

The Check-Up



£90k raised
for staff
and patients
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#TeamMKUH
wish Capt Tom
Happy 100th
Birthday!
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New lifeline
service for those
with nobody
to turn to
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After surviving 9 days on a ventilator fighting COVID-19, Nick Clark tells his story. See pages 4-5



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Welcome to The Check-Up

MKUH Chief Executive Joe Harrison

It gives me enormous pleasure to introduce the Summer 2020 edition of our hospital magazine, The Check-Up.

Now in its sixth year, The Check-Up's purpose is to inform, entertain and help to improve the health and wellbeing of patients, communities and staff of all health organisations and those of our partners.

This edition of The Check-Up focuses on our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and our ongoing local management of it.

I recognise the contribution everyone has made as part of the huge national effort to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

Many people have worked differently in many different ways to keep essential services running, whether that is working remotely for the first time, juggling the responsibilities of caring for and home-schooling children, or trying to look after elderly relatives and neighbours. Your contribution, even if it has been to sacrifice seeing family and friends by staying at home, is just as great, and just as valued.

For those who have been shielding and isolating, these will have been long and difficult weeks. Thank you for doing all you can to protect yourselves and your families.

Although we are now seeing the positive impact of many weeks of social distancing and our significantly changed lives, this pandemic is not yet over. It will call on more of our resolve and reserve through the coming months and, at MKUH, we will be maintaining the stringent infection prevention and control and personal protective equipment practices we have had in place throughout this pandemic to protect staff and patients.

Coming back to this edition of The Check-Up, it goes without saying that it features many COVID-19-related articles and pieces of information and advice, not just from MKUH but some of our partner organisations including MK Council, Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Commissioning Collaborative, Carers MK and Healthwatch MK, but I am hopeful you will find it informative, useful and reassuring, and hopefully you are also able to enjoy it as we all start making our way towards the 'new normal'.

With sincere best wishes,

Joe

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The Check-Up Editor

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We'd love to know what you think of this edition of The Check-Up and if you have any ideas for future articles, so don't hesitate to contact the Communications team at communications@mkuh.nhs.uk

Meet the student nurses on the MKUH frontline



WHEN the World Health Organisation last year announced 2020 as being the first ever global Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, nobody could have predicted how much the world would come to depend on those whose roles make up the largest portion of the NHS workforce.

Nurses and midwives bring diverse skills, commitment and expert clinical care and make huge differences to the lives of so many. Since the pandemic outbreak, tens of thousands of COVID-19 patients in hospitals across the country have seen just what highly skilled, caring and compassionate professionals they are.

This is why, in the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, we all take the opportunity to say thank you to all nurses and midwives; to showcase their diverse talents and expertise; and to promote nursing and midwifery as careers with a great deal to offer.

Many of those amazing careers are just beginning now at MKUH, with more than 50 nursing students on the frontline of the COVID-19 effort at one stage in May 2020. Many of the student nurses who joined would not normally be on placement yet - they would usually be completing academic studies before undertaking a shorter placement later in the year - but that has not stopped some opting to join the COVID-19 Clinical Extended Placement.

Sam Donohue, Deputy Chief Nurse at MKUH, said: "I'm full of admiration for our student nurses and the way they are helping to provide vital care and compassion whilst having to deal with some really challenging circumstances in their home lives.

"We know how incredibly important it is that we take excellent care of our student nurses during this pandemic - and that goes for all of our staff. We will provide them with all of the support they need and ask for as they begin their promising careers.

"These students will be this country's future nursing and midwifery workforce. Our role is to continue to support them through their academic journey. We also want to reassure students who have paused their studies that we will treat them with the same level of support when they return to their programmes later in the year."

The Trust supports student nurses across the adult, children's and learning disability fields. Each student has a protected learning day that includes clinical, leadership and management skills which is facilitated by the practice education team along with specialist nurses and ANPs across the hospital.



Student nurse Criselda, aged 39

For Criselda Cuthbert, being a nurse is a dream job. As a single parent, Criselda's life became even more hectic when lockdown came into force.

She is currently sleeping on the couch downstairs, keeping herself apart from her children to help them feel safe.

Criselda said: "I don't see my children often or even hug them compared to before as they are scared. Also, I can't spend time with sister and give my little nephew a cuddle as they know I work in a high-risk area in the hospital and fear that I may have the virus and may just be asymptomatic, which I totally understand. We think about safety and how we can protect our families.

"Working on the frontline is challenging. I am still a human being who feels concerned and anxious about the unknown, but I am here for the patients as they need someone to look after and care for them, not just with the current COVID-19 situation but at all times.

"MKUH has provided brilliant support and reassurance for us. For instance, the study days which are tailored to us students help us to be prepared and equipped so that we can use that training when we are out on placement. Also, MKUH has provided staff and well-being support which is a big help to us."



