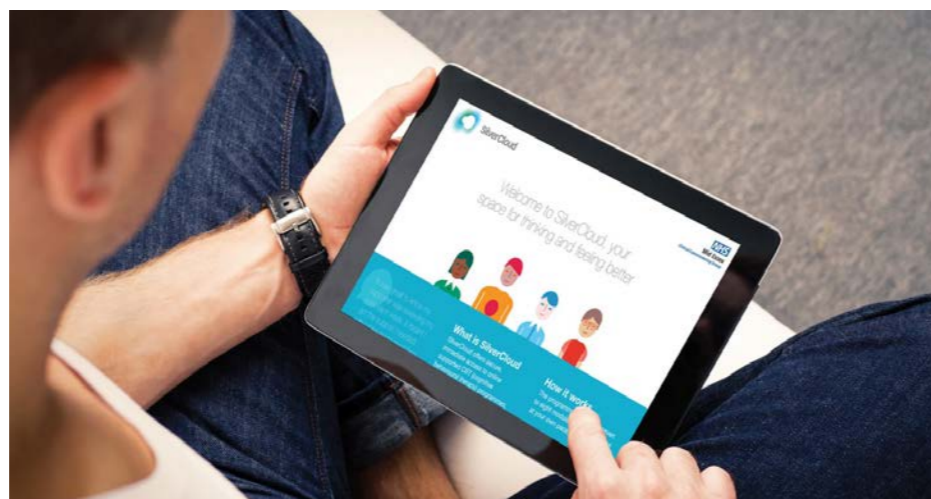
Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health and we hope that together we can all keep Essex active.

Mental health – focused on meeting your needs

Now more than ever, it's important to reflect on our feelings and mental wellbeing. The past three months have seen most people's worlds turned upside down as they cope with the coronavirus pandemic.

Unusual events like this can have a big impact on our mental health. But help is on hand. Even through the pandemic peak, local services to support your mental health continued to be available. Most are being provided in an online or telephone format at present, to meet social distancing guidelines. But if someone needs face to face support, it can be arranged.

There are a range of ways to support you and your family's mental health, whether that's responding to a crisis or working on preventing mental health from becoming an emergency. Here are some of the ways you can get help.



Online support with SilverCloud

SilverCloud is a flexible self-help programme you can access at home, in a coffee shop or on the go using a computer or a smart device – all you need is an internet connection. This means you can easily fit your sessions around your normal daily routine.

The programme consists of digital cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), which medical evidence shows can have a positive impact on low mood and anxiety.

SilverCloud is free, to anyone who lives or works in mid Essex. For more information or to sign up visit: www.me.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/



Talking therapies with Health in Mind

Health in Mind provides access to a wide range of talking therapy treatments for adults with common mental health problems. Health in Mind is part of the national initiative Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT).

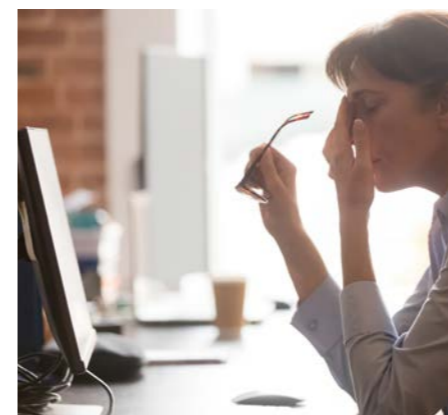
Treatment sessions may be by phone, online, in groups or face-to-face. Treatment options are based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) which is a structured therapy where you will be set goals you want to reach and work on changes you can make to patterns of thoughts and behaviours to help you attain your goals.

If you think you would benefit from our service the first step is to talk to the team to find out how they can best help you.

www.midessexccg.nhs.uk/livewell/mentalhealth/health-in-mind

If you working in a health or care service

Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) is offering a new service for people working in Essex-based health and social care. If you need support with managing stress and emotional difficulties in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, phone 01375 898837 or email to epunft.staffpsychsupport@nhs.net. The service is available seven days per week, 8am–8pm.



Mental health crisis? Help is on hand

A crisis mental health phone line has launched across Essex. The 24-hour service run by EPUT offers immediate and specialist support to adults experiencing mental health crisis.

