

Media release

The NHS is still here for you – make sure you get care when and where you need it

28 April 2020

A major new drive has been launched to persuade the public to seek urgent care and treatment from the NHS when they need it.

Over recent weeks there has been significantly lower numbers of people contacting their GP practices or attending emergency departments and urgent treatment centres. Delays in getting medical help, advice and treatment pose a long-term risk to people's health and wellbeing and ultimately their lives.

Dr Charlotte Canniff, local GP and Clinical Chair of NHS Surrey Heartlands Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), said: "We understand people are worried about placing a burden on the NHS and we know that people are concerned about Coronavirus. However, the NHS is still here for you, there is capacity within our services and we have worked hard to ensure it is safe for you to access essential services."

Seeking medical help is one of the four reasons that people can safely leave home, in line with government guidance. If you or a member of your family experience symptoms of a heart attack or a stroke, are a worried parent or have concerns about conditions such as cancer you should seek help. If you have a symptom that you are worried about, you must contact your GP practice.

Dr Canniff added: "People really should contact their GP or use the 111 online service if they have urgent care needs, or 999 in emergencies; attending hospital if they are told they should. If you cannot get help using the online NHS 111 service then please do call 111.

"The current situation does mean services are being delivered differently, in some cases virtually, but we continue to deliver health advice and treatment safely to meet the needs of everyone. For example, if you need medical help from your GP, contact them either online or by phone to be assessed.

"I would also encourage people to continue to use other vital health services such as maternity appointments, mental health support and cancer treatment. Your clinician will discuss if there are any issues posed by Coronavirus. If we ignore problems or treatment it can have serious consequences.

"This also applies to routine vaccinations for babies and children. We know they protect against serious and potentially deadly illnesses and it is imperative that even during the

Coronavirus outbreak we do not stop protecting ourselves and our communities against other viruses.”

If you need medical help and it's not a life threatening emergency, remember to call your GP practice, call NHS 111 or visit www.111.nhs.uk first.

ENDS

For more information please contact the Press Office on 07825 946551.

Note to editors

About Surrey Heartlands CCG

Surrey Heartlands CCG is the merged Clinical Commissioning Group which formed in April 2020 combining East Surrey, Guildford and Waverley, North West Surrey and Surrey Downs Clinical Commissioning Groups. The CCG is part of the [Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership](#), which covers a population of over one million people.

Heart Attacks

If you think you or a family member are suffering with the symptoms of a heart attack you must dial 999 immediately.

- If you or a family member develop symptoms such as heavy or tight chest pain that may spread to your arms, neck or jaw, or make you breathless, sick, sweaty or light-headed and that doesn't go away, this could be caused by a heart attack. Dial 999 immediately.

Stroke Patients

- If you think you or a family member are suffering with the symptoms of a stroke you must dial 999 immediately.
- You can spot the symptoms of a stroke by using the FAST test:
 - Face - is the face drooping / fallen on one side? Can they smile?
 - Arms - can they raise both arms and keep them there?
 - Speech - is it slurred?
 - Time to call 999 if you see any of the above signs

Pregnant Women

- If you are pregnant it is important that you still attend your antenatal appointments and continue to seek advice from your midwife or maternity team.
- If you are worried about your health or the health of your unborn baby, please contact your midwife or maternity team.

Parents of young children

- If you are worried about the health of your baby or child, please call 111.
- If it's a serious or life-threatening emergency, call 999

Mental Health

- If you are concerned about the mental health of your child, please contact your GP or check online self-referral options for under 18 years olds at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/
- If you are facing mental health issues contact your GP or key worker, if you have one, and continue to access your mental health services as usual. We are also still open for new referrals, via your GP or online.
- If you're experiencing stress and anxiety, you can get further information, including how to self-refer to psychological therapies at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/
- If you are facing a mental health crisis, use the NHS 111 online service. If you cannot get help online, call 111.

Learning Disability and Autism

- If you need medical help reasonable adjustments will be made so you get the right care and support.
- Your local community teams and crisis support lines are available if you are worried or anxious.