Student nurse Steven, aged 25

Fellow student nurse Steven Simmons finds home life can be just as challenging as life on the wards.

Steven said: "I really enjoy working for the Trust. It feels like everyone has really pulled together to deliver excellent care in challenging times. Juggling academic work with the demands of the job can be very difficult, though.

"Being a single dad, life can be very challenging at times. I also have two elderly parents who have had COVID-19 at home which has presented its own challenges."



Student nurse Maryam, aged 28

Maryam Nwaogu is also a student nurse starting her career at MKUH.

Maryam said: "I am really enjoying working here - the community spirit is amazing! The area I am working in is made up of a great team who are very supportive and helpful."

After surviving 9 days on a ventilator fighting COVID-19, Nick Clark tells his story

In April, Nick Clark spent nine days on a ventilator in Intensive Care after contracting COVID-19 and severe pneumonia. At one point, his prospects looked so grim that he called relatives to say 'see you on the other side', but Nick recovered and was eventually discharged. It was the start of a long process of physical and mental rehabilitation. This is Nick's story.



Nick with daughter Matilda in their back garden at home

NICK recalls the moment in hospital when he thought COVID-19 was going to claim his life.

He said: "For me, it felt like the beginning of the end, but I vividly recall feeling so unwell I was willing to try anything. I then started to make video calls telling friends and family how much I love them, saying goodnight and see you on the other side.

I remember asking my wife, Sarah, for my daughter, Matilda, to sleep my side of the bed - a feeling I never, ever want to experience again.

"A little later, there were three anaesthetists in the room explaining what was going to happen and I remember asking them not to forget about me. I remember one of them firmly holding my hand saying, 'I promise I will look after you. Everything is going to be OK, I promise. You're in the best possible care. Think of something really nice.'"

Nick was moved into Intensive Care where he spent nine days being ventilated under sedation. He was then moved back to the ward but was still very unwell and was fitted with a catheter and feeding tube and remained on oxygen.

And the anaesthetist was right - everything did turn out OK. His feeding tube and catheter were removed and, only days later, he was discharged home in what was an amazing turnaround. But being discharged was just the start of the recovery process, not the end.

Nick said: "Having lost a third of muscle mass at one stage, I was incredibly weak, not even able to hold my mobile phone. Not being able to walk, I began receiving daily physio and visits from doctors.

Matilda said:

"It made me sad when Daddy was in hospital. The nurses and doctors gave him lots of medicine to make him better. He was so brave! Thank you."

"I began to make progress and was soon able to get out of bed and sit in the chair without help. The day I returned home, 9 April 2020, is a date I will never forget, but this is just the start of the physical and mental help I'll need.

"Shortly after hospital, I had a breakdown. My daily and weekly activities that were once done without a single thought have now become anxiety-filled daily and weekly goals. Leaving hospital does not simply mean you're better - it means you're at the start of your recovery.

"There is little press regarding post-COVID-19 rehabilitation in terms of physical and mental recovery. This is arguably more important and I personally think this should have more focus as this recovery process takes far longer and requires you to fully understand what happened, how it happened and why it happened, which is something that is incredibly hard to face. The impact is also on the patient's family who are equally affected. I truly feel that there will be a surge in mental health referrals in months or years to come as a result of COVID-19."

As a result of the treatment and care he received at MKUH, Nick is raising money to help the hospital's post-COVID-19 teams, such as Physiotherapy, Mental Health and the Deep Vein Thrombosis Clinic, teams that he feels are instrumental in getting patients back to their normal way of life.

Nick said: "Not only do I want to raise money, but I also want to raise awareness of this awful disease. But there is no sum of money that could pay for the care I received. Some of the people that cared for me have now become friends. I'll be forever grateful to MKUH and all of the staff that cared for me and continue to care for me.

"The NHS is simply the finest healthcare system in the world and it is finally getting the recognition it deserves. Not all heroes wear capes!"

To donate towards Nick's fundraising efforts, please visit

www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/nick-theboy-clark

To read more about how COVID-19 patients are helped to recover their mobility and normal functioning, please turn to page 13 for 10 Quick Questions with MKUH's Advanced Respiratory Physiotherapist

Sarah said:

"We are so happy to have Nick home. The nine days he was on a ventilator were incredibly tough and I thank MKUH from the bottom of my heart for what they have done and continue to do. We are forever grateful."



Nick is using physiotherapy at home to help with his recovery from COVID-19



Nursing will be forever changed following this pandemic

Our first Big Interview is with MKUH Chief Nurse Nicky Burns-Muir, who talks about how COVID-19 has been the most challenging period of her career, the anxiety levels experienced by staff and how nursing will be forever changed.