Anyone in need can dial 111 at any time and select the option for mental health crisis (option 2). Callers will be connected to trained staff at EPUT who can provide timely and appropriate support and advice.

The service is free from UK landlines and mobiles, and aimed at people aged 18 and over so they can access support when they need it most.



Children's mental health and wellbeing

For many children this is a worrying and unsettling time, with routines and school turned upside down, it's natural that some of our younger people need some extra support. Children's mental health services are provided by the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS).

A child or young person can contact the service directly. Any parent/guardian or professional such as a teacher, school nurse or GP can contact us on the behalf of the young person

Contact details:

In-hours mental health
0300 300 1600 (Essex SPA)

Out of Hours Mental Health
0300 555 1000
(Mental Health Direct Line)

Visit: www.nelft.nhs.uk/services-ewmhs to find out about online apps like Kooth, Big White Wall and MiLife.

Local GP surgeries delivering gold-standard LGBTQ+ care

In the previous edition of Engage we told you about two GP practices in mid Essex that received an award from the LGBT Foundation for Excellence in LGBT Healthcare. We are pleased to say that 13 more GP surgeries have stepped up to meet the needs of their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) patients.

These practices across Braintree District, Chelmsford City and Maldon District have all received awards from the Pride in Practice programme for making services more accessible to LGBTQ+ people in their communities. And 11 have further cause to be proud as they are the first in the county to receive the Pride in Practice Gold Award – the highest possible rating available.

Dr Anna Davey, Chair of NHS Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and a GP partner at a Braintree District surgery deemed outstanding by the LGBT Foundation, said: "I'm really proud that so many colleagues in local surgeries have proved their commitment to giving our lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender questioning residents the best standard of care. We know that even unconscious bias is something to be wary of so I am delighted we can show we are a safe place for everyone to discuss their health with us."

"I would encourage all mid Essex practices to sign up for the Pride in Practice scheme once we are through the current challenging times, as my practice found it of real benefit to us as well as our patients. I hope everyone has a safe and happy Pride Month."

Planned and delivered by the LGBT Foundation, Pride in Practice is an evidence-based programme open to all GP surgeries in mid Essex, the first area of the UK outside Greater Manchester where it has been offered. The programme is endorsed by the Royal College of General Practitioners and other clinical bodies, and measures how well surgeries meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and regulatory bodies.

Most importantly, the programme supports surgery staff to strengthen relationships with LGBT patients and more confidently support their needs.

Jack, a Witham resident registered at one of the Gold Award practices, said: "I've been using Fern House Surgery since I moved to the Witham area. In this time I have been continually impressed with the



fantastic service they deliver. I think it's great that my surgery undertakes such vital training.

"For many people visiting the GP can be a daunting experience, especially if you identify as LGBT. Knowing that the GP has taken training, to better understand the needs and the concerns of the LGBT community is fantastic and makes it a more approachable place."

Dr Michael Brady, National Advisor for LGBT Health, NHS England and NHS Improvement, said: "Now more than ever it is vital that we address LGBT health inequalities. Pride in Practice is a great example of primary care services taking the lead to improve the care and experience of LGBT patients. Through better monitoring, staff training and the support provided by the LGBT Foundation, practices are able to both identify inequalities and address them."

"I applaud all these practices for their efforts in ensuring they deliver LGBT inclusive care and look forward to seeing more services taking up this initiative."

Pride in Practice was developed by the LGBT Foundation in response to the worries of many LGBTQ+ people about accessing health services for fear of experiencing discrimination or even hostility on the grounds of their sexual orientation, gender identity or trans status. The foundation support's NHS's commitment to changing this situation by helping health providers become more aware of the needs of LGBT communities and how to best address them.

Claudia Carvell, Business Development Manager for Pride in Practice, said:

"This is a fantastic accomplishment for each of the 15 GP practices who've achieved a Pride in Practice award, meaning that more LGBT people than ever can have confidence that their identity will be recognised and considered as part of their GP appointments."

"As Pride month approaches, there's never been a better time for GP practices to take part. We've also recently launched our Pride in Practice Training Academy, a training and accreditation service designed to promote LGBT inclusion at home, at work and in the community."

