

A close-up photograph of an elderly woman with short, curly white hair. She is smiling and looking directly at the camera, with her face partially obscured by a bouquet of small white and pink flowers she is holding. The background is a blurred garden or nursery with various plants and flowers.

## Community Bulletin

Issue One, April 2020

## Welcome to our first Community Bulletin

We know it is a frightening time at the moment and we appreciate all the kind thoughts and support you have offered the NHS.

We hope you are all doing your utmost to stay safe and well at home, and are only going out for essentials: food, medicines or exercise once a day.

At the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group we are supporting all frontline services and providing co-ordination and oversight as the strategic lead for the NHS response to Covid-19 in Kent and Medway.

We have written this bulletin as a way of staying in touch with our local communities and sharing some of the best ways in which you can help us.

An introduction from

**CATHY FINNIS**

Lay member for Patient and Public Engagement, Kent and Medway CCG

I've heard lots of examples of kindness and gratitude that has given health and care colleagues a much needed morale boost. I am pleased to see the whole health and care system pulling together to make sure we're best prepared for the weeks and months to come.

We have had to pause a lot of routine work in the CCG to focus everyone's efforts on getting us through, what will be an extremely difficult time, for both the NHS and the country as a whole.

During this unprecedented event the pressure on frontline services and staff is immense. Now, more than ever, we need people to play their part and think of others by using health and care services appropriately.

One of our challenges is around medicines. In the last few weeks we've seen people ordering and buying more medicine. This situation is similar to what we've seen with food and toiletries and is worrying. The increased demand for both prescribed and over the counter medicines is placing huge pressure on GP Practices and Pharmacies.

Here are four things you can do for the NHS to help us, help you:

## **1 Only order medicines you need for the next month**

Don't stockpile. Don't order early. Don't over order. There will be enough medicine for everyone if we follow these rules.

## **2 Only request home delivery services if you really, really need to**

There has been an increase in the demand for home delivery of medicines. We need to make sure that these delivery services are available for people who truly don't have any other means of getting their medicine. So, if you have friends, family or neighbours who could collect your medicines please ask them to do so.

## **3 Don't ask your GP for items just because you haven't been able to get them elsewhere**

We've seen an increase in people ringing their GP practice to try and get new items on prescription. Your GP practice won't prescribe items that you don't normally get.

## **4 Order repeat prescriptions online**

Registering for online services at your GP practice will enable you to order repeat prescriptions online. You can also set up for your electronic prescription to go directly to the pharmacy of your choice.

By doing these four things you'll be helping the NHS, and especially our pharmacies, to cope a little better during this time. Please spread the word and encourage family and loved ones to do the same.



Having said that, please be reassured that urgent emergency services are still treating all kinds of illness and injuries that haven't gone away just because Covid-19 has appeared.

If you are seriously ill please don't delay asking for help either through 111 or in emergencies by using 999.

Stay home, protect the NHS, save lives.

Regards,  
cathy



**Stay at home. Protect the NHS. Save lives.**



You should stay at home—only go outside for food, health reasons or work (if you cannot work from home.

If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times.

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

Wash your hands as soon as you get home.

Remember—you can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

**If you need any information these are our trusted sources of information on Covid-19**

Online NHS111 symptom checker  
[www.111.nhs.uk/Covid-19](http://www.111.nhs.uk/Covid-19)

NHS health advice and information  
[www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)

Government advice and guidance  
[www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

# Changes to the way GP practices run



Changes in the way GP surgeries are run are now being rolled out across Kent and Medway to ensure the safety of staff and patients during the Covid-19 outbreak.

As many people as possible are being offered video and telephone appointments, to avoid unnecessary risk and travel. All appointments are now made by telephone with no walk-in services.

We know people still need to see a clinician face-to-face for some things. To minimise the risk of spreading the virus between patients GP practices are working together to provide different locations for people with Covid-19 symptoms and those without.

Patients with Covid-19 symptoms, or people living in the same household as someone with symptoms, will be sent to a primary care treatment centre, sometimes being referred to in the media as a 'hot site'. These are not walk-in services and are not offering testing for Covid-19.

Patients will ring their GP practice or NHS 111 and if they need to be seen face to face they'll be directed to the relevant place.





# Community news

## Thank you everyone for playing your part

We in the NHS would like to thank everyone who has volunteered to support people through this time, or sent messages of support, or drawn pictures, or clapped.

The NHS never works alone and it's never truer than now. We can all play our part.

Our partners in the local councils and the voluntary and community sector are working as hard as ever to help people when they need it.