What does a Chief Nurse do?

I am the Director of Patient Care and Chief Nurse and work with other members of the Trust Board to set the strategic direction of the organisation and ensure Ward-to-Board governance is delivered. I am the professional lead for all nurses, midwives and allied health professionals in the Trust.

I've had a 34-year career and my role is to ensure the workforce is developed to be highly skilled and experienced so it can deliver high quality patient care that is safe, effective and ensures a positive patient experience of our services.

What makes nursing the best profession in the world in your opinion?

Being a nurse is highly rewarding. It is a real privilege to support people at the most vulnerable time of their lives. Nurses are leaders, compassionate carers and clinicians who take responsibility for the care they provide to patients and families.

Nursing is a diverse career which can give you a wide range of opportunities to develop and undertake a varied portfolio of roles and jobs across acute and community care.

“COVID-19 has been the most challenging period in my 34-year career.”

How has COVID-19 impacted your role?

COVID-19 has been the most challenging time in my career and one where I have seen the very best of our teams delivering compassionate and kindness to our patients at a truly difficult time. As a newly appointed Chief Nurse, I was launched into the Kents Hill facility and then COVID-19 in the hospital. That was a steep learning curve for me in leadership and accountability and making decisions that could have an impact on staff and patient safety was extremely stressful at times.

It was like going into the darkness and an unknown place where I had no measure to know or a blueprint to follow, truly standing on the edge of uncomfortable at times. Whilst at Kents Hill other organisations nationally were interested in our every move, which was an added pressure and complexity.

How has COVID-19 hit the roles of nursing staff?

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on all staff groups and nursing has undergone a revolution in terms of changing practice and models of nursing to deliver care.

“I am so incredibly proud of each and every member of staff and their contribution to the delivery of care during this extraordinary time.”

There has been much courage demonstrated by our clinical staff. Nationally, we were being told to stay at home and isolate from others and reduce contacts. At work we were asking staff to go toward the problem and care for patients with this unknown, potentially fatal disease. This was difficult for staff to comprehend. I have never experienced such anxiety levels in nursing teams and I spend a considerable amount of time with my senior leadership team talking to staff and allowing them to express their concerns.

What has been the impact of COVID-19 on MKUH?

I am so incredibly proud of each and every member of staff and their contribution to the delivery of care during this extraordinary time, whether in ICU caring for the sickest patients, or shielding at home and supporting from a distance contributing to decision making and processes. Everyone has stepped up and into a new way of working, which is truly remarkable and testament to the outstanding team we have here at MKUH and why I wanted to be the Chief Nurse.

What has been the impact of COVID-19 on the MK community as far as nursing is concerned?

For patients this has been an extremely difficult time they are frightened and isolated from their families and loved ones which adds to the complexity of the care requirements during COVID-19. There have been some truly exceptional teams who have taken on challenges which we could not have believed a year ago - Ward 14 moved from rehabilitation to the Acute Respiratory Unit accepting potential COVID-19 patients; ICU created a second facility with theatre teams and nurses from medicine; end-of-life care for patients supported by the therapy teams; Senior Sisters and Matrons provided a 24/7 rota and supported night staff - too many to mention them all here.

How emotional have you been at the Thursday handclaps?

The community clapping on a Thursday for the NHS has been humbling and extremely emotional at times. The support we have received from our community has been heartwarming and definitely kept us all going when at times we were all exhausted and running at pace. Kindness is key in making human connections and meaning in a world that is unfamiliar.

“There have been some truly exceptional teams who have taken on challenges which we could not have believed a year ago.”

What does the future look like for nursing at MKUH and nursing generally?

Nursing will be changed forever following this pandemic and, in the midst of such challenges, some exceptional and positive outcomes have occurred. All of the nurses have gained experience and extended skills which inevitably will benefit their practice going forward and ultimately improve patient care and experience. It has demonstrated the immense contribution nursing brings to the delivery of high quality care and has elevated the role nationally which can only strengthen the future of nursing as a profession.

What's your message to the public?

The PALS/complaints and patient experience teams have provided such an outstanding contribution for patients during this period by completely changing their roles including starting a family hub to keep families up-to-date and connected with their loved ones. Families have told us how important this service is to them and has given them reassurance we are caring for their loved one. By helping people with difficult circumstances, collective resilience can foster real change and this is what it means to be in #TeamMKUH. **I am so proud to be the Chief Nurse at MKUH.**

To read up on how some of our student nurses are coping on the MKUH frontline, please turn to **page 3**.



Urgent appeal for help for NHS staff sees £90k and 9,000 items donated

MORE than £90,000 and 9,000 items have been donated to hospital staff and patients following an urgent COVID-19 appeal by Milton Keynes Hospital Charity.

