**Changes to local health services: COVID-19**

**A spokesperson for NHS West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), said:**

*“As we continue to face this Coronavirus pandemic, we have been working locally in West Lancashire to ensure we are mobilised in order to cope with more demand on many areas of our NHS services.  This is so we can look after those who need us most, while also protecting our staff.*

*“We have been busy working hard to ensure we have enough protective equipment for our staff, the right respiratory equipment we need to take care of those with Covid-19 and also ensure we are working differently to cope with the pressures we are and will experience over the coming weeks and months. This includes looking after those who may fall unwell, which are unrelated to this pandemic.*

*“We know this is a very unprecedented time and acknowledge the fear and anxiety many of us will be feeling across West Lancashire.  We would like to offer some reassurance to you that we are working tirelessly to get this right and be as prepared as we can.  This, however, means shaping services differently to how you are used to. This could mean anything from asking you to visit a different building to how you are used to, have a chat over the phone to explain your health need or not be able to visit somewhere you perhaps rely on frequently to manage your health and wellbeing. Finally and very importantly we ask all patients to please not attend any health service with suspected Covid-19 symptoms”.*

Please note – local staff will wear masks and aprons, in order to ensure they are protected and respect social distancing.

We have captured below some key changes that are happening across local health services.  This does not go into the detail of every specific service but offers a general overview.

**GP Practices**

* Over the coming weeks, you will find that GP practices are structured and working very differently. This is because we are working together in new ways.
* All patients will be screened via phone before being given an appointment.
* Please expect a great deal of our care to be delivered by phone or video, instead of face to face.
* We will be using our teams in different ways to ensure the well and those with Covid-19 symptoms are cared for separately. This may mean you are asked to access the services in a new way.
* We will continue to support home visiting where needed.

**Community Health Services**

* Staff are carrying out initial screening before patients come to any appointments to ensure they have no Covd-19 symptoms. This applies to home visits as well.
* Community services will be working closely with primary and social care to ensure services are wrapped around those patients being discharged from hospital
* All non-essential podiatry appointments have been cancelled until further notice, with the exception of high risk and dressing clinics. All new referrals will be triaged and seen if urgent. Non-urgent referrals will be moved to an assessment waiting list until further notice.
* Please contact Virgin Care’s Single Point of Access with any queries:

vcl.westlancs-spa@nhs.net 0300 241 0011

**Urgent Treatment Centre/Walk-In Centre**

* The Urgent Treatment Centre in Ormskirk and Walk-in Centre in Skelmersdale will be moving to booked appointments only as of Saturday 28 March 2020. Patients should not attend either centre in person without phoning 01695 402180 first. Some patients will be treated over the phone and some will be given an appointment at one of the centres.
* This change is to protect our patients and staff. Many other areas are approaching this in a similar way during this time.

**Hospital services**

* Planned care appointments and non-urgent operations have been postponed.
* The hospital is working hard to ensure there is capacity by discharging patients who are well enough to go home
* The trust is delivering respiratory training to those who need it
* Southport & Ormskirk has stopped all visitors into the hospital sites, in line with many other trusts UK wide <https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-puts-stop-to-hospital-visiting/>