Jacque Russell from OutHouse East, a local LGBT charity in Essex said:

"OutHouse East support and advocate any training that ensures that our LGBTQ+ community have a great standard of health care. As Dr Anna Davey stated, 'unconscious bias' is something that needs to be aware of' so we would like to see more surgeries across Essex working towards a high standard of care and we will in turn support in any way we can."

Surgeries that sign up to Pride in Practice receive personalised and ongoing support from the LGBT Foundation through dedicated account managers and access to resources. As well as the 11 gold awards, one silver and three bronze awards have also been awarded in mid Essex.

The 15 practices are:

- **Blandford Medical Centre**, Braintree (Gold award)
- **Coggeshall Surgery** (Gold award)
- **Fern House Surgery**, Witham (Gold award)
- **Beauchamp House Surgery**, Chelmsford (Gold award)
- **The Writtle Surgery** (Gold award)
- **Burnham Surgery** (Gold award)
- **Rivermead Gate Medical Centre**, Chelmsford (Gold award)
- **Whitley House Surgery**, Chelmsford (Gold award)
- **Baddow Village Surgery**, Chelmsford (Gold award)
- **North Chelmsford Health Centre** (Gold award)
- **Beacon Health Group – Danbury Surgery, Mountbatten House Surgery and Moulsham Lodge Surgery** (Gold award)
- **Longfield Medical Centre**, Maldon (Silver award)
- **Chelmer Village Surgery**, Chelmsford (Bronze award)
- **Stock Surgery** (Bronze award)
- **Tollesbury Surgery** (Bronze award)



Celebrating LGBTQ+ inclusion in Witham



What was it about Pride in Practice which inspired you to champion for an LGBT ambassador?

"Pride in Practice, to me, set a bar and I just was so impressed at the effort involved. After working in healthcare and local government, I am too familiar with how hard it is to introduce anything that challenges how things are done (or not done). I was just blown away by the hard work and persistence of everyone involved and also the honesty."

"We need to step up to meet the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender patients and this is how we are going to do it. I find that approach really forward-thinking and I respect it."

What will be the main role of Witham's LGBT ambassador?

"The initial role was to essentially gather residents of Witham who identify as LGBTQ+ and create a 'safe space' where the community can connect. This is why the Witham LGBTQ+ Network [a private Facebook group] was established."

"Most importantly the LGBTQ+ Ambassador is the go-between, giving the opportunity for an official voice for the first time to speak on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community within the Town Council. It's a massive step forward."

We caught up with Councillor Chelsy Jay, a member of Witham Town Council, to ask about plans for celebrating LGBT inclusion following the town becoming the first to have a GP surgery awarded the gold Pride in Practice accolade.



Why is it important that our GP surgeries are recognised for excellence in LGBT healthcare?

"I think that it is absolutely paramount that GP surgeries are recognised for excellence in LGBT healthcare, as healthcare is a basic right for all of us. Your sexuality or gender should never affect the level of care you receive so all surgeries need to step up and I am so glad they have support to carry this out."

What other plans have you got to celebrate LGBT inclusion in Witham?

"Developing a remit for our group is very exciting! For the first time in our town's history we have a designated LGBTQ+ collective being given the opportunity to influence what's on the local town council's agenda. That really is so big."

"We hope to get a laundry list of issues and areas we want to work on, see improvements in etc, and of course, we want to have our first Witham Pride in 2021!"



Guest editor's column: Supporting LGBT communities across Essex



With Jacque Russell, Chief Executive of Outhouse East

This work combined with strong partnerships with other organisations and individuals has enabled us to build a strong, cohesive and influential voice for Essex residents.

We currently offer a variety of service ourselves, which include a counselling service, overseen by a coordinator and a clinical supervisor. We currently have 10 counsellors who volunteer their services to us, all seeing between up to four clients each.

We run two weekly youth groups, one in Colchester and one in Basildon, with 10 to 25 young people attending each session. More than 55 young people have registered with us to access support when needed and we also offer a specific young people's counsellor service and one-to-one support too.

Outhouse East is a small charity providing vital support and guidance to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) people in Essex.

The charity started 40 years ago as the Colchester Gay Switch board and today we deliver Essex-wide LGBTQ+ awareness training to public, private, and non-profit agencies across the county.