#TEAMMKUH have been overwhelmed by the generosity and kindness of the community since the launch of an appeal by MK Hospital Charity.

The appeal was launched to help meet the unprecedented demand for NHS services through funding special extras to enhance patient experience, as well as care for staff too.

The charity received donations of PPE, cold drinks, hot food, chocolate, healthy snack bars, yoga sessions, portable radios and even free car MOTs for staff.

The money raised has been put towards (or has already been put towards) funding:

- A new Staff Hub to support the wellbeing of staff who can **take time out to rest and have some quiet time, with free drinks and snacks provided too.**

- 150 staff care packs containing items such as **hand creams, drinks, sanitary products, books and healthy snacks** to keep staff going.
- **80 mobile phones to enable virtual visiting during the pandemic** – so that patients and their families can see each other’s faces and talk at this difficult time. The mobile phones have also proved invaluable for remote consultants with relatives and patients, using an app called Nye, to make the call secure.
- **Refurbishing staff rooms throughout the hospital** – starting with critical care, theatres teams and Ward 8 – to create safe and comfortable spaces for staff to take time out.
- **Small, portable whiteboards** to offer an alternative way to talk with hearing

impaired patients, who communicate through lip reading only (which isn't possible when staff are wearing face masks).

- **DAB radios for patients** to listen to music and, in some cases, enjoy a little dance – and newspapers for patients whilst visiting has been restricted.



MKUH Head of Charity Vanessa Holmes said: "I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you to all those who have donated time, money and goods over the last three months.

"Those soft extras have made a real and tangible difference to the wellbeing of staff.

For instance, a special 'Love NHS' lights display, secured by our friends at My Milton Keynes, brought smiles to many faces – several people said it brightened their day after a really long shift.

"Milton Keynes Hospital Charity supports all patients, their families and staff at MKUH, funding items and projects that go over and above the standard NHS provision.

"As we continue to receive donations and work with the hospital to find new ways of offering support, we would like to say thank you once again to the local communities who have taken the time to donate, fundraise, leave kind comments for staff, cook and deliver meals, purchase items from our Amazon Wish List and volunteer their time.

We hugely appreciate your support at this challenging time."

If you would like to support the charity or find out more, please visit: www.mkhcharity.org.uk



... And Mentioned in Despatches... Captain Tom!

Happy 100th Birthday!



As a special thank you to Capt Tom for the incredible £33 million he raised for all NHS charities, MK Hospital Charity created a two-minute video featuring dozens of #TeamMKUH staff wishing him 'Happy 100th Birthday'!

MKUH is hoping to receive a portion of the funds which it will use to improve the lives of patients, visitors and staff.

In case you hadn't heard, Capt Tom won the hearts of the nation in April when he walked 100 laps of his garden in Marston Moretaine before his 100th birthday in what was an incredible achievement. Amazing!



COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on all of us

Our second Big Interview is with MKUH Medical Director Ian Reckless, *pictured*, who talks about COVID-19 including its dramatic impact on all of us, the psychological distress it has caused and participation in the Oxford vaccine trial.

What does a Medical Director do?

The Medical Director is a member of the Executive Team and Trust Board, but also a practising doctor. I am a consultant physician with a particular interest in stroke medicine. My clinical work these days is limited, spending a week covering the Acute Medical Unit (Ward 1) every other month.

What types of staff do you oversee at the Trust?

My primary role is to oversee the work of the Trust's doctors. I also have responsibilities in relation to pharmacy, supporting our Chief Pharmacist and the University of Buckingham Medical School.

"COVID-19 and isolation will have caused psychological distress to many."

How has COVID-19 affected your role?

COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on all of us, from the early days when

we were looking after the evacuees from Wuhan at the Kents Hill quarantine centre through to the period of peak demand in April, and now as we move through to the recovery phase – learning to operate our usual services alongside COVID-19.

My normal routine has changed significantly. The focus has been on planning for a range of eventualities and trying to keep communication across the organisation as clear and open as it can be given all the uncertainty.

Like many colleagues, I have found the pandemic relentless and tiring. I am longing for a time when I can really switch off, perhaps on holiday with my family. I can hope...

How has COVID-19 affected the roles of medical staff?

Medical staff have fallen into two main groups: those who have become busier in their usual field of practice, and those who have had to work outside their comfort zone (perhaps in theatre or outpatients) returning to help run inpatient medical wards, attending to patients suffering the effects of COVID-19. Many doctors have ended up putting their specialism aside and returning to the core tasks and duties of a doctor.

Examples include colleagues from the orthopaedic team going to ICU in teams to help prone (turn) ventilated patients; colleagues from pathology participating in ward rounds many years after their last experience at the bedside; fifteen newly qualified doctors joining us ten weeks early having had their graduations brought forward; and doctors volunteering

to come and work with us at MKUH (whether from the private sector or research work).

