



You may have seen in the news or in the Trust's social media accounts over the past few weeks that the emergency department at Blackpool Victoria has been incredibly busy.

This feels like an understatement when I think of the huge and ever-increasing volumes of people that have attended for care, support and treatment. It's been a very challenging time indeed.

Of course, this is nothing new. ED, or A&E as you might better know it, is one of the busiest areas of any hospital setting and Blackpool is no different.



Between our vast communities across the whole of the Fylde Coast and Wyre and the millions of people who visit us on holiday or day trips every year – we have plenty of people through the door needing help with accidents and emergencies.

And it's important to say, that's what we're here for and it hasn't changed. If you have a life-threatening injury or symptoms such as chest pain, stroke, major trauma, or severe bleeding that won't stop, you should attend A&E and if you need to, call an ambulance immediately.

I want to mention the amazing people who are there to help you.

The A&E team work tirelessly and relentlessly every minute of every hour of every week of every month. Year in, year out. All clinical and non-clinical staff – people working away that you likely never see or notice – all contribute to this incredible place.

I am always beyond proud to support the team and all the amazing things they do there – as I am of the Trust as a whole.

At the peak of demand over the last week we had 83 people waiting for treatment within ED. To clarify, that is a very big number and our waiting times to be seen nudged four hours at times. When you consider we aim to see people *within* four

hours – and much sooner if possible - it's easy to understand how challenging and stressful this scenario is for everyone involved.

Waiting for long periods of time is not what we want people to experience or expect. In addition, staff working long, relentless shifts when they are still exhausted from the pandemic is not to be underestimated and the impact on them is significant, especially over a period of weeks and months.

It is a credit to them that they never stop and my experience is that they are always quickly moving onto the next person who needs their help.

Don't forget also that the team regularly deal with extremely upsetting cases, looking after people with very serious illness or injury and those who sadly don't survive.

In these times, they not only look after the patient but their families and friends too and, just as importantly, each other. As a Trust we wrap as much care and health and well-being support as we are able to around them but the job they love can regularly leave them emotionally and physically devastated.

I want to say a very genuine thank you to the team for everything they do. Their hard work, dedication and resilience is brilliant and very much appreciated and can never really be repaid.

Perhaps in return, we could ask for your help?

There are things everyone in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre can do to help alleviate the stress and strain on the department and the team. These include:

- Please, don't turn up to A&E if you don't need to be there
- If you're unsure about the best place for you, try ringing NHS 111 or 111.nhs.uk to discuss your symptoms
- Make sure you have any prescriptions you need and a good supply of basic medicine available for the Bank Holiday weekend
- Consider whether you need to go to A&E

Over the past 12 months everyone at the Trust has been very grateful for the support of the community and the gratitude demonstrated by gifts and cards, donations and claps of appreciation across Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre.

Please, help us now by considering colleagues and each other who really need the care and support provided for life threatening injuries and illnesses in A&E. We need and appreciate your support.

Take care,

Natalie Hudson

Chief Operating Officer

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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Positive

NEW ROLE FOR OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Last Friday it was announced that the Trust's Chief Executive Kevin McGee has been appointed as Chief Executive of Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

The exact details of Kevin's future portfolio are yet to be agreed and more details about how this might affect his role here at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals and as Joint Chief Executive at ELHT will be shared as soon as possible.

MEDICAL DIRECTOR UPDATE

In this week's weekly Covid update, Trust Medical Director, Dr Jim Gardner, discusses the need to get vaccinated in light of the Covid variant of Indian origin. He also mentions the pressure across GPs, Urgent Treatment Centres and the emergency department.

You can view the full video [here](#)

SUPPORTING THE TRUST'S EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

The emergency team at Blackpool Victoria Hospital today renewed their plea to local people to help them reduce pressure on A&E in the run up to the Bank Holiday weekend.

The request to consider alternative options for care comes following weeks of significant demand which at its height has resulted in more than 80 people waiting for treatment.

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, which runs A&E at The Vic, said the number of people attending was having an adverse impact on waiting times and affected the team's ability to see people who needed their help the most.

Medical Director Dr Jim Gardner said: "The support we received from local people during the pandemic was overwhelming and we remain incredibly grateful. However, we do now need help to reduce the pressure on A&E.

"The department is open and the team is ready to care for people who need help. We know that there are patients who absolutely need to be there but we are also

seeing people who would be better cared for at an alternate healthcare service or setting.

“Please, only attend A&E if you have a genuine life-threatening emergency, such as chest pain, stroke, major trauma or severe bleeding that cannot be stopped.”

“If you need urgent medical help and don’t know which service is best for you, NHS 111 can help 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They will ask questions about your symptoms so you get the help you need.

“If you need to go to the ED, NHS 111 will book an arrival time for you. This might mean you spend less time in the department and the team to can be ready to see you, whilst also caring for other patients who may need them more.”