In 2018/19 we delivered 82 sessions to more than 1,300 people, focused on tackling conscious and unconscious bias and building awareness of the specific issues faced by members of the LGBTQ+ community at work, in health and throughout their lives.



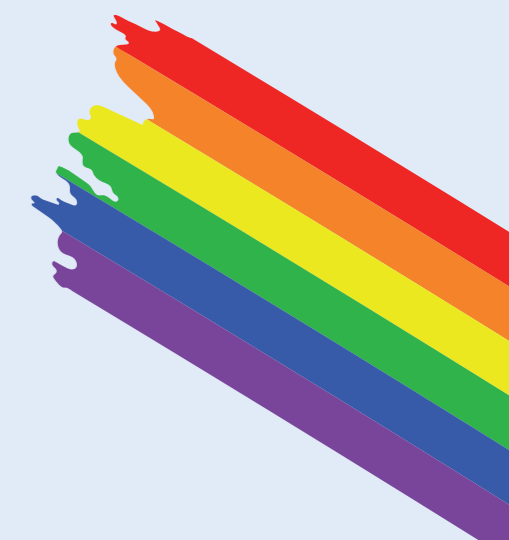
We also have agreements in place with Metro (HIV support), Next Chapter (a domestic abuse charity) and Cara (centre for action on rape and abuse) who are based in our centre supporting our community.

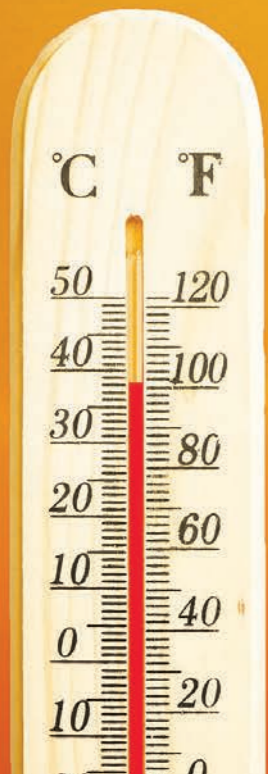
We would like to build on our current services to become all-inclusive of any support needed, ensuring stability for our community and ourselves – so please get in contact if you need support or want to get involved!

In addition to these services we offer:

- Saturday socials
- a support group for parents whose children are transitioning running (Colchester base)
- two Trans support groups.
- a women's craft group

For more information please visit our website www.outhouseeast.org.uk. You can also email us on info@outhouseeast.org.uk or call 01206 871394





Summer health

– our guide to staying safe when the heat arrives

The summer months are finally upon us and most of us welcome the sunshine and warmer weather. But not only must we remember to follow COVID-19 guidance, it is also important to remember the various health problems summer can bring that might affect you or your family.

Don't let your summer be ruined by sunstroke, dehydration or hay fever. Advice on avoiding the worst of their effects is all covered in our guide to summer health.

HEATWAVE AND VERY HOT WEATHER



There are some easy ways to stay safe when the heat arrives.

- Look out for others, especially older people, young children and babies and those with underlying health conditions
- Close curtains on rooms that face the sun to keep indoor spaces cooler and remember it may be cooler outdoors than indoors
- Drink plenty of water as sugary, alcoholic and caffeinated drinks can make you dehydrated
- Never leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle, especially infants, young children or animals
- Walk in the shade, apply sunscreen and wear a hat if you have to go out in the heat, and try to keep out of the sun between 11am and 3pm



- Take care and follow local safety advice if you are going into the water to cool down
- Avoid physical exertion in the hottest parts of the day
- Wear light, loose fitting cotton clothes
- Make sure you take water with you if you are travelling



HAY FEVER



Hay fever can be miserable for so many people as the different blossoms and allergies run through the whole summer

There's currently no cure for hay fever and you unfortunately cannot prevent it. However, you can do things to ease your symptoms when the pollen count is high including:

- putting Petroleum Jelly around your nostrils to trap pollen
- wearing wraparound sunglasses to stop pollen getting into your eyes
- showering and change your clothes after you've been outside to wash pollen off
- staying indoors whenever possible
- keeping windows and doors shut as much as possible
- vacuuming regularly and dust with a damp cloth
- buy inga pollen filter for the air vents in your car and a vacuum cleaner with a special HEPA filter

Hay fever is not a long-term medical condition and treatment is only required for a few months each year so it can be managed without medical input. There are lots of different medications available, most of which are available to buy from your community pharmacy.

