

# Patient Update

Newsletter for Patient Participation Groups

August 2020



## Consultation on commissioning of hydrotherapy services

A 12-week public consultation has just been launched to seek views on the future provision of hydrotherapy services in Berkshire West.

The move is part of a review of services to make health care fit for purpose and ensure money is being spent wisely to provide modern, efficient and effective services for the benefit of as many people as possible.

**Commissioning of  
hydrotherapy services  
in Berkshire West**

The graphic is a dark blue rectangle with white text. At the bottom, there are three light blue wavy lines representing water.

The consultation survey, which is being run by the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (BWCCG), started on 10 August. Further information and the questionnaire are on their website: [www.berkshirewestccg.nhs.uk/hydrotherapy](http://www.berkshirewestccg.nhs.uk/hydrotherapy)

Hydrotherapy is water based exercise which is an additional, 'complementary' service offered to a small percentage of patients needing physiotherapy.

The service is commissioned by BWCCG and managers want to establish where the service fits within their commissioning agenda, and whether it meets the demands of the NHS Long Term Plan which is dedicated to ambitious health and social care improvements over the next decade.

Dr Abid Irfan, Chair of Berkshire West CCG, said: "the demands of Covid have turned the spotlight on all NHS services, and what's been clear is that a lot of what we do could be done very differently.

"We're keen not to lose this momentum of change to bring about big benefits for patients, and our staff. So, across the NHS, we're turning our attention to a wide range of work, looking at what we do and asking why we do it in a particular way; whether it can be done differently; delivered elsewhere, and whether it provides proven benefits for as wide a range of people as possible," Dr Irfan added.

"The NHS is facing huge demands from an ageing and growing population and it's our duty to make sure we get the most out of taxpayers' investment in the NHS, use our limited resources prudently and deliver essential and effective care to everyone across Berkshire West.

"The hydrotherapy service is one of many that have been suspended for safety reasons during Covid which is why we feel now is as good a time as any to re-look at the facility and how it fits into the shape of our local NHS services in the future.

“We are holding a wide ranging, long running consultation exercise over the next 12 weeks so we can get a really in-depth picture of the way the service is used and what people feel are its benefits.”

## Next month’s Health and Wellbeing Conference for West Berkshire is taking place online and virtually via Zoom, on Friday 11 September

It’s free and open to everyone and is aimed at sharing insights and promoting discussion about how we can learn from the COVID crisis and use what we’ve learnt to strengthen our communities, improve wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.



COVID has affected us all in different ways.

- Young people have generally been affected less physically but are suffering educationally, socially, mentally, and economically. How can we avoid a ‘lost generation’?
- It has brought out the best of our volunteering spirit but how do we capitalise on that and ensure the best use continues to be made of this fantastic resource?
- Some groups, particularly ethnic minorities, people in deprived areas and older people in care homes have suffered particularly badly. How can we stop that happening in future and take this opportunity to redouble our efforts to reduce health inequalities?
- How do we make sure we all pull together – as organisations and individuals – to build a happier, healthier, and more resilient future?

The event runs from 12.30 to 3pm and speakers will include Kamal Bahia, Head of the Health and Wellbeing Board Engagement Group; Garry Poulson, Director of the Volunteer Centre West Berkshire; Matt Pearce, Head of Public Health and Wellbeing, West Berkshire Council and Nick Carter, Chief Executive West Berkshire Council.

There will be question and answer sessions and breakout events. If you’d like to take part you can sign up at [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/health-and-wellbeing-conference-tickets-114084830800) (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/health-and-wellbeing-conference-tickets-114084830800>). You will receive a conference link and password a few days before the event giving details on how to access the Conference. If you would like to participate in a Breakout Session, you can secure your ticket via the same Eventbrite page.

If you’d like to submit questions before the event please contact: [kamalbahia@nhs.net](mailto:kamalbahia@nhs.net)  
You can also keep in touch with the latest updates via the [Facebook page](#).