What have the challenges been for medical staff?

I have been really impressed by how medical staff – and indeed the wider staff team – have adapted to the demands of the situation, including embracing technology to keep in touch with patients and keep them safe, and moving to different models and hours of working without hesitation. There have been challenges. Chief among these has been balancing the various risks we have faced. For example, there has been nervousness about the right sort of personal protective equipment (PPE) to wear in various clinical scenarios, particularly at a time when the national advice was evolving. We have also got better at achieving the appropriate balance between 'isolating patients' (staying away from them where possible) and 'caring for patients' (maintaining the human touch and personal interactions at all times).

"Many doctors have ended up putting their specialism aside and returning to the core tasks and duties of a doctor."

What has been the impact of all of the above on the people of MKUH and the patients of MKUH?

In general, we have been able to provide a really good service to the people of Milton Keynes and to give them confidence as we all come to terms with the dangerous disease that is COVID-19, and the profound implications that it has for our lifestyles now and over the next couple of years. I think we have tried hard to adapt to the needs of patients over this time – in particular given the challenges of restricted visiting and the absence of face-to-face outpatient consultations in some specialties. The challenge for us and the wider public sector will now be to fix some of the problems and gaps which the focus on COVID-19 and the lockdown have led to: patients who would really benefit from care not being willing or able to access it; the psychological distress that COVID-19 and isolation will have caused for many, and the socio-economic circumstances of vulnerable children and adults.

What does the foreseeable future look like for Medicine at MKUH?

For the rest of 2020, we will be trying to operate many of our usual planned services

(outpatients, investigations, procedures and operations) alongside the highly infectious and problematic disease that is COVID-19. It is very likely that the background level of COVID-19 in the local population will wax and wane over that time, with occasional peaks and outbreaks. Those outbreaks will have to be managed decisively and firmly with colleagues in public health. We will have to work even harder at basic measures such as hand hygiene and social distancing as we move once again to containing the disease.

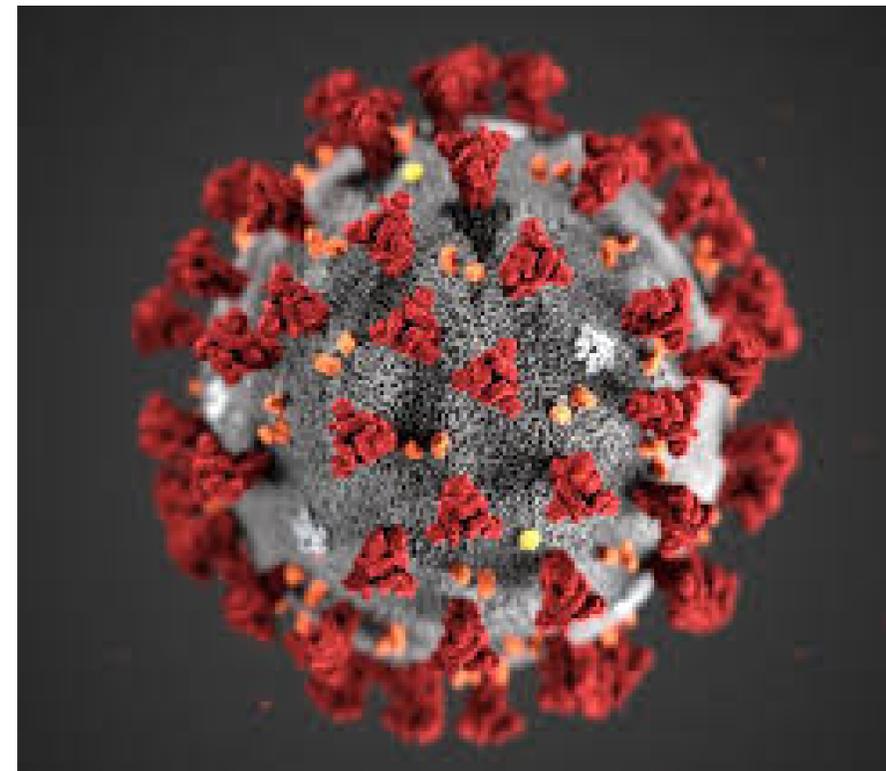
How do you think this pandemic will end?

The main hope for our physical health now and our economic health in the years to come is that an effective vaccine is found for COVID-19. There is currently a lot of hope that the vaccine being 'fast-tracked' 30 miles away in Oxford could present the answer the world is looking for – possibly before the end of the year. I am really excited about that prospect – not least as I am participating in the vaccine trial. Right now, I may – or may not – have had a COVID-19 vaccine that may – or may not – work!