The NHS in mid Essex spent around £150,000 last year paying for antihistamines, eye drops and nasal spray medications on prescription. Yet antihistamines can be bought for as little as £1.99 for 30 tablets and eye drops for as little as £4.99. This is why, when you only need them now and again, it is better to buy over the counter instead.

For more advice on managing hay fever symptoms visit www.allergyuk.org.

KEEP HYDRATED



Everyone is at risk of dehydration in hot temperatures which is why it's always important to keep hydrated, but during hot weather it's even more important to drink plenty of fluids like water – especially for the elderly or if you have a health condition such as diabetes.



Some drinks can increase dehydration, including those containing alcohol or caffeine such as tea, coffee and cola drinks. Drinks high in sugar have a similar effect – so stay clear of all these.

For those reluctant to drink water, why not try homemade ice lollies made with watered-down fruit juice or squash, or adding fruits such as lemons and limes to your bottled water?

Although you may not feel particularly hungry in the heat, don't stop eating. Perhaps try to have smaller, more frequent light meals and incorporate lots of fruits and salad which are full of water and will help hydrate you.

SUN SAFETY



We all know sunscreen is important but using the right one can be a little confusing. The NHS's general advice is a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 to protect against UVB and at least four-star UVA protection. Of course, the best protection from the sun is staying out of it at the hottest parts of the day, from 11am to 3pm.

Most people also don't apply enough sunscreen. Due to the huge range of different products available including lotions, mousses, sprays and gels it is always best to check the individual product for advice on how to apply.

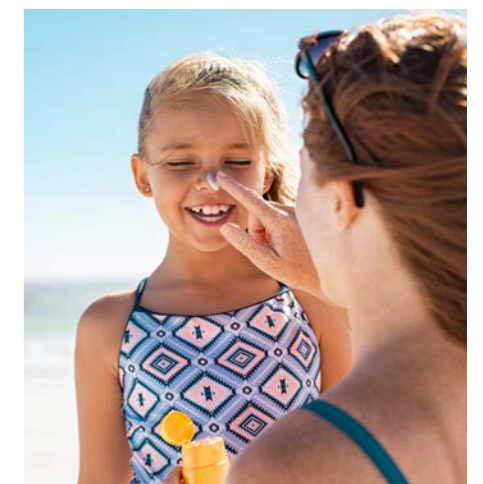
As a general guide, adults should aim to apply around two teaspoons of sunscreen if you're just covering your head, arms and neck or two tablespoons if you're covering your entire body while wearing a swimming costume.



If sunscreen is applied too thinly, the amount of protection it gives is reduced. Areas such as the back and sides of the neck, temples and ears are commonly missed, so you need to apply it generously and be careful not to miss patches.

Apply sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before going out in the sun to allow it to dry. More is better and don't forget to reapply sunscreen at least every two hours, and immediately after swimming or sweating, or if it has rubbed off for example by towel drying.

For more sun safety tips visit www.nhs.uk.



BUGS AND BITES



Like sunburn and sand between your toes, insects and bites are a pretty unpleasant part of summer. Most insect bites and stings are not serious and will get better within a few hours or days. There's lots of help available from www.nhs.uk and you can also buy creams for itching and antihistamines from your pharmacy to have at home in case you need them. and you can also buy creams for itching and antihistamines from your pharmacy to have at home in case you need them.



If you are worried about a bite or sting then seek advice from your community pharmacist, GP or call NHS111.

SPRAINS AND STRAINS



When the weather is nice it is the perfect opportunity to put down the TV remote and head outdoors for some fun and games. Being active is good for your overall wellbeing. It builds confidence, social skills and improves concentration and learning. It also helps us maintain a healthy weight and aids sleep.



However, with being active and playing sports there is more risk of sprains and strains from tripping and falling. Most minor sprains and strains are relatively minor and can be treated at home with self-care techniques, such as paracetamol or PRICE therapy.



PRICE stands for protection, rest, ice, compression and elevation.

Protection – protect the affected area from further injury – for example, by using a support.