NHS 111 can be accessed online at 111.nhs.uk or by calling 111, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



[You can hear from ED consultant, Dr Israel, on our video here](#)

PLEASE CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS TO A&E

People living in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre have been urged to use the right health service this bank holiday as NHS services have noted an increase in demand. GP practices will be closed for the Bank Holiday on Monday 31 May, but people who need health services can still access advice and treatment if they need it.

Dr Neil Hartley-Smith, a local GP and clinical director for NHS Blackpool and NHS Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), said: “Since the lockdown restrictions started to ease, we have seen more people walking into urgent treatment centres and to A&E at the hospital. Many of those people could have saved themselves a long wait if they had used the right service.

“Urgent treatment centres and A&E are for exactly what they say they are for; urgent care and emergencies. Anyone attending those services when it is not urgent or a life-threatening emergency face a long wait as the patients with the most serious need are prioritised.”



Dr Anthony Kearns, head of department for emergency medicine at Blackpool Teaching Hospital NHS

Foundation Trust, said: “Of course, many people have acute conditions that need urgent treatment and they take priority, but we have seen many non-urgent cases, which make the department and the waiting room unsafe, due to crowding and social distancing restrictions. This then means we cannot treat those who urgently need our attention as quickly as we would like.”

There are many other services that can be used for non-urgent and long-term conditions such as pharmacies, GP surgeries, Urgent Treatment Centres (UTCs) and NHS 111 First, who will book people an appointment if your condition is deemed to be an emergency.

If you do need medical advice over the bank holiday, the advice is to use NHS 111 either online at 111.nhs.uk or by calling 111 for free. You will be asked a series of questions by trained call handlers who can then decide the best option for you. If necessary they can have a GP call you, offer you advice on how to deal with your condition yourself or make an appointment at an urgent treatment centre or A&E. If you are given an appointment, staff in the services will try to see you within 30 minutes of your appointment time. That means you should not be sat in a waiting room for a long time.

For people who have minor conditions such as aches and pains, hay fever or other common ailments the best thing is to go to the pharmacy.

Dr Hartley-Smith said: “Most of the time common symptoms can be treated easily and cheaply with over the counter medicines. Only if they persist should you seek more advice from your GP. Pharmacists are highly trained professionals who can offer you advice for free. If you need to speak in private, consultation rooms are available and often you will be in and out of the pharmacy with a treatment within a matter of minutes.”

To see which pharmacies are open on Bank Holiday Monday, visit www.fyldecoastccgs.nhs.uk

MEET OUR DIVISIONAL LEADS: NEIL UPSON, THEATRES, SURGERY, ANAESTHETICS, CRITICAL CARE AND GASTROENTEROLOGY

The Trust has recently delivered a significant restructure of our services, with the aim of providing more capacity, more capability and better outcomes across all our services for patients and their families.

Across the next few weeks we will be hearing from some of the Trust's divisional leads about the improvement journey their colleagues and teams have been on.

This week Neil Upson, Director of Operations for Theatres, Surgery Anaesthetics, Critical Care and Gastroenterology, paid tribute to the response to the pandemic and had some news on innovations which will help patient care within his division.



Neil On Covid Response

"I would like to reflect on the magnificent progress and work that our ITU staff undertook in the middle of the pandemic. We doubled our bed capacity from 16 to 32, we all worked together as a team, staff from cardiac, staff from theatres, staff from the general ITU, all working together to manage patient care to their best ability.

"When we were full, we transferred patients out to other organisations across the conurbation, and when they were full, we took patients in from across the conurbation. So, a real example of teamwork and I can only commend those staff for how hard they worked."

Neil On Cancer Recovery

"Immediately prior to the pandemic we embarked on an expansion plan for cardiac and thoracic services. This has allowed us to respond timelier to cancer patients and lung cancer patients and get those dealt with in a more appropriate timescale. Clearly, we have got a challenge because of the backlog of patients in the system, but these developments will help us move out of that situation."

Neil On Better Pathways

"I'd also like to mention the reestablishment of the cardiac network, which is basically a virtual organisation that works across Lancashire and South Cumbria to pull all cardiac services together and allows us to develop more seamless pathways for the care of cardiac patients. So, referral from Primary Care to secondary care and then into tertiary care and then back out to primary care."

VACCINATION FOCUS SWITCHES TO BLACKPOOL VICTORIA

The NHS Covid vaccination programme opened up to everyone aged over 30 this week, as the biggest and most successful vaccination drive in NHS history continued.

Blackpool Victoria's Vaccination Hub is now open to local people as well as staff following the closure of the facility at the Winter Gardens. You can book by [clicking here](#).



One million more people aged 30 and 31 will be invited by text over the coming days, leaving only adults between 18 and 29 yet to get the nod to come forward.

Since opening up to people in their 30s, nearly four million appointments have been booked.

The NHS has now delivered almost 32 million first doses of the jab, and well over 19 million of adults have had both doses, meaning they have maximum protection from the virus.

The NHS is urging everyone who is eligible to take up the offer of a jab at one of the 1,600 convenient locations across the country including mosques, museums and rugby grounds.