## Building Berkshire Together

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust is beginning a major modernisation of its services and buildings to develop and deliver outstanding NHS services that are fit for the future, and to play a greater part in the growth and development of their local economy. This long-term,

modernisation programme will see the investment of hundreds of millions of pounds over the course of the next ten years and will involve every one of their public and private sector partners. The Trust have just launched a digital platform giving full information about the plans to develop a masterplan, or blueprint, for an amazing hospital, delivering outstanding care and treatment for local people. They'd like patients, partners and local communities to help them design it so the new hospital is built with the real needs of patients and staff firmly in mind and everyone's expertise, experience, and ambition flow through the design.

Please register and login to the site, and take the survey to share what you would like to see: <https://thefutureroyalberkshire.uk.engagementhq.com/royal-berkshire-fit-for-the-future>

## New online support network launched in Berkshire West to help young people struggling with mental health difficulties.

The Youth Counselling service, called Kooth, will complement a range of other mental health support packages provided for youngsters across Berkshire West. It's primarily aimed at dealing with issues around Covid but will play a key role in supporting the young people re-adjust to life post-Covid.



Kooth, which is live now, provides a seven day a week online platform with a trained counsellor available until 10pm each night. It offers self-help and useful psychological information; moderated peer support alongside supervised and professional support. There is also be an option of around 8 sessions with the same counsellor if this is felt the best way of helping the young person.

The service, which is aimed at 11 to 18 year olds, is being pioneered by Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in partnership with the 3 Local Authorities with support from Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and our local voluntary sector. It's already up and running in 140 other CCG areas across the country, and last year supported more than 134,000 children and young people.

Kooth will virtually support children who are waiting to see a counsellor and also divert those who don't need a face to face appointment – freeing up places for more pressing cases. Special sessions for school staff are being held to raise awareness of the service, and there will be posters and information cards available to youngsters when they return to the classrooms in September.

Katrina Anderson, Director of joint Commissioning for Berkshire West CCG, said: "Kooth is a widely respected tool with a good track record of delivering vital mental health support to children and young people. It's working very well in many other areas of the country where it is accessible to more than 75 per cent of 11-18 year olds.



"Covid has placed specific challenges on young people - the sudden interruption of their school life, separation from their friends, social isolation, being at home with family members who may

be worried about jobs and finances, concerns about health - all on top of the other issues young people struggle with as they are growing up. These sort of worries won't go away for many of them when they go back to school in September which is why this easy-to-access online service is so invaluable".

## Recover in Mind West Berkshire

Recovery in Mind offers free courses to adults in West Berkshire with mental health difficulties.

Set up four years ago, they've helped over 350 adults, designed and delivered over 20 different courses and under normal circumstances, would be running more than 50 courses during the year.

Founder Angela Ryan says; ' Covid-19 has had a significant impact on both people's physical and mental health. Come September we will be returning, offering adults in West Berkshire quality support to help them take back control and learn to live with their mental health challenges.'

There's full details of the courses at <https://recoverymind.org>.

## New Emergency Department pilot

A new way of treating frail and some older people at the Emergency Department (ED) is being piloted in Reading to provide them with a separate, quieter more spacious area and easier access to specialist care.

The month long pilot at the Royal Berkshire Hospital is for some people aged over 80 and others who are potentially frail. It's aimed at reducing the number of times these patients have to be moved around ED as they are being assessed to determine their best course of treatment. It's hoped this will ease the confusion and disorientation older people can often experience during a visit to ED.

Space has been set aside for the new Older Person Emergency Department which is less busy, quieter and has easier access to bathrooms. There will be a range of health professionals staffing the area including an Occupational Therapist and Frailty Practitioner, ED nurses, doctors and health support workers. They will be supported by an Elderly Care Consultant/Registrar.

Older people and people living with frailty will be directed to the special area after they've had the routine tests like bloods and ECG if it's felt this is the most appropriate way to continue their treatment.

Dr Zac Etheridge, Consultant Geriatrician and Clinical Lead for Acute Medicine at the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, said: "ED can be an extremely busy and noisy area. We know people in their 80s and older, and others who are living with frailty, may find this activity very disconcerting, causing confusion or worsening their health problems."

## If you're worried about cancer

If you have any signs or symptoms of cancer, you may be worried about whether you will be able to see a GP or a specialist and get any tests you need. You may also be worried about whether it is safe to do so. Please do still contact your GP straight away, while coronavirus (COVID-19) is a concern, it is still important to talk to your GP about any worries you may have about cancer. If you do have cancer, this will help you to get a diagnosis as soon as possible

Cancer teams throughout the UK are doing their best to maintain services. They want to ensure that cancer diagnosis, treatment and care continues as much as possible.

Macmillan is doing everything they can to make sure their vital support continues to be available for much needed clinical advice, financial information and emotional support during this difficult time. Call 0808 808 0000 or go to [www.macmillan.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/coronavirus)

## Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) AGM

NHS Berkshire West CCG is holding their AGM on Tuesday 8 September. Further details will be shared on the [CCG website](#) nearer the time.

## Babies and children under three should not wear face masks

Health officials are warning that babies and children under the age of three must not wear masks or face coverings as they pose serious risks of choking and suffocation.

The Government introduced new rules on face masks in public places last month but, following the news that some shops were selling masks for very young children, the health teams at the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust and Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group are warning parents of the dangers these pose. Messages are being posted on social media and the health websites, [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk) and [www.berkshirewestccg.nhs.net](http://www.berkshirewestccg.nhs.net)

Liz Stead, Head of Safeguarding Children at the CCG, said: "Whilst the wearing of masks for any child under the age of 11 is not compulsory, we've noticed some shops have been selling masks aimed specifically at babies and toddlers. We are very concerned about this and want to alert parents and carers to the dangers around masks and face coverings for these infants.



“The best way to protect young children is to follow the guidelines around frequent hand washing, keeping equipment and surfaces in the home cleaned, wiping down toys and baby changing mats and maintaining the social distancing rules.

“If a child starts to show any symptoms of concern – a high temperature and/or constant cough, parents and carers should go onto NHS 111 online or ring their GP surgery for advice,” she added.

## **Berkshire West Shared Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2020**

Every few years, our local Council’s produce a Health and Wellbeing Strategy jointly with NHS colleagues to set out priorities for local people and enable commissioners to plan integrated services that meet the needs of the whole local community. Covid has meant that identifying the future local priorities for residents is more important than ever.

This year, an ambitious ten-year Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being drawn up to cover the whole Berkshire West patch - Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire. This is because they have similar populations with people working and socialising in different boroughs from where they live, and they share NHS services.

A lot of work has already taken place to gather data on local priorities in each of the boroughs, and the prioritisation process is due to start shortly, with the aim of publishing the final document early next year.

Covid has affected the way engagement with local people and key stakeholders can be carried out, but it’s still vital to hear the views of local people. It’s particularly important that people from the BAME community, vulnerable residents and those whose voices may not have previously been heard in discussions like this feel included and able to have their say.

Please take a little time to have a look at the survey - [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KRLJT7N](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KRLJT7N). The responses will shape a wider public consultation in the autumn.

## **Opportunities for public membership on NIHR research committees**

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) involves patients and the public in their decision making processes on research funding and management.

They currently have [voluntary opportunities](#) for public members on their national research funding committees. There’s information [on their website](#). The closing date for applications is 9am, 7 September 2020.

If you have any queries please contact: [netspublic@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:netspublic@nihr.ac.uk).

## Health at Home

NHS Health at Home encourages patients to try online first when looking for an NHS service. Further down the page is a useful video “**If you need to contact a GP**” – this gives simple explanations on how to contact practices remotely. <https://www.nhs.uk/health-at-home>

## All change at the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

Nicky Lloyd has been appointed acting Chief Executive of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust for six months. She is standing in for Steve McManus who has been seconded to help operationalise the Test and Trace deployment with NHSE until next February.