

The NHS across Hampshire and Isle of Wight needs your help.

COVID-19 cases are rising. Local hospitals and GP practices are busier than ever before. There are huge pressures on NHS services, and we can only withstand those pressures if we all work together.

The NHS is a fundamental part of every community. In every neighbourhood there are people relying on the NHS for care, and in every neighbourhood there are people who work in the NHS, delivering that care.

The health of our communities, and the health of our NHS, are forever linked. If our communities struggle, the NHS struggles. If our communities thrive, the NHS thrives.

That is why we are asking for your help.

NHS staff are working flat out, at the most difficult of times. Frontline teams and support staff are doing everything they can, not only to treat people with COVID-19, but also to provide cancer care, screening, operations, care in the community, mental health services, and all of the non-urgent, urgent and life-saving treatments that people need, every day, in addition to delivering the biggest vaccination programme ever seen in England.

Everyone – you, your family, your friends – can play a part in the effort to keep Hampshire and Isle of Wight safe and to support the NHS.

You must stay at home, except in those circumstances where you have a legitimate reason to go out.

Make sure you do the right thing – washing your hands, covering your face, giving other people space – not just some of the time, but all of the time. It is important to ventilate indoor spaces if someone in your home has the virus as this can help prevent transmission to other household members.

Expect the same of your family and friends – make sure they know that they have a role to play as well, and how essential it is that they play a part in keeping us all safe.

With the development of vaccines we now know we can beat this virus, but we cannot let our guard down. These next few weeks will be the most difficult we have ever faced. The colder weather makes things all the more challenging for us. That is why we are asking for your help.

So please remember:

Hands – wash your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds

Face – wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet

Space – stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings)

All of us in health and care services across Hampshire and Isle of Wight know only too well what the impact of this pandemic has been on your physical and mental health. Don't forget there are a range of NHS services here to support you:

- ▶ Visit 111 online for advice. It's easy to use – visit www.111.nhs.uk.
- ▶ Your local community pharmacy can also give help and advice.
- ▶ If you need urgent medical help, call 111 first, who can also book you in to be seen at your local A&E, urgent treatment centre or minor injuries unit.
- ▶ Contact your GP practice for advice – check their website for their opening times and out of hours services.
- ▶ Finally, please remember, if it's a life threatening emergency, please call 999 immediately.

Thank you for all of your support. Thank you to all of our staff working to make a difference, whether in hospitals, in the community, in mental health, supporting COVID testing or delivering the vaccine.

Everything you do is helping to build a better year ahead.

We feel so proud to work in health and care, and we want to support you during these most challenging of times.

With your help this winter, we will continue to deliver the best possible care for you and your family.

Stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives.

Thank you on behalf of all NHS organisations in Hampshire and Isle of Wight

Maggie MacIsaac, Chief Executive, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care System

Dr Lara Alloway, Chief Medical officer, Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Julie Dawes, Chief Nurse, Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Alice Webster, Director of Nursing, Isle of Wight NHS Trust

Steve Parker, Medical Director, Isle of Wight NHS Trust

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Dr Dan Baylis, Chief Medical Officer, Solent NHS Trust

Jackie Ardley, Chief Nurse, Solent NHS Trust

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Dr Nigel Watson, GP and Chief Executive of Wessex Local Medical Committees

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Dr Linda Collie, Clinical Leader, NHS Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group

Dr Elizabeth Fellows, Chair and Clinical Executive, NHS Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group