

7 May 2020

## Welcome to the Healthwatch City of London newsletter

During these unprecedented times, many health and social care services are being delivered very differently and many of these changes will remain for a long time and may be permanent. As users we have had little opportunity to help support clinical and care teams in making these changes so that they meet our needs. This is because of the necessary speed of change.

We are working closely with providers of services to make sure your voice is heard as we move forward into a 'new normal', where services are provided very differently.

Our series of surveys will give us insight into your views and experiences of the current services, and your thoughts on the future provision of services; keeping the best of the changes and making sure we build the good work whilst suggesting where we discard those elements that don't work. We will focus on ensuring that people's worries and concerns about current services are addressed and we work to get services right for the future. Information gained from the surveys are fed back to service providers and will be used to guide service provision in the future.

Please also let us know of your experience and thoughts by completing our surveys. Results from the surveys will be fed back to the clinical commissioning group for City and Hackney, the North East London Integrated Care Board, the Corporation of London and service providers. It is important that our voice is heard

With the ongoing Covid situation we are working to get the most up to date information to you. We have summarised the main points below, but please refer to our [advice and information pages](#), which are continuously updated.

Public Board meeting: we will be holding our next Public Board meeting on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May between 12:00 and 14:00. The meeting, which will be held virtually, will cover the work of Healthwatch City of London so far this year, we will also discuss our priorities and aims for the future. If you'd like to attend please email us at [info@healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk) We will send joining details nearer the time. For more information please visit the [events](#) section of our website.

Stay safe

Gail Beer, Chair Healthwatch City of London

## Latest information and advice for residents

We constantly update our website with any new [advice or information](#) pertaining to the City of London and our residents. Please make sure you check regularly for the up to date advice.

## Neaman Practice

Please do not visit the surgery. You can still ask for medical advice by requesting a telephone triage appointment on the day (currently this cannot be booked in advance) [020 7600 9740](tel:02076009740). If you have trouble getting through to the Practice, please call NHS 111.

## Prescriptions

Neaman Surgery: All repeat prescription requests to be made via your Patient Access account, via your nominated pharmacy or by emailing the Neaman Practice [theneamanpractice@nhs.net](mailto:theneamanpractice@nhs.net) (Please allow 48 working hours). Please note for new or expired or acute medication request, you may be required to speak to a clinician. If you do not have access to email or a digital account please call the practice on 020 7600 9740.

You can register for the NHS APP <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app/>) via your APP store and order your repeat prescription

If you need to collect a prescription and have coronavirus symptoms or are self-isolating at home – please arrange for a friend, relative or volunteer to collect for you.

To help to keep supplying medicines to everyone who needs them, please only order repeat prescriptions in your usual quantities at the usual time.

## Dentistry

For the very latest advice please check the [dentistry page](#) our website

- All NHS dental practices are expected to be providing urgent telephone advice and triage. Anyone with a regular dentist should, as a first step, call their practice. Patients should not visit the practice. The dentist will assess the patient's condition, give advice, and if needed, issue prescriptions for painkillers or antibiotics which can then be collected from, or delivered by a local pharmacy.
- Anyone without a regular dentist may refer to the [NHS Find a Dentist website](#) to obtain details of a local practice.
- If, following triage by a dentist, the patient is assessed as requiring an urgent face-to-face treatment, they will be directed to ring 111 where they will be triaged by the Dental Triage service.
- Following assessment by the Dental Triage Service, if the patient needs an onward referral, this will be made to one of the Urgent Dental Care Hubs (UDCH)
- Following remote assessment by the UDCH, if felt clinically appropriate, the patient will be directed to attend for a face-to-face consultation.

Please do not visit A&E departments with dental problems.

## Ophthalmology

**Moorfields eye hospital:** Offering an emergency care line 'Moorfields A&E Attend Anywhere service'. The service is a video call which will run at the following times **9am and 5pm Monday to Friday** and between **10am and 4pm on Saturdays and Sundays (please note that the service is closed between 12.30-13.30 Monday- Friday)** The service is for existing Moorfields patients and those who live locally to Moorfields Eye Hospital in London who have a potentially life or sight threatening problem.

The service is not for general advice on minor conditions or to discuss use of medications or upcoming appointments. The hospital will attempt to answer all calls within 30 minutes. At busy times and at weekends the wait can be up to two hours.

If you need general advice, you can also try the nurse-led line on 0207 566 2345, 9am-5pm Monday to Friday and 9am-5pm on Saturdays. Full information can be found on their website.

**Guys and St Thomas's hospitals NHS Foundation Trust:** The eye emergency service remains open at St Thomas's hospital for people with acute eye problems. Before attending, please call 020 7188 4336 for advice from staff to make sure your visit is necessary. The service is open Monday-Friday, 9am-3pm. Out of these hours, eye emergencies will be seen in the main eye emergency department on a walk-in basis. Please note that the entrance near the eye department by Lambeth Place Road/Evelina London Children's Hospital is now closed. Entry to the eye department is via St Thomas' Hospital main entrance.

**Boots Opticians:** Boots Opticians is offering an adviceline for urgent eye care, call 0345 125 3768. They may offer you a face to face appointment for essential care locally or an urgent appointment at one of their hub stores. The nearest store for this is 114 High Street North, Newham, E6 2HT.

**Vision Express:** Vision Express are also offering a telephone consultancy service, but advise not to visit their stores. You can call them on 0800 038 2177. You can also order or top up your contact lenses.

