

24 February 2022

Latest update on health and care services in our area

To everyone in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire,

Thank you again for all you continue to do to keep yourselves and each other safe from Covid-19. As the country looks towards the next phase of living with the virus, we wanted to update you on what that means for your local health and care services.

Although all services remain extremely busy, we have thankfully now passed the peak of the Omicron wave. As a result, we are standing down the temporary ['Nightingale surge facility'](#) that was set up in the grounds of Bristol's Southmead hospital earlier this year.

As we work hard to catch-up on operations and appointments delayed during the pandemic, it's vital that we keep hospitals, care homes, GP surgeries and other healthcare settings as safe as possible. For this reason, we will still ask you to wear face coverings, regularly wash your hands, and – where possible – socially distance when on health and care premises. This will help keep our settings free of infection and protect the most vulnerable from serious illness.

We have introduced a number of new initiatives in response to both the pandemic and the recent high pressure on our services. They include:

- [A new grant scheme](#) of up to £1,200 for people to help their loved ones return home following a hospital stay. The grant can be used to support the costs of shopping, household tasks, meal preparation, cleaning or transport - and is available to individuals, family members, friends, or other advocates of an individual returning from hospital.
- Expanding our [digital 'pulse oximetry' services](#) so that more people with Covid-19 can recover from the virus at home, safe in the knowledge that they are being monitored by clinical teams. To date, the service has helped over 900 people in our area. If you or a loved one has tested positive for the virus you may be eligible for this support. Please complete [this online survey](#) to find out more. This information is available in [multiple languages](#) and [British Sign Language \(BSL\)](#).
- Expanding our [111 team](#) to include a greater range of clinical professionals.

Please remember as we go into Spring:

- Vaccination remains the best way to protect yourselves and your loved ones from Covid-19. You can find your nearest clinic via [grabajab.net](#) for first, second and booster doses.
- You should only ever call 999 in the event of a serious or life-threatening emergency. [Click or call 111 first](#) for urgent but non-life-threatening conditions, rather than visiting busy emergency departments and minor injuries units. You can also call your GP in the day.

- Get to know your local pharmacy – they can offer clinical advice, prescribe some treatments, and provide over the counter medicines for a range of minor illnesses, such as coughs, sore throats, tummy trouble and aches and pains. Pharmacies are open throughout the day, evening and on weekends and you can be seen without an appointment.
- Please show kindness and respect to health and social care staff when you come to see us. Sadly, 2022 continues to bring violence and aggression to our doors. This has a considerable impact on people, as this video from [UHBW NHS Foundation Trust](#) and this one from [North Bristol NHS Trust](#) both highlight.

Thank you again for helping us to help you. You can find more support including local wellbeing helplines, carers links and mental health specific resources below.

On behalf of the Executives in Healthier Together

Healthier Together: who we are

Healthier Together is the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Integrated Care System (formerly known as a Sustainability and Transformation Partnership). The ICS brings together 10 local health and care organisations, including the Clinical Commissioning Group, three local authorities, and other health providers working together to shape the future of health and care in our area. More information is available on our website: www.bnssghealthiertogether.org.uk

Thank you for all you have done so far. Here's how to continue helping us, to help you:

- **Take up your vaccination or booster if you haven't yet.** It's never too late! Find out more about benefits, safety, side-effects and booking at grabajab.net.
- **Only dial 999 or visit A&E if it's a genuine, life-threatening emergency.**
- **Do not attend A&E with minor injuries** – visit a local Minor Injury Unit or call NHS 111.
- **Utilise your local community pharmacist** who can help with a range of minor health issues including colds and earaches
- **Order your repeat prescriptions ahead of bank holidays.**
- **Download the [NHS app](#)** for routine health issues, such as repeat prescriptions. You can order repeat prescriptions on here without the need to call your GP.
- **Look after yourselves and your family.** Make sure you have a well-stocked medicine cupboard at home; take physical, outside activity; sleep well; and consider wearing masks in busy, indoor areas and public transport. Wash your hands to help reduce the spread of Covid-19.
- **Be patient and kind to health and care staff.** Please do not be abusive or be aggressive. Everyone is working extremely hard in very difficult circumstances and we have a zero-tolerance approach to staff abuse of any kind across all health and social care.

Your mental health and wellbeing is important, and there is support available for you locally:

- The **VITA 24/7 helpline** can help you with emotional support. The line connects you with a mental health counsellor and relevant groups in your local area. Call 0800 012 6549 (textphone users should dial 18001 followed by 0800 0126549). Translators are available.

- The **AWP Mental Health 24/7 response line** is there for adults under the care of AWP who are worried about their own or someone else's mental health: 0800 9531919
- **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services emergency helpline** provides help and support for health and care professionals, young people, families and carers 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Highly trained clinicians provide urgent advice and guidance to support young people in crisis, who may need to attend hospital. The emergency helpline is contactable on 0800 9539599. Non-urgent calls will be redirected to the CAMHS Getting Advice Team, who are available Monday to Friday 9am-4.30pm at awp.camhsgettingadvice@nhs.net
- **Off the Record** provides free, confidential and self-referral support for young people. Access is free and available through self-referral on the website for Bristol and South Gloucestershire <https://www.otrbristol.org.uk/> and North Somerset www.otrnorthsomerset.org.uk/
- **Kooth** is an online mental wellbeing community which provides access to real-time, online support for young people aged 11-18, allowing you to talk to a trained counsellor via webchat. Access to Kooth is free and is available through self-referral on the website <https://www.kooth.com/>
- **The Sanctuary**, based at Southmead Hospital, is a non-clinical service that offers face-to-face and virtual support for those aged 16 years and above who are in emotional distress. The service operates Thursday - Monday, 5pm - 11pm. To access a same day session at the Sanctuary, phone 07709 295 661 (phone lines open from 4pm on opening days). Please note to ensure we keep everyone as safe as possible sessions must be booked in advance. www.bristolmentalhealth.org/services/bristol-sanctuary/
- **Safe Haven Crisis Centre** is based in the centre of Weston-Super-Mare and is a non-clinical service that offers face-to-face and virtual support for those aged 16 years and above who are in emotional distress. The centre is open seven days a week, between 6pm and midnight. To access the service please contact 01934 313480 (Please note to ensure we keep everyone as safe as possible sessions must be booked in advance). www.second-step.co.uk/our-services/community-and-wellbeing/safe-haven-crisis-centre/
- **Bump2baby wellbeing** helps you find the right support during pregnancy, birth and beyond: www.bump2babywellbeingguide.org
- **SilverCloud** is a free online platform offering valuable mental health and wellbeing support: bnssq.silvercloudhealth.com/onboard/

If you are caring for a loved one, and need help, advice, or are concerned about the person you are caring for, there is support available to you locally:

- **Carers Support Centre** provide support, information and advice to carers of any age living in the Bristol and South Gloucestershire areas. www.carerssupportcentre.org.uk/ or Carers Line 0117 965 2200.
- **Bristol Black Carers** provide support and assistance for Caribbean, African and Asian carers in Bristol www.bristolblackcarers.org.uk/ - 0117 379 0084
- **Bristol Young Carers** help and support for children aged 8-18 in the Bristol and South Gloucestershire areas www.carerssupportcentre.org.uk/young-carers/ - 0117 965 2200
- **Alliance** provide support for carers in North Somerset www.alliancehomes.org.uk/ns-carers-support
- Your Local Authority can also help with the latest information and advice.
 - **North Somerset** www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/adult-social-care-health/carers
 - **Bristol** www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/carers
 - **South Gloucestershire** www.southglos.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/carers/

