

To everyone in Dorset: Thank you.

Thank you for all you've done; you can continue to help us help you.

The NHS in Dorset would like to say thank you for everything you are doing to support our staff during the global coronavirus pandemic.

We are incredibly proud of all that our amazing NHS staff have achieved with the help and support of all other key workers. We'd like to say a huge thank you to them too.

Thanks to your support and commitment, you have helped to reduce the spread of the virus, saved lives and protected your NHS in Dorset. Sadly, coronavirus has not gone away and it looks as though it will be with us for at least the next 12 months and possibly beyond. We need to remain vigilant and prepared for a potential second peak. We will need your continued support and help as we move forward together under a 'new normal' for everyone.

During the coronavirus pandemic our staff have been working hard to ensure all patients who need care - not just those with coronavirus - have been able to get it. To avoid unnecessary contact, and to protect patients, some appointments and surgeries have been postponed and others rapidly transformed to be delivered differently using technology.

We'd like to be upfront with you that the way we're delivering local health services will continue to be different. Returning services quickly to how they ran before this pandemic is not possible. This will take time as we know coronavirus is likely to be with us for a while.

We are ensuring that all urgent problems are being seen and must stress that people with possible heart attacks, strokes, severe infections, and life-threatening illness call 999 and those with worrying symptoms of cancer seek help from their GP without delay.

GPs are continuing to maintain as much care as possible, including immunisations and screening procedures. As in the last few weeks, electronic consultation, telephone and video consultation will be the first contact as this ensures safety for patients and staff. GP staff will plan care for and with

you, and you should continue to contact them, even though the way services are delivered will look different for the foreseeable future.

You can also continue to support your NHS by choosing the right care when you need it. We are here for you. If you aren't sure where to go visit www.111.nhs.uk or call 111 and this service will be able to book appointments directly with urgent treatment centres, minor injuries units and out-of-hours GP services for non life-threatening conditions; please use these services as the hospital A&E facilities must be kept for emergencies.

We will continue to ask patients to attend face-to-face services only when it is really necessary, and where it can be done safely without putting our patients, the public or our staff at greater risk of catching coronavirus. Where possible, appointments will continue to be offered using remote services such as a video or phone consultation.

At the same time, we are looking at how we restore routine services at our hospitals and other services in a way that is safe for everyone. This is a huge task for our hardworking staff as they continue to provide care alongside implementing social distancing measures, apply caution, and put safety first; and our staff will do their best to let our patients know how it will affect them.

Meanwhile, it's important for you to look after your health and wellbeing at this current time – which will also support your local NHS. See www.livewelldorset.co.uk

Finally, we'd like to thank you all for your continued help, support and understanding at this time.

Thank you from your local NHS in Dorset.

Signed by:

- **Nick Johnson**, Acting Chief Executive, Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- **Professor Alastair Hutchison**, Medical Director, Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- **Tim Goodson**, Chief Officer, NHS Dorset CCG
- **Dr Forbes Watson**, Chair, NHS Dorset CCG
- **Dr Karen Kirkham**, Assistant Clinical Chair, NHS Dorset CCG
- **Eugene Yafele**, Chief Executive, Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust
- **Dr Steve Tomkins**, Medical Director for Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust
- **Debbie Fleming**, Joint Chief Executive, Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- **Dr Matt Thomas**, Consultant Physician, Acting Medical Director, Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- **Dr Alyson O'Donnell**, Medical Director, The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust