

Update for Carers

3 September 2020

COVID-19 - update on our mental health and learning disability services

HPFT recognises the invaluable work carers do each day to support our service users. We also appreciate how difficult this year has been and how we need our carers and service users to keep telling us how we can support you more and continue to improve our services.

In this briefing we would like to update you on all of the work happening throughout the Trust as we enter the next phase of this pandemic. The vast majority of our services continued to operate throughout the pandemic thanks to the flexibility and resilience of our dedicated staff and we'd like to reassure you that our services are all open:

- All HPFT sites have been risk assessed to ensure they comply with all the latest COVID-19 guidance to keep our staff and service users safe
- Our staff wear all the correct personal protective equipment and adhere to social distancing measures.
- We are using the latest technology to provide a range of consultation options, including by phone, video and online, instead of face-to-face appointments where it is appropriate to do so.
- Visiting to our inpatient services is still being restricted to provide a safe environment for our service users and staff, with the aim of reducing the potential for the spread of infection. Individual agreements for visiting are being considered on an individual basis with active and collaborative risk assessments. If visiting in person isn't possible, our staff will suggest other options for keeping in contact.

Updates on inpatient, crisis and community services

Our inpatient services for children and young people, adults (including rehabilitation, our secure units and our mother and baby unit), older people and those with a learning disability, as well as our community based services (across Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex and Norfolk) and our crisis services are all open. We continue to bolster services which include:

- The 24/7 Single Point of Access (SPA) Mental Health Advice and Support Line is now a Freephone number – **0800 6444 101**.
- The SPA team can also be accessed 24/7 via **NHS 111** for Hertfordshire residents. Selecting **Option 2** for mental health services, transfers callers to the team directly.
- The Trust has also launched a **live webchat service** for people who would prefer to talk online, rather than over the phone. They can access the service Monday to Friday, 7am-7pm by clicking on the red circle, which is on the right hand side of every page of HPFT's website at: www.hpft.nhs.uk. After providing their name and date of birth details, as well as a contact number and postcode, people can live chat online with a member of the helpline team.



- Our A&E diversion centres for those in a crisis – based on our ADTU sites in Hemel and Stevenage remain open for the time being. The centres provide an alternative environment in which to carry out an assessment for people and reduce people’s potential exposure to infection whilst easing pressure on our local A&E departments.
- Our community based services are being delivered by providing more care by telephone/virtual appointments, whilst also being mindful that this is not a viable option for everyone. We are now increasing our face-to-face contact with service users in the community and also in care homes and other supported living environments, where it is safe to do so and more beneficial to the service user than a virtual/telephone appointment. The following community services remain completely unchanged:
 - GP+ Services
 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Home Treatment Team
 - CAMHS Targeted Treatment Team
 - Regular Depot clinics.
- Wellbeing (IAPT) and the Early Memory Diagnosis and Support Service (EMDASS) have both been fully restored, as whilst not closed, both services were significantly reduced during the initial outbreak when staff were redeployed to support our inpatient and crisis services.
- Significant increased demand for IAPT services is anticipated in the forthcoming weeks. The service has developed a range of [short films and webinars](#) to support people who may be experiencing difficulties.

A bite sized two part pre-recorded webinar series specially aimed at supporting healthcare workers, including carers, to manage their own wellbeing after working during the pandemic is available for free on our dedicated YouTube channel.

Part 1: 7 Tips for Wellbeing (13 minutes) - https://youtu.be/T1LHqc_3os

Part 2: 7 Tips for Wellbeing (15 minutes) - <https://youtu.be/UgsnbDIOj6w>

Finding a balance: Support for Parents of School Age Children’ webinar provides parents with some top tips to look after their own wellbeing. The webinar has been developed by our trained therapists and is available to local residents for free: <https://youtu.be/fS0I7RqCgUQ>
- EMDASS is running additional weekend clinics to assess the large numbers of service users referred over the last few months and have reduced the numbers of service users waiting for a diagnosis to below pre COVID-19 levels.
- We have launched the new liaison and diversion service for vulnerable people in the criminal justice system in Hertfordshire. You can find out more [here](#).
- The Enhanced Primary Care Service pilot has launched in Watford and Lower Lea Valley. These new services will be aiming to bridge the gap between existing GP and secondary care services, by providing structured support, to help people experiencing mild to moderate mental health issues to move on with their lives.

Reshaping our services

We would also like to take this opportunity to update you on the work we are doing to look at all of the new initiatives that have been put in place over the last few months to help us manage the COVID-19 pandemic and involving staff, service users and carers in the discussions to decide if we want to adopt these new ways of working permanently. For example, this includes the A&E Diversion Centres; the 24/7 Mental Health Advice and Support Line; the Staff Helpline. It also includes the new and creative ways we are seeing our service users - the SPA team has recently launched a live web chat service – and adapting to new patterns of working. All these changes have been delivered at speed, as part of our rapid response to the COVID crisis.

This work, which is designed to improve the care and outcomes for our service users, will run between now and the end of March 2021 and focuses on the following:

- Psychological Therapies
- 18-25 Transition
- All Age Crisis
- Adult Community Mental Health
- Physical Health
- Older People
- Learning Disabilities
- Evidence Based Treatments

This exciting programme of work is being led by Clinicians and co-produced with service users, carers, GPs and HPFT staff, including Allied Health Professionals and members of the Joint Commissioning Team. If you have any suggestions for improvements, please can you email our inclusion and engagement team at: hpft.carers@nhs.net or call 01727 804418.

We hope you and your families are keeping safe and well. Thank you for your continued support as we move to the next phase of reshaping our services.