Rest – avoid exercise and reduce your daily physical activity. Using crutches or a walking stick may help if you can't put weight on your ankle or knee. A sling may help if you've injured your shoulder.

Ice – apply an ice pack to the affected area for 15-20 minutes every two to three hours. A bag of frozen peas, or similar, will work well. Wrap the ice pack in a towel so that it doesn't directly touch your skin and cause an ice burn.

Compression – use elastic compression bandages during the day to limit swelling.

Elevation – keep the injured body part raised above the level of your heart whenever possible. This may also help reduce swelling.

A community pharmacist can offer self-care advice on managing sprains and strains and advice on the short-term use of over the counter medicines until you recover from your injury.

Safer sleeping – advice for new parents



It's more important than ever to follow **#safer sleep advice**

With families isolating at home, having a young baby can feel overwhelming, especially if they wake during the night. Parents with young babies may also have specific concerns about the risks posed by coronavirus.

The Lullaby Trust is an excellent source of advice and support to help keep your baby safe. Some of their top tips are below.

- Continue to breastfeed your baby if you are doing so
- Continue to follow safer sleep advice to lower the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- If you show symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) try not to cough or sneeze on your baby
- If your baby is unwell with a cold or fever, don't be tempted to wrap them up more than usual. Babies need fewer layers to lower their body temperature
- Always seek medical advice if you are worried about your baby – either linked to coronavirus (COVID-19) or any other health issue

There is also specific advice to follow during the COVID-19 crisis including symptoms your baby may exhibit and what medical advice you need to take in each instance. More information is available on the Lullaby Trust's Safer Sleep webpage www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/.

If you have questions about safer sleep contact The Lullaby Trust information line on 0808 802 6869 or email info@lullabytrust.org.uk.



TIPS for sharing the new baby love

- Stay in touch with family over the internet with FaceTime, WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom or other apps.
- Take lots of pictures and videos of your newborn to share with family and friends.
- If you are feeling overwhelmed and you are increasingly anxious, it is important to talk about this with your Health Visitor.

Involving you in our work



With Nathalie Wright Lay Board Member-Patient and Public Engagement

Hello there and welcome. Firstly, I hope you are all keeping safe and well in this current climate. It may seem like a while ago that we were all in touch so I just wanted to make sure that we are all aware of the different ways we can continue communicating and engaging.

As a technophobe myself I have certainly found the last 13 weeks challenging and overwhelming but also educational and inspiring.

Both my seven-year-old and elderly relatives in their 80s have been using technology to stay in touch with their friends and loved ones. Most people I have spoken to have mentioned that they have had more 'virtual' engagement and communication during this period than ever before.

Hopefully, this has allowed us all to understand and in fact appreciate the world of technology in its positive form.

To me, there is nothing better than face-to-face meetings and engagement, to understand people's emotions and their general 'vibe' on a subject. However, until we get back to the 'safe' environment without coronavirus infection risk, we may wish to take this opportunity whilst we have the time to understand the online world.

My 84-year-old auntie who is housebound is now 'online' and fascinated that she can order her prescriptions and book appointments. Her comment was simply, "Nobody told me it was that easy!"

She has also been able to contact the NHS responder number and received phone calls and deliveries from volunteers in the community. I hope this level of community care will continue.

Looking forward, I know that the Communications and Engagement team at Mid Essex CCG and their colleagues at our four partner CCGs in the south of the county are working tirelessly to ensure that our patients and public receive as much accurate information as possible.

We are investigating how we can support 'virtual' patient involvement in the form of video meetings and calls until meeting in public is possible, and maybe even after that for people who find it difficult to get to meetings in person.

Please let us know if you have a story of how communication through technology has had an impact for you in these past 13 weeks, and look after yourselves!

Nathalie



The next CCG Board meeting will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams on 30 July. If you would like to attend please email meccg.get-involved@nhs.net for the details of how you can attend.



HM Government

NHS



CORONAVIRUS STAY ALERT TO THE RISK OF INFECTION

Remember it's critical to keep washing your hands regularly for 20 seconds.

For more ways to stay safe go to gov.uk/coronavirus

STAY ALERT ▶ CONTROL THE VIRUS ▶ SAVE LIVES