## Support for vulnerable and isolated people



The Kent Together 24-hour helpline has been set up to support vulnerable people in Kent who need urgent help, supplies or medication.

It provides a single, convenient point of contact for anyone in the county who is vulnerable and has an urgent need that cannot be met through existing support networks.

It is also the place to report any concerns about the welfare of someone else.

You can contact the **Kent Together helpline** at [www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether](http://www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether) or by calling **03000 41 92 92**. It is a 24-hour service.

The helpline is collaboration between Kent County Council, central Government, District, Borough and local councils, emergency services, the voluntary and community sector, the NHS and other partners.

There is also support available locally in communities.

## Medway



Medway Council has been working with the voluntary and community sector to provide meals and food packages to the most vulnerable. More than 35,595 meals have been delivered so far and the council has also set up a medicines delivery system and a befriending telephone service.

Please contact:

[emergency.foodproject@medway.gov.uk](mailto:emergency.foodproject@medway.gov.uk) if you are concerned about a local resident in need of support.

See <https://www.medway.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Medway Voluntary Action (MVA) is co-ordinating information and support for the voluntary sector and local communities who are helping support vulnerable residents – please see [www.mva.org.uk](http://www.mva.org.uk) or look for #Medwaytogether on Twitter.

Staff at **Involve** are collating all offers of help and support to advise clients, colleagues and community contacts. If you know of any organisations in West Kent offering support, please share the details with: [Sophie.dixon@involvekent.org.uk](mailto:Sophie.dixon@involvekent.org.uk).

West Kent

Involve have also developed a **Safe and Well telephone service** a daily or weekly phone call offered to clients, patients at GP practices and anyone in the wider community who could benefit. The service will be available to people living in Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling, Borough Green, the Weald, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and parts of Dover and Folkestone.

Up-to-date information here

<https://www.involvekent.org.uk/safe-and-well>

To refer someone, please call 0300 0810005 or email [safeandwell@involvekent.org.uk](mailto:safeandwell@involvekent.org.uk)



## East Kent

**Connect well east Kent**, have a 14 page list of help currently available from local councils and community and voluntary groups. Please use the link below:

<https://www.connectwelleastkent.org.uk/covid-19-help/>



**Ageless Thanet** also has a list of support available in the community and are providing a telephone service, so if you are struggling with feelings of social isolation and loneliness during this time and would like to hear a friendly voice try calling 01843 210005 between 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

For more information use the link below:

<https://sekgroup.org.uk/community-support/ageless-thanet/>

**Red Zebra** has a "Whitstable Cares" page, which offers local residents the chance to volunteer, or seek help if they need it, or find out about emergency services such as food banks or distribution schemes, medical advice or financial advice.

<https://redzebra.org.uk/whitstablecares/>

A Thanet community assistance website has been set up to offer help during the pandemic:

<https://thanetcoronavirusassistance.com>

**RED**  
**ZEBRA**  
**COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS**

## Swale

Swale Borough Council has opened a Community Support Line for people who need to self-isolate and who don't have friends or family to support them.

If you are over 70, under 70 with [underlying health conditions](#), are self-isolating because you have symptoms, or live with someone with symptoms and have no friends or family nearby who can help, call 01795 417525.

The line is open from:

Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm

Friday 9am to 4:30pm

Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays 10am to 2pm

Outside these times contact the Kent Together helpline at [www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether](http://www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether) or by calling 03000 41 92 92.

For more information, visit [www.swale.gov.uk/community-response](http://www.swale.gov.uk/community-response).



## Gravesham

Gravesham Borough Council is working with **North West Kent Volunteer Centre** and other community partners to get vital supplies and medicines to those who need them most in our community.

If you, or anyone you know is vulnerable or self-isolating and without an immediate support network, you can ask for help.

Please go to:

<https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/environmental-health/coronavirus-guidance/help-and-support/overview>



## Dartford



Dartford Borough Council has created **Dartford Together** to bring together reliable information and support from trusted community partners.

<https://www.facebook.com/Dartford-Together-103500731291563>

DBC can help with food supplies for those facing a food emergency. If you think that you, or someone you know, needs help, call DBC on 01322 343434

## Swanley

Swanley Town Council is co-ordinating local volunteers in the town to make sure the most vulnerable residents are looked after.

They are calling for donations of essential supplies and have asked that if you are a local resident and you or a family member, friend or neighbour need supplies and cannot get out, to call 01322 665855.

For further information go to: <https://www.swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk/>





# A bit of entertainment for the kids

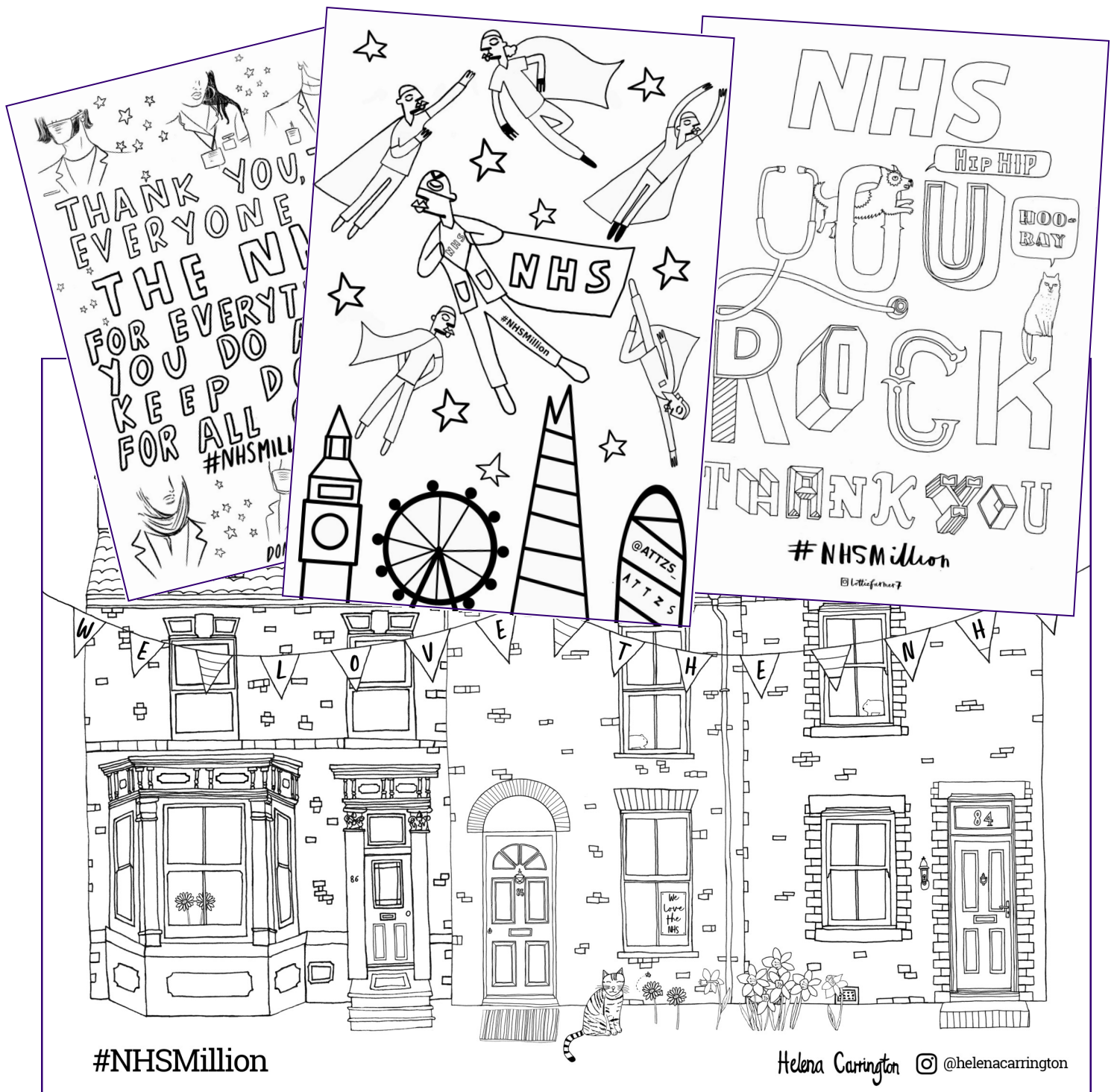
## NHS Million posters

The NHS is proud to have teamed up with artists from around the UK to bring you poster designs to print, colour in and display at home.

If you have children in your family there is a fantastic selection here:

<http://www.nhsmillion.co.uk/nhs-posters>.

It's cheering to see the posters on display in windows and is a boost to all NHS staff who are working so hard at this challenging time.



# Stay in touch

As a new organisation, NHS Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group wants to build on all the great engagement networks that the previous eight CCGs established.

Although we can't get out and about to talk to people during the pandemic we are looking at how we can keep in touch through virtual channels.

As a starting point we'll be sending these bulletins on a regular basis and there will be more information in future editions.

If you use social media please follow our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts. You can check our website for news at: [www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/news-and-events/news](http://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/news-and-events/news)