How can we cope with change and uncertainty?

The key thing is how we all cope with change and manage uncertainty, but here is what I would advise:

- **Look after yourself and those around you, whether it's your family or those you work with.**
- **Remember the power of effective vaccination.** When your opportunity to have this year's flu vaccine comes, take it. Save the other arm for when we do have an effective COVID-19 vaccine!
- **Wash your hands regularly and try to keep physically distant from others wherever you can.**



"I have been really impressed by how medical staff – and indeed the wider staff team – have adapted to the demands of the situation."

New lifeline for vulnerable MK residents

A LOCAL Support Service has been set up to make vital deliveries to vulnerable residents who have nobody else to turn to during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The service, set up and delivered by Milton Keynes Council, is there for people who have registered with Government as 'extremely vulnerable' and who need extra help, and for other residents who are self-isolating and do not have family, friends or neighbours to support them.

The council has already contacted more than 14,000 local people and made 1,500 emergency deliveries, mostly essential medication.

The service is staffed by council employees whose usual work has been disrupted by the pandemic including librarians, community safety officers and the family support team.

Reg, an 89-year-old MK resident, said: "My wife is in a wheelchair and is disabled. We cannot leave the house

and I won't do anything to put her at risk. Without this incredible service, we wouldn't have our essentials like milk and bread. It's unbelievable what the council is doing for people like us and I want to thank everyone who is involved."

Cllr Pete Marland, Council Leader, said: "I'd like to thank council colleagues who are checking in on local people to make sure they get the help they desperately need."

The Local Support Service takes calls Monday to Friday between 9am and 5.15pm on 01908 252398. Deliveries happen seven days a week including evenings.

The council stresses this is a lifeline for people who have no other support and asks people who do have friends and neighbours to keep the helpline free for isolated people in need.



Jo Smart, Local Support Co-ordinator for the Local Support Service

Using physio to help COVID-19 patients get better

10 quick questions with Louise Worrall Advanced Respiratory Physiotherapist



1 So, what do you do Louise?

I am an Advanced Respiratory Physiotherapist treating patients with a variety of acute and chronic respiratory conditions. I also run the post-ICU rehab service for patients recovering from critical illness.

2 How long have you been with MKUH?

I have worked in the NHS for 17 years and been at MKUH for 13 years. Nearly all of this time has been within critical care.

3 What are your regular day-to-day roles?

I work three days a week. I am in outpatient clinics two days a week seeing respiratory and post-ICU patients. On my third day I usually run the post-ICU rehab class in the gym, review ICU patients on the wards and I also have a teaching role.

4 Why is physio so important to COVID-19 patients?

These patients often have significant deconditioning, fatigue and breathlessness. Physio can help to improve patients' quality of life, regain their previous level of function and enable them to return to their usual everyday activities including work.

5 What are you doing differently to deliver the physio service during the lockdown?

We are using phone or video calls for all of our appointments to keep the service running as much as possible. We hope to start seeing patients face-to-face in clinic in the coming weeks.

6 What are MKUH doing physio-wise with COVID-19 compared to the rest of the country?

We've had a well established post-ICU rehab service running here for 10 years so we are set up to offer vital rehab to patients who have needed critical care. We know the journey ahead and we are ready to support them.

7 What's your favourite part of the job?

Seeing patients working so hard in the gym when just a few weeks before they were in ICU and often on a ventilator. It's amazing! Being a part of a patient's recovery is incredible and so rewarding.

8 What's your least favourite part of the job?

Feeling like there is never enough time to give my patients all I wish to - although I am sure we all feel like that!

9 What's been your biggest challenge?

Trying to provide the best service possible to all of our patients whilst also ensuring post-ICU patients get urgent access to rehab. Also not seeing patients face to face in clinic is very challenging for staff who are used to 'hands-on' rehab.

10 What does the future look like?

More COVID-19 patients will need access to Respiratory Physiotherapy. So providing that rehab to all patients will certainly be a challenge - but one we will do all we can to manage!

Care and Response team helping people with all their queries and concerns



Helen Butler, MK Council's Care and Response Telecare Service Manager

THE 24/7 Care and Response service have been working harder than ever since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak to alleviate residents' concerns, with the number of calls increasing by a quarter.

Normally the service, which is run by Milton Keynes Council 365 days a year, would take 18,000 calls a month, supporting more than 5,000 MK residents in need of help in their own homes.

Many use their alarm units and personal pendants which connect directly to the Care and Response call centre.

A team of mobile wardens is available visit to assist people after a fall, to install equipment and carry out

welfare checks although, in many cases, guidance and reassurance can be provided over the phone.

Helen Butler said:

"These are difficult times and our service users are primarily older people. We are often the only person they have spoken to for a while and a bit of reassurance goes a long way."