Nurse and Covid-19 Vaccination Director for Lancashire and South Cumbria Jane Scattergood said: "Getting the vaccine is the single most important step we can take to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities against Covid-19, with the jabs saving thousands of lives already, and today the biggest and most successful NHS Covid vaccination programme in history is rolling out to everyone in their thirties.

"The offer of a vaccine doesn't expire so if you are eligible and haven't booked please do come forward when you're invited to."

On the advice of the government and Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), people aged 50 and over and the clinically vulnerable are having their second doses brought forward to counter the spread of the Indian

variant. Nobody needs to contact the NHS and people will be told to rebook if they need to.

When invited, people will be able to book at one of the vaccination centre, pharmacy or general practice sites across the country that are available through the national booking service.

Text invitations appear as an alert from 'NHSvaccine', including a web link to the NHS website to reserve an appointment. More appointments are being added to the National Booking Service every day.

People 39 and under who are eligible and pregnant women will be offered the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine in line with recently updated JCVI guidance.

We have now vaccinated more than one million people across Lancashire and South Cumbria. With 218,800 people in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre having a first dose and 155,027 having had their second dose.

VARIANTS OF CONCERN HOTSPOTS

In response to the new variant of an Indian origin, the Trust has introduced additional infection prevention control measures.

Wards will now advise and organise for visitors from affected areas, where the new COVID-19 variant is spreading, to have a Lateral Flow Device test on arrival.

The ward must confirm this is negative prior to visitors being able to see their loved ones. Visitors who can provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test (taken within the last 72 hours) do not require retesting.

Visitors must make arrangements and agree visiting times with the ward staff prior to attending. You can speak to the relevant ward by calling the Trust switchboard on 01253 300000.

In order to help stop the spread, people are advised to take particular caution when considering visiting and follow the local advice provided by the government.

RELOCATION OF POULTON HEALTH SERVICES

The Wyre Care Home Support Team, Poulton Community Midwives, Poulton District Nursing and Matrons services have relocated from Poulton Health Centre (Princess Avenue) to Poulton Civic Centre.

The new address is The Bungalow, Poulton Civic Centre, Breck Road, Poulton FY6 7PU.

Clinics currently located or delivered from Poulton Health Centre will be relocating over the next few weeks.

For more details on when the clinics will be restarting [please click here](#)

FIRST RESPONDER REG GOES THE EXTRA MILE

A first responder who works as a nursing associate at Blackpool Victoria Hospital has been given a Going the Extra Mile award for helping an injured patient while off duty.

Reg Potter works on Ward 14, and also volunteers as an Ambulance First Responder. He was off duty on his way home on May 6 when he spotted someone in the street in Carlton and stopped to help.

Reg stayed with the injured man, who turned out to be the father of a Trust employee, to provide reassurance and provide support.

The nomination was submitted by the patient's daughter, Tess Cunningham, who works at a Clinical Nurse Specialist on the Gastro Unit.

In the nomination, Tess said: "He pulled over and offered to help. He stayed with my Dad for over an hour looking after him, reassuring my Mum and liaising with paramedics.

"He was a calming influence in a very stressful situation. I can't thank him enough for his kindness that day, he certainly went the extra 10 miles – thank you."

Reg said: "Receiving this award was totally unexpected but is very welcomed. I was also brought biscuits to say thank you, which was a really nice thing to do."



FOOTBALLERS PLAY FOR JORDAN BANKS BLUE SKIES TROPHY

A group of former professional footballers, from clubs around the north west, have come together to play in a charity football match for the family of Jordan Banks, the young Liverpool fan who suffered fatal injuries when struck by lightning this month.

The annual Blue Skies Football Tournament will be renamed 'The Jordan Blue Skies Trophy', in memory of the nine-year-old, with proceeds from the game being shared between Jordan's family and the hospital's Blue Skies charity.

The match is being arranged by 50-year-old local football coach Daz Meehan from Blackpool, a Fire Safety Officer in the NHS.

He said: "The preparation began a few weeks ago for this year's Blue Skies Tournament and when I heard about the devastating news I just thought it seemed right that we should help a young family who must be going through a very distressing time. For me and all the players involved it was a no brainer to use this opportunity to raise some funds for them.

"I hope we can raise as much money prior to the game and at the game with lots of local football families coming to support both teams."

The game will take place at AFC Fylde on Saturday, 26 June at 2.30pm. Admission is free but you can make a donation online.



TWEET OF THE WEEK

We expect another busy weekend please #HelpUsHelpYou by sharing our simple message.



POSITIVE COMMENT

Claire was looked after when having a CT scan this week...

'I'd just like to send a message to say a huge thank you to the two members of staff who looked after me yesterday morning whilst I underwent a CT scan and who kept my anxiety at bay. They are an absolute credit to the hospital.'

Thank you for reading this bulletin. If you have any comments or questions, or would like to know more about any of our services, please get in touch via telephone on 01253 300000, through our [online contact form](#), or via post at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Trust Headquarters, Blackpool Victoria Hospital, Whinney Heys Road, Blackpool, FY3 8NR