**Specsavers:** Specsavers are advising to call your local store for urgent eye or hearing advice. The nearest stores are:

London Liverpool Street, 14 New Street, London, EC2M 4TR. Tel: 020 7377 4970 or

London Wall, 150-151 Salisbury House Shops, London Wall, EC2M 5QD. Tel: 020 7330 1130

## Hearing

You should use your usual provider for any issues, including batteries for hearing aids. However, if they are not available, Boots Hearing care are currently offering a delivery service for hearing aid batteries. Click on this [link to access their website](#) or you can call them on 0345 270 1600.

## Advice for parents

There are concerns in the healthcare sector that parents are not getting in touch for non-COVID-19-related illnesses or injuries for a range of reasons, including fear of having to visit hospital and not wanting to burden the NHS.

Barts Health NHS Trust and East London Health and care partnership has developed advice to help parents decide whether they should use NHS 111/ call their GP/ visit A&E/ call 999 if their child is ill or injured.

### **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.

**If you think you are pregnant, you should contact your GP surgery.**

### **Newborn baby and immunisations**

To register your baby at the Neaman Practice you will need to complete the New Patient Registration GMS1 form <https://www.theneamanpractice.nhs.uk/new-patients-2> and then email [theneamanpractice@nhs.net](mailto:theneamanpractice@nhs.net) with your discharge summary and birth certificate and a member of our admin will be in touch with further instructions. If you do not have access to email please call the Practice on (020 7600 9740)

All 6 weeks checks will be done at 8 weeks to align with the 8-week immunisation schedule. Postnatal checks will be carried out by a member of the clinical team, please call and ask for a telephone triage appointment ([020 7600 9740](tel:02076009740))

### **If you are receiving treatment for cancer**

If you have a symptom that you are worried about, you must contact your GP Practice. Your clinician will discuss with you the benefits of starting or continuing your cancer treatment against the increased risks of contracting coronavirus.

If you have any concerns regarding your condition or current treatment please contact your GP Practice or your designated nurse.

### **Suspected Heart Attack?**

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.

## Suspected Stroke?

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

## Worried about your own or another's 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/](http://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. The NHS 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/](http://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.

## Further advice

The City of London Corporation now have a dedicated page on their website. Here you will find the [latest advice](#) for residents of the city on Covid-19 and where to get help and advice.

[www.GOV.uk](http://www.GOV.uk) is the official source of advice from the government. It is updated on a daily basis.

## Advice on shielding

We are aware of some confusion around shielding. We are looking into the situation and can report back the following information. We will continually update you with any new information, so please continue to check our website.

### Letter from the Neaman Practice:

The Neaman Practice has issued a letter regarding shielding. The letter dated 30th April state that recipients should shield for 12 weeks from today (the date on the letter). This is confusing as shielding is meant to start from the end of March. We have checked with the Neaman Practice who have confirmed that shielding should start from the end of March, and not the date of their letter.

We've been made aware that the letter may have gone straight into your email junk box, please ensure you check this ASAP.

### Government advice:

The Government is currently advising people to shield until the end of June and is regularly monitoring this position ([advice updated 5 May 2020](#)).

### Clinical Commissioning Group advice:

Our CCG will be issuing letters towards the end of the shielding period, the letters will advise on how to come out of the shielding period safely, and what services and provision will be in place. We have asked for input into this letter to ensure that it contains the information you wish to know. Please let us know by [emailing us](#), if there is any specific information that you'd like included.

To clarify the government advice, shielding means:

Do not leave your house.

Do not attend any gatherings.

This includes gatherings of friends and families in private spaces, for example, family homes, weddings and religious services.

Strictly avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough.

## NHS Open for Business

The coronavirus pandemic has resulted in a decrease in people accessing NHS services for a range of conditions that are not related to coronavirus.



The NHS is keen to emphasize that it is still open to provide care for you.

The advice given is that you can still contact your GP, 111 online or call 111 for help. If you are told to go to hospital, you must go.

## Advice issued for spending Ramadan in lockdown

The Muslim Council of Britain, the largest umbrella organisation for Muslims in Britain, has published [online guidance](#) to help millions cope with the restrictions of lockdown during the fasting month of Ramadan.

This year's Ramadan, which began last week at the end of this week, will be a very different experience for Muslims.

With lockdown continuing, there will be no congregational acts of worship outside the home, no Taraweeh prayers at the mosque and no iftars (usually a huge ritual meal marking the breaking of the fast after sundown) with friends and family to attend.

Instead, the MCB is offering guidance on how to arrange virtual iftars online with loved ones and community members by using video chat.

The MCB advises to plan your iftar menus in advance, so as to avoid multiple shopping trips.

It also suggests eating high-energy, slow-burning foods during the second meal of the night, the suhoor, which takes place just before dawn, to help maintain energy levels throughout the daylight fasting hours.

## NHS 111 - Healthwatch City of London survey

This week we have launched our survey to understand your experiences and view of NHS 111 during the current pandemic.

Make sure your voice is heard by [completing the survey](#). Future surveys will cover topics such as accessing mental health services and your GP surgery. [Let us know](#) if there are any areas you think we should be looking into.

## Get in touch with Healthwatch City of London

Visit our website for more information, news and events, have your say about your care, and spread the word about Healthwatch City of London.

[www.healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk) email: [info@healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk)

Tel: 020 3745 9563

Portsocken Health and Community Centre, 14-16 Little Somerset Street, London E1 8AH