

Our Healthier South East London
South East London ICS
1st Floor, Hub 1
PO Box 64529
160 Tooley Street
London, SE1P 5LX

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XXXX

By email only

8 June 2020

Dear XXXX

NHS Covid-19 briefing for south east London

Further to the briefing I shared with you 26 May, things continue to change in terms of the Covid-19 response being undertaken nationally, across London and here in south east London.

As you will be very aware, from 1 June, lockdown rules in England were changed so that up to six people can meet outside of their household in parks, gardens, and other outdoor spaces, as long as they maintain social distancing. Last week new guidance was shared for those who have been shielding for the previous two months, who now able to go outside and spend time with their household, or one person outside their household. In addition, further guidance was issued over the weekend on face masks and coverings to be worn by all NHS hospital staff and visitors, which comes in to effect from 15 June.

The new NHS Test and Trace service was launched on 28 May, with specific guidance on how it will work for the NHS and social care published at the same time. An update on this service from a south east London perspective is provided below.

Updates on such important matters as shielding, testing and NHS Test and Trace are just three examples of the advice for clinical and non-clinical matters that continues to be updated regularly, which we ensure is shared with our frontline health and care staff.

As you will see from the update below on what is happening in our acute and other hospitals, the focus is now turning to include the changes we need to make to ensure that we are able to restart - safely - planned care for patients. This is not just about freeing up capacity previously used to combat Covid-19 as pressures ease on London's health service, but how this is done in ways that reassure people that the new arrangements are prioritising their safety. And, of course, we will continue to use telephone and video consultation where clinically that is the right thing to do.

Covid-19 cases and deaths in south east London

Cases of patients with Covid-19 are collated and published nationally by upper tier local authority. Deaths are collated and reported nationally by acute trust, as well as now by upper tier local authority. The following information relates to the period to 6 June for cases and to 22 May for deaths:

	England	London	SE London
Cases (published daily by PHE)	154,908	27,139	6,196
Deaths (published weekly by ONS)	42,210	8,034	1,510

The number of people testing positive for Covid-19 in each of south east London's boroughs for the period up to 6 June is:

- Bexley – 728
- Bromley – 1,286
- Greenwich – 704
- Lambeth – 1,214
- Lewisham – 990
- Southwark – 1,274

In terms of deaths, the borough level information is set out below (which is the weekly position published on 26 May, reflecting deaths up to 22 May but registered by 31 May).

	Care home	Home	Hospice	Hospital	Other	Total
Bexley	25	11	6	159	2	203
Bromley	69	14	7	227	1	318
Greenwich	20	8	3	179	2	212
Lambeth	24	18	5	217	1	265
Lewisham	22	20	2	231	1	276
Southwark	56	17	2	160	1	236

Further information about Covid-19 deaths that have taken place in hospitals can be found on the [NHS England/Improvement website](#). The [Office for National Statistics](#) publishes provisional counts of the number of deaths and age-standardised mortality rates involving Covid-19 between for England and Wales. The figures are provided by age, sex, geographies down to local authority level and deprivation indices.

Tackling inequalities in Covid-19

Two reports published in early June highlight the differential impact of Covid-19. A [Public Health England](#) report looking at the disparities in the impact of Covid-19 shows that lower-paid workers, older adults and men are generally the worst affected by coronavirus. The report also found that in the UK, black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people are up to twice as likely to die of coronavirus than white British people. A [CQC publication](#) suggests that the death rate for those with a learning disability is three times that of the national average.

Addressing inequalities will continue to be a priority, is a focus of the Our Healthier South East London Long Term Plan as well as the cornerstone of our developing recovery plan. We will focus relentlessly on reducing inequalities and are committed to creating tangible actions to progress and promote equality.

NHS Test and Trace

The NHS Test and Trace service went live on Thursday, 28 May. Anyone with a positive Covid-19 test result will now be contacted via NHS Test and Trace and asked to provide details of places they have been and of people they have been in contact with recently. In addition to those with a positive test being required to self-isolate for seven days, contacts of these cases will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days. Importantly for our ICS, where contact has been with staff wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), they will not automatically need to self-isolate. This will be critical in continuing the resilience of our services.

Any positive test results linked to places such as care homes, schools, hostels or where there is additional complexity will be managed by Public Health England working with local authority public health teams. Support for those who have been asked to self-isolate is available through the hubs that have been established in all boroughs to support people who are shielding or clinically vulnerable to the virus.

Ensuring that those who have symptoms of coronavirus can access testing quickly via nhs.uk/coronavirus or calling 119 will be critical to the effectiveness of the NHS Test and Trace service. It is also important that local communities have confidence in, and are able to act on, the advice to self-isolate to prevent any further spread of the virus.

There is a London-wide group that is developing information for London's communities to address the needs of our diverse population and help ensure that the messages reach everyone.

Each director of public health now receives a daily report with the number of cases in their borough; they will also work closely with the South London Health Protection Teams from Public Health England to manage any localised outbreaks.

In parallel, local authorities have been asked to develop outbreak control plans. These will form the borough's response to both preventing new outbreaks and managing any identified in local areas. Clearly engagement with residents is an essential component of these plans.

Whilst these plans are borough-based, the directors of public health are working together across south east London to ensure that there is a shared approach and that support and mutual aid is available across the six boroughs as required.

Acute services in south east London

Hospitals in south east London continue to treat patients who have tested positive for Covid-19, however, there is now an increasing focus on restarting services that were suspended at the beginning of the pandemic back in March. In the past few weeks, we have also begun to see increase in emergency department attendances.

While patients will continue to have virtual and telephone consultations wherever clinically that is the right thing to do, plans are being developed for the return of patients to hospital for elective and other procedures. This includes reverting wards back to their pre-Covid-19 purpose, as well as staff returning to their substantive roles.

Provider organisations are also ensuring that plans ensure the safety both of patients and staff as far as possible to mitigate the further onset of Covid-19. This work involves plans being developed that include the management of social distancing on hospital sites, as well as reviews of current visiting policies.

We are planning to increase the amount of non-Covid work we are able to undertake and some patients are now being contacted to arrange a date for their operation. Patients coming in for planned treatments are being asked to self-isolate for 14 days and to have a swab test before their admission date. This helps minimise the risk to them and to staff, whilst enabling much needed treatments to go ahead. For each patient we are assessing whether the benefits of treatment outweigh the risk. Infection control measures mean that we are able to see fewer patients than usual and some patients will continue to be offered treatment in the Independent Sector to help us ensure as many patients are treated as possible.

Urgent South London Mental Health Prevention Summit

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust jointly with local authorities: Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark hosted an Urgent Mental Health Prevention Summit to address how to work together to protect our communities' mental health as result of Covid-19. The virtual Summit addressed the wider impact on our communities' mental wellbeing as the country emerges from Covid-19. The Summit set out the following six actions as the starting point for a 12-month programme of mental health prevention:

- To create a mental health prevention taskforce that will have representatives from across organisations and boroughs that will oversee a twelve-month prevention programme.
- To develop a programme of mental health community capacity building across south London – which will work with schools, faith and community groups to stay well. Making sure we reach out and listen to as many communities as possible across our four boroughs, including those for whom English is not a first language to help shape this work.
- To create a package of digital mental wellbeing courses for all residents across south London through the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust Recovery College
- To support and share the south east London Free Your Mind mental health campaign with all our residents and communities
- To work together on tracking the levels of psychological distress in our communities as a result of Covid-19
- To host a Mental Health Prevention follow-up summit in October to report back on progress and further challenges as a result of Covid-19. The shared action and implementation plan will be published in full.

I trust that you will find the information contained in this latest briefing helpful. If there is any subject area that you would like us to consider including in future such briefings, please email Peter Gibson, the CCG's director of communications and engagement (peter.gibson2@nhs.net).

Best wishes



Andrew Bland

CCG Accountable Officer and South East London ICS Lead