"We have some service users who we speak to frequently throughout the day and night providing reassurance that we are here and that they are not alone. A five-minute conversation can greatly help a person who is feeling isolated and upset."

"We just do things a little differently now, with PPE to protect service users and staff where needed."

Are you a carer struggling with anxiety and isolation?

A MESSAGE FROM CARERS MK

CarersMK

Due to the current coronavirus pandemic, we are finding that many unpaid family carers are providing additional care.

Many are concerned about putting their loved ones at risk by allowing paid carers into their homes, so they are refusing help and providing that extra support themselves.

Some carers need to balance working at home with caring. Going to work can provide an opportunity for respite but, as the advice to stay at home continues, carers are more likely to reach breaking point.

The closure of schools and day centres means some working carers have to take unpaid leave. This is likely to cause financial difficulties the longer the situation continues. Older carers with loved ones in nursing homes or residential care cannot visit them. This is understandably causing upset and distress.

Many young carers and young adult carers cope daily with anxiety and isolation. Managing lockdown alongside caring makes this challenge even harder. They are often worried about their studies and when they might see their friends again. As their responsibilities increase the opportunity to have a break and be with a child can be denied.

These are just a few of the many examples of issues and concerns that carers are experiencing.

If you are looking after someone who cannot manage without your support then you are a carer, and we are here to support you.

We provide a phone or virtual support service or, if you would like to speak to other carers, we offer a range of virtual support groups, information sessions and activities.

The MK Carers service is free, you can register by calling 01908 231703 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday, or visit our website - www.carersmiltonkeynes.org and complete the registration form.

For young carers a professional referral form is preferred which is downloadable from our website.

Look after your health

Dr Nicola Smith, who is Clinical Chair of Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Commissioning Collaborative, explains how NHS services are available

NHS
Bedfordshire, Luton
and Milton Keynes
Commissioning Collaborative

OVER the past few months the NHS has had to adapt to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, it is continuing to treat people with other health conditions both in the community and at MKUH.

It's important for anyone who is concerned about their physical or mental health to seek medical help. GP practices are still open and taking appointments, although you will notice changes in the way consultations with your GP are conducted. To protect practice staff and other patients from potential infection from COVID-19, GP appointments are being conducted remotely wherever possible.

On calling your GP surgery, you will have an initial assessment and may be offered a phone or online video consultation. However, if it is necessary for you to have a face-to-face consultation with a GP, an appointment will be made for you to do this.

Other services continue to be available at your GP practice. These include blood tests, repeat prescriptions and routine vaccinations for children.

Women who are pregnant must attend their antenatal appointments, and if they have any concerns about their own health or the health of their unborn baby, they should contact a midwife immediately.

Similarly, if you have a hospital outpatient appointment for diagnostic tests or treatment, please attend unless you've been told not to.

Anyone needing urgent medical help can use the NHS 111 online service. If you cannot get help online, call 111.

For a serious or life-threatening emergency, such as a heart attack or stroke, call 999.

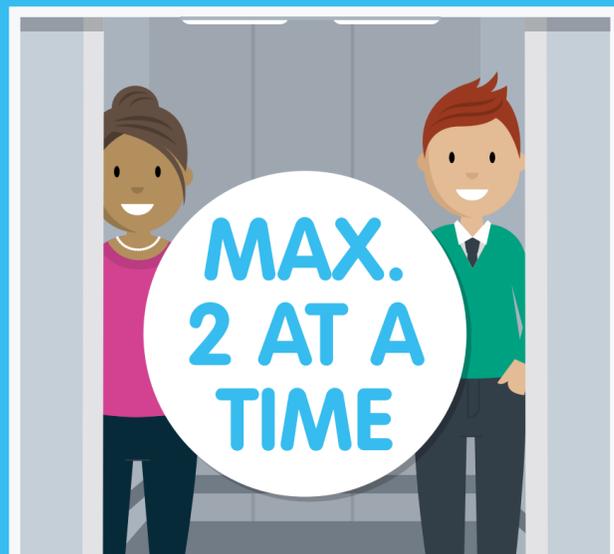
Don't take risks with your health. If you need medical help, the NHS is still here for you.

For more information, visit <https://111.nhs.uk/>

TheMKWay
CARE. COMMUNICATE.
COLLABORATE. CONTRIBUTE.

NHS
Milton Keynes
University Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

BE SMART, STAY APART



We're in this together. Thank you for your cooperation

MKUH has launched its social distancing campaign

In May 2020, MKUH began asking staff, visitors and patients to keep a safe distance from others as part of its Be Smart, Stay Apart campaign.

Social distancing, as well as regularly washing your hands and ensuring you use a tissue when you cough or sneeze, will help to ensure viruses are not spread to other people when you are in the hospital.

