

Your Health

Update for patients and the public in Berkshire West
(Includes West Berkshire, Wokingham and Reading)

February 2021



Well done to Woodley Centre Surgery!

Congratulations to Woodley Centre Surgery, whose Virtual Consultation Team was shortlisted for GP Team of the Year at the [General Practice Awards 2020](#).

The team were shortlisted in recognition of the virtual group consultations they instigated for their community when Covid started.

In addition, Dr Rupa Joshi, PCN Co-Clinical Director was shortlisted for General Practitioner of the Year. Dr Joshi said: "I'm very proud of all my colleagues here at Woodley Centre Surgery. Everyone's pulled together to ensure we continue to help our patients during these challenging times, so I'm especially pleased that our team's been recognised through this nomination. Even though we didn't win, the nominations have been a huge morale boost."

Covid Vaccine uptake

Dr Joshi is featured in a new video aimed at dispelling some of the myths around the Covid vaccine. Thanks to a huge effort of NHS teams, volunteers and local authorities across the country, 15million people have been vaccinated so far. However, research is showing a reluctance amongst some groups of people to take up the offer of a jab. Dr Joshi's film, which is being shared by the NHS national teams, addresses some of the concerns some people have. There's [a link here](#).



And thank you to the staff at Sunrise Care Home in Sonning who filmed videos in nine different languages to encourage their counterparts to take up the offer of the vaccine. There's a link here to the [English speaking film](#). If you'd like copies of other languages, please contact communications@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Thames Valley Cancer Alliance

The Thames Valley Cancer Alliance is keen to hear from people who have had cancer or relatives or carers of sufferers, to help improve services in the region.

If you'd like to know more, please contact Lisa Cox, the patient engagement and experience lead on 07900 715074 or l.cox7@nhs.net.

Phlebotomy Service at West Berkshire Community Hospital

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust re-opened their phlebotomy service for routine referrals at West Berkshire Community Hospital in January.

Patients can now book all appointments (both routine and urgent) either via their website – <https://wbch.sangix.co.uk> or by the automated telephone booking system or receptionist on 01635 273343.

Hydrotherapy consultation update

The Berkshire West CCG Governing Body took the decision at its meeting on 8th December, to

change the way they commission hydrotherapy, and moving forward to only commission hydrotherapy for NHS patients where there are exceptional clinical circumstances. They will in future consider a clinical referral for hydrotherapy through the commissioning process for Individual Funding Requests (IFRs). An IFR request is based on whether a treatment should be provided for one particular patient when it would not be funded for other patients who have the same, or a substantively similar, condition.

The CCG regularly reviews Procedures of Limited Clinical value (PLCV) and this is a treatment where the clinical effectiveness over lower cost land-based therapy is either absent or weak for the majority of patients. Our clinical effectiveness team will be working with the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP) to develop the clinical criteria for hydrotherapy. We hope, depending on operational pressures, to have an agreed implementation date for these changes by the start of the new financial year.

Dr Ragu Reddy, Secondary Care Consultant on the Governing Body, said: "This has not been an easy decision and we appreciate it will disappoint some people who feel they have benefitted from hydrotherapy treatment. However, there is limited, definitive evidence on the clinical effectiveness of hydrotherapy (it is not a service offered universally across the NHS) and we have a duty to prioritise Berkshire West's scarce financial resources prudently and allocate them to the commissioning of services that are clinically sound and meet the needs of the widest cohort of patients."

Hands, Face, Space

Newbury GP, Dr Abid Irfan features in [a new video](#) urging people to continue to adhere to the hands, face, space rules in a bid to prevent the spread of the virus. The film is part of a series produced by healthcare teams in Berkshire West. There's also a second short video of Dr Aniruddh Shenoy from the Royal Berkshire Hospital talking about [long covid](#).

There is also a wealth of facts and figures about Covid on the new vaccine page here. www.berkshirepublichealth.co.uk.



It features visuals, videos and questions, which should give you all you need to know about the virus. And remember to check out your practice websites along with the [Berkshire West CCG](#) and [Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust](#) websites which are regularly updated with [new FAQs](#) and other Covid related information.

And on the subject of videos, [here's a special one](#) sent to the RBH from Twyford parish councillors to thank staff for the huge amount of work they are doing to care for local people.

Special messages to your friends and family in hospital

A popular online service for families and friends to send messages to loved one at the Royal Berkshire Hospital has been relaunched following its success over Christmas and New Year.

The online service complements other ways patients can stay in contact with their loved ones whilst visiting is still restricted at the hospital to try and stop the spread of the virus and keep patients and staff safe. The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust is also continuing to offer phone and virtual visiting via iPads, which are available for patient use on all the wards.

Sharon Herring, Associate Chief Nurse for Patient Experience and Workforce said: "We were thrilled at how well the initiative was taken up over the Christmas and New Year period. With the current restricted visiting, we wanted to continue the service with a refreshed look and feel so that relatives and friends can remain in contact and continue to send messages to their loved ones."

Go the RBH Trust website to [download a card to send back to the hospital](#).

RBH supports drugs trial

A clinical trial started this month at the Royal Berkshire Hospital to test whether a drug called Almitrine can help people who are seriously ill with Covid. The Hospital is one of three centres carrying out the research on around 116 patients. The John Radcliffe in Oxford and University Hospital of Wales are also taking part in the four-week trial.

The trial team hopes that administering the drug Almitrine to Covid patients will reduce the amount of other respiratory support the patient needs.

Nicky Lloyd, Acting CEO of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, said: “This trial offers a great opportunity to supplement our increasing understanding of Covid and meet the need for new, cost-effective treatments. The Royal Berkshire Hospital is a research-active hospital, which is well-placed to improve care and outcomes for our patients by taking part in collaborative research studies.”

Lead researcher Professor Peter Robbins said: “The primary idea behind medical treatment is that it is supportive – its aim is to keep people alive while they make their recovery from the disease. The idea behind our trial is to enhance the supportive treatment – extend people’s runway.”

Call for People Aged 70 and over to contact the NHS for a Covid jab

People aged 70 and over who have not yet been vaccinated against Covid and who would like the jab are now being asked to contact the NHS.

Until now the NHS has asked people to wait until they are contacted to make sure those who are most vulnerable are protected first - and that remains the case for most people.

However, to ensure everyone is offered the vaccine, people aged 70 and over can now contact the NHS. The easiest way to arrange a vaccination is through the national booking service which can be accessed at www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination. The system allows patients to choose a time slot and location that suits them.

Anyone unable to book online can call **119** free of charge, anytime between 7am and 11pm seven days a week.

If a suitable and convenient slot is not available people can also call their GP practice.

People in priority groups who are given a vaccination appointment by both their local GP team and the National Booking Service should cancel the one they do not want so the slot can be used by someone else.

Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy for Berkshire West – deadline extended

The deadline for having your say on the new 10 year plan to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Berkshire West has been extended to **Sunday 28 February**. You can take part in the [online survey](#).

If you would like it in a different or more accessible format please email: berkshirwestwellbeing@gmail.com

The plan has been produced by the Health and Wellbeing Boards in Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham. It focuses on health and social care teams working in partnership and will help in decision making around the allocation of finances and resources.

Further information is available here: www.berkshirwestccg.nhs.uk/jhwbs

