

COVID-19 - Staff Bulletin - Keeping in Touch

1 May 2020

Reporting Sickness

During this period if you are not well enough to be at work please:

1. Speak to your line manager early on your first day of absence which will help ensure that alternative arrangements can be put in place to cover our essential services.
2. Send an email to cbchealth.sickness@nhs.net

PPE - From famine to feast!

CBC has become the distribution nerve centre for PPE for Gateshead's hot services and general practices.



From masks to aprons, to gloves in all sizes, to wipes, to sanitisers in all sizes, and to visors in abundance. We have it all!

Gary Armstrong and Connor Atkinson are our designated 'warehouse managers', receiving and sorting regular supplies from Newburn and responding promptly to daily requests for PPE stocks from our colleagues in practices.

Blaydon & Second St. Hot Sites

Volunteer GPs, health care assistants and administrators are getting into the swing of things in Gateshead's two hot sites. Working from bases at Blaydon PCC and Second Street, these dedicated teams are seeing a steady stream of suspected Covid-19 patients that have been referred into the hot sites by their home practices. The service is currently operating at around 50-60% capacity, and so is capable still of accommodating any unexpected surges in demand.

Julie Cox and Emma Elliot are responsible for managing operations at the hot sites to ensure services run safely and smoothly, and to provide the best possible experience for both patients and staff under very difficult circumstances.

Covid-19 Prevalence Survey

A mass Covid-19 Prevalence Survey took place across Gateshead on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week. Aimed at assessing the proportion of people in the community who have the Coronavirus, but do not display any of the symptoms (asymptomatic, GatDoc was allocated a target of 25 swabs to complete over the two-day survey period.

Nicola Allen and Liz Orr managed to swab 37 people in the allocated timeframe, comprising staff and colleagues from our own services at QEH, Blaydon, Second Street and Queens Park, and also a number of staff from the local constabulary. It must be said that we caused a bit of a flurry of excitement amongst our neighbouring tenants at Queens Park, who wondered if there had been a riot of some kind – with the arrival of a constant stream of police cars! We tested a number of the boys and girls in blue as part of our sample cohort.

A huge thank you to the brave souls that endured this eye-watering procedure, which involved a throat swab from right behind the little wobbly bit at the back (see our technical diagram opposite) and a tickle from the very top of each nostril.



We would have liked to capture a few more of the volunteers that came forward to help, but unfortunately, we needed to call time at 5 pm.

Early feedback suggests that, for the vast majority of those tested, results came back as negative and people were notified very promptly by text in less than 24 hours. There were however a few people that tested positive. Although this small group has shown no symptoms nor are they at all unwell, they have been found to carry the Coronavirus. This means 7 days at home for them and 14 days for other household members, in line with national guidance.

If further surveys are planned, we will notify staff working during the survey period(s) to see who may be interested in taking part.

Super Scrubs

Expert friends and seamstresses in the local WI have very kindly donated some stylish scrubs and scrubs bags for use by front-line staff. In various plain and patterned fabrics, these useful garments can be worn instead of everyday work clothes, then tossed into a scrubs bag and thrown lock, stock and barrel into a hot wash at home (60 degrees). The sets we have received so far have been distributed into the hot services, but we do have a small supply of bags here at CBC if anyone would like one.



Covid-19 Statistics:

There are **752 confirmed cases** in Gateshead, out of a local population of 202,508

Note: Confirmed cases only include those testing positive for the virus, not all will have been tested. Deaths in England only include those in hospitals, those outside England may include a small number that occurred in the community.

Source: UK public health bodies. Figures last updated 29 April

Happy May Day!

This day hails from the event that took place on 1st May 1886, when workers filled the streets in America to rebel against insane working hours. After this protest, working hours reduced from 12 hours a day to 8 hours.

J. McGuire, general secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and a co-founder of the American Federation of Labour, was the person who suggested the idea to mark this day in remembrance of labourers. "Who from rude nature have delved and carved all the grandeur we behold," he had said.

All most all the countries in the world have acknowledged International Workers' Day, but only a few, around 60 nations celebrate this day, recognising the efforts of labours.

May Day has a long history and tradition in England. The day is celebrated with music and dancing. Perhaps the most famous part of the celebration is the Maypole. Children dance around the Maypole holding onto colourful ribbons. Many people use flowers and leaves to make hoops and hair garlands as well. A lot of towns also crown a May Queen on this day.



Some countries celebrate the night before May Day called Walpurgis Night. These countries include Germany, Sweden, Finland, and the Czech Republic. The celebration is named after English missionary Saint Walpurga. People celebrate with large bonfires and dancing.

Long ago in the Middle Ages the Gaelic people of Scotland and Ireland celebrated the festival of Beltane. Beltane means "Day of Fire". They had large bonfires and dancing at night to celebrate. Some people are starting to celebrate Beltane again.



A special mention this week

for the Screwfix and B&Q Business to Business Team. Gary approached them earlier in the week with a request to purchase some disposable outfits for our hot sites and hot car services. The amazing team got back to us very promptly and has donated 350 boilersuits FREE OF CHARGE. How fabulous is this..... and we're expecting them before the weekend!



A sign of getting back to normal?

Discussions are beginning to take place at a senior level within the Gateshead health and social care system about how we might begin to migrate steadily back to normal ways of working.

A good deal of planning and organisation will go into this over the coming days. We will of course endeavour to keep you updated of progress as soon as there is anything to report.