The measures were introduced early in the COVID-19 pandemic and we believe it is important to maintain these standards.

The measures include:

- No more than two people sharing an elevator at any one time
- Patients not turning up too early for appointments
- Visitors adhering to our latest guidance (please check the website)

We understand that in the course of your treatment at the hospital that it won't be always be possible to maintain a two-metre distance between you and the staff delivering your care. Where that is the case, staff will take the necessary precautions to ensure their contact with you is safe and this may mean they need to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like a mask and gloves.

Tell
Healthwatch
MK about
your NHS
experiences

healthwatch
Milton Keynes

The coronavirus
crisis is a challenging
time for everyone

COVID-19 is changing the way NHS and social care services work but, if you don't know how to find out what services or support options are available to you, Healthwatch MK can help you find the right person to speak to.

Healthwatch MK is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services to make sure those paying for and providing services put local people at the heart of care.

Healthwatch MK will listen to what you like about services and what you think could be improved and share your views with the people who have the power to make change happen.

Healthwatch MK
operate an Advice &
Signposting service
9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

Call on 01908 698800 or email
info@healthwatchmiltonkeynes.co.uk

For more information
visit the website
www.healthwatchmiltonkeynes.co.uk

I just want to say **Thank you**

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, many patients have suffered from serious illness and their families have not been able to visit them in their time of need due to the visiting restrictions. Here is a selection of some of the feedback on the excellent treatment and care by **#TeamMKUH** recently.

Ward 16, in particular Maria and Emilie

I owe my life to all the wonderful NHS staff of Ward 16, MKUH. These incredible people provided excellent care, over long hours, and at significant risk to themselves, especially Maria and Emilie. Thank you for my life.

Palliative and End-of-Life Care team

A big thank you for helping my family deal with the loss of my dad who died on Ward 17. Your team ensured he was as comfortable as possible and dealt with him, and us, with such compassion.

Wards 15 and 18

Thank you all for the care, support and compassion you gave my father. My special thanks go to Sister Angelina Pereira and Nurse Hellen Gain for their love and support. You are all amazing people and I thank you so much for all you do every day.

Ward 18

A big thank you to all staff in Ward 18 and all other healthcare workers who assisted with our Dad during his stay at MKUH. He received amazing care and support.

Sofia from Maternity Ward 9

Our appreciation and thanks to the NHS for the amazing service that was accorded to my wife from the time of pregnancy with our first baby, right from the prenatal visits and all through delivery and after. In particular, Ruth Nyarko from MK Village Practice and Sofia from Maternity Ward 9 for their incredible care and support. We just cannot thank you and your team enough.

#TeamMKUH

Molly, 13, has written a letter of appreciation for #TeamMKUH. She wrote: 'It takes a very brave, special person to be able to stay away from their own families so they can take care of others during this difficult time. I thank you with all my heart for putting your own lives at risk for others.'

Ultrasound department

Thank you to the team in the Ultrasound department. We came for our 20 week scan yesterday and the ladies on the reception desk were friendly and helpful, whilst the staff were patient and explained everything and made us both feel so calm. Amazing!

Emergency Department (ED) team, and Molly and Ellie from Ward 1

My thanks to the ED team. It was a traumatic and worrying time but the genuine care and concern shown by both the reception staff and nurses helped me tremendously to manage the situation, particularly Nurse Molly and Dr Ellie.

Emergency Department Ward 21

I can't thank A&E enough for helping me. The reception, triage nurse and doctor were so kind and helpful. Thank you all for helping me and my burns at a time when the NHS is under so much pressure.

Ward 21

In Ward 21, the care the staff gave me was special. Staff of all shifts treated me very kindly. Even the staff who had not previously met me were kind and friendly. It has been a very 'healing' experience and could not have been better. **Thank you**

PALS

We are here to help!

PALS is MKUH's Patient Advice and Liaison Service providing a confidential point of contact for patients, families and carers by offering on-the-spot help, advice and information regarding your healthcare.

You can contact PALS via PALS@mkuh.nhs.uk, text (07773 577 923 – you will receive a call back) or by calling 01908 995 954

(if you reach the answerphone please leave a message and your call will be returned either that day or as soon as possible on the next working day).

Email a letter and photos to your loved one in hospital



Families and friends can email letters and one or two photographs to patients during their stay at MKUH to help you reach them during the visiting restrictions.

To do this, please email letterstolovedones@mkuh.nhs.uk attaching your letter and photograph(s), providing your loved one's date of birth and full name.

Upon receipt, we will print out your letter and laminate any photographs and deliver them to your loved one.

If you have any questions about emailing a letter or if you need any help, please call the PALS team on 01908 995954.