



20 March 2020

Dear stakeholder,

In light of the rapidly developing situation with coronavirus (COVID-19) we thought it would be helpful to share some information with you about the CCG's response.

Like other NHS and public sector organisations across the country, the considerable response needed to manage the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) is a priority for the CCG and we know that this is similarly a key area of focus for our partner organisations.

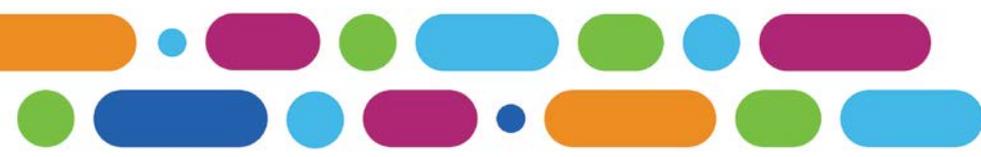
We are following measures from Public Health England (PHE), NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to protect patients and NHS staff and minimise impact on wider health services. And our work is reflecting the national move to delaying the spread, as announced at the end of last week. We are working with health and local authority partners, including public health, to manage the local response to COVID-19 and are working to implement measures recently announced by NHS Chief Executive, Sir Simon Stevens.

As the response to the pandemic is currently our primary focus, our board have been reviewing all of our priorities and have scaled down activities that don't relate to the COVID-19 response, including board committees and meetings. This will be in place for the next three months, and we will continue to review the situation as it evolves. Any urgent business will be conducted via shorter virtual meetings.

Alongside this, we are assessing those areas of CCG work that we can put on hold or pare back during this period when groups of our staff are working so intensely on managing this response to the virus. We are also identifying staff who can provide additional support for other services under particular pressure – particularly 111 services that receive calls from the public, concerned that they may have coronavirus.

We're supporting general practice in adapting the way they look after patients, in line with the government's approach to protecting people against coronavirus by reducing contact to essential circumstances. GP surgeries are reducing the need for patients to come into their practice by triaging patients requesting an appointment and moving to telephone and online consultations where clinically appropriate. Patients are also being supported to order repeat prescriptions remotely and to collect them from local pharmacies. Face-to-face appointments are still available for patients where needed and where practices are sure that there is no risk to patients or staff.

Other measures being introduced in the local NHS, and across the country, include freeing up hospital resources by cancelling elective surgery, testing health professionals for coronavirus and refocusing community services to maximise the clinical support available.





For the public, we are reiterating public health advice around self-isolation and hygiene and handwashing and through various communication channels including a [Coronavirus page on the CCG website](#) and through our social media channels.

The gov.uk website has a host of [guidance and regulations](#) for various organisations as well as [information and advice for the public](#) on COVID-19 including the current situation in the UK and information about the virus and symptoms.

We hope you have found this update informative and useful.

With very best wishes

Dr Nicolas Small, Chair, Herts Valleys CCG

David Evans, Interim Chief Executive, Herts Valleys CCG

