

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) Trust Update

20 April 2020

This bulletin draws together the latest updates and information from the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust which we hope will be useful to our local partners and communities.

## Key news and information

### EXETER GENOMICS SCIENTISTS TO BATTLE SPREAD OF COVID-19

Scientists at the University of Exeter and the RD&E are part of a group of the country's leading institutions who are joining together to sequence the virus from patients throughout the UK. By knowing the sequence it will be possible to know both how it is changing (or mutating) and also to map the spread of COVID-19. The information gathered will be key for stopping the virus spreading by informing the best strategies for reducing spread and also for future diagnostic tests and treatment.

Samples from patients with confirmed cases of COVID-19 will be sent to a network of sequencing centres at Exeter, as well as Belfast, Birmingham, Cambridge, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, London, Norwich, Nottingham, Oxford and Sheffield. These centres will liaise with the Wellcome Sanger Institute, near Cambridge: one of the world's most advanced centres of genomes and data, to analyse the genetic code of COVID-19 samples circulating in the UK.

Ray Sheridan, RD&E consultant, said: "Covid-19 is the single most important medical emergency our country has ever faced. I really believe that the combining the efforts of our NHS and universities across the country offers real benefit for patients. As a frontline clinician, this research effort gives me hope that I can pass on to patients. Every day that we can delay this virus from hitting its peak - by handwashing, isolation and social distancing - buys us more time to work on this crucial research."

### JAMES BRENT TO REMAIN CHAIRMAN FOR A FURTHER YEAR

In recognition of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, following agreement with NHS England and NHS Improvement, James Brent has agreed to continue as Chairman of both the Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Foundation Trust (RD&E) and Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust (NDHT) until June 2021.

The decision ensures stability and continuity at a time when the NHS as a whole is handling the significant challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic. It is expected that the recruitment campaign will recommence towards the end of the year or sooner depending on the trajectory of the pandemic.

### INTERPRETATION SUPPORT FOR DEAF PEOPLE

BSL HealthAccess offers immediate, on demand access to BSL interpreters for communication with Deaf people across all NHS related services, including GPs, health clinics, pharmacies and 111. The service is currently free and can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

There are two options available:

- Video Relay Service - a BSL interpreter relays information over a telephone call between a BSL user and the hearing person receiving or making the call.
- Video Remote Interpreting – a remote interpreter is used to facilitate communication with a Deaf and hearing person in the same location.

BSL users can access the service via the InterpreterNow App on a phone or tablet.

## RNIB EYE CLINIC LIAISON OFFICERS

The RNIB provides support to the West of England Eye Unit through its Eye Clinic Liaison Officers. These officers are continuing to support existing and new patients during the pandemic by checking they have access to shopping, prescriptions and medication, are able to keep in touch with family and friends and can access current info about the situation. They can also make referrals to other services including the NHS volunteers through the GoodSam app and a new Staying In Touch (SIT) service which offers patients a weekly call to make sure they are okay and to offer emotional support.

The Eye Clinic Liaison Officers can be contacted on [rde-tr.exetereclo@nhs.net](mailto:rde-tr.exetereclo@nhs.net) or via voicemail on 01392 406126.

## HOSPITAL RADIO REQUEST SHOW

Hospital Radio Exeter has launched a request show so people can email requests and special messages to patients in the hospital.

The programmes will go out on Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8-9pm. Radio is free on the Hospedia TV/Radio sets in the hospital and can also be heard on the internet so visitors and relatives can hear the request they have made for their patients.

If you want to send a patient a special message, please email [Requestshow@aol.com](mailto:Requestshow@aol.com). To listen go to [www.hospitalradioexeter.com](http://www.hospitalradioexeter.com) and press the listen now button.

## SUPPORT FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE

#YouAreNotAlone is a new public awareness campaign which aims to help those affected by domestic abuse and reassure victims that support remains available. If anyone is at risk of, or experiencing, domestic abuse, they are still able to leave and seek refuge - isolation rules do not apply. Police response and support services remain available. The public are being encouraged to show their solidarity and support for those who may be suffering, by sharing government digital content or a photo of a heart on their palm using the hashtag #YouAreNotAlone. Find support at [www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse](http://www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse).

and finally...

## DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE DESERVING OF A BRAND NEW BIKE?

The RD&E's cycle to work scheme provider, Cyclescheme, is giving away 13 brand-new bikes. And they need your help. Nominate the brilliant people who are helping keep us safe and supported during this time and they could win!

Visit [www.cyclescheme.co.uk/community](http://www.cyclescheme.co.uk/community) to enter:

- 1. Who is making a difference?** This could be someone caring for vulnerable neighbours, a local teacher or someone raising money for charity. It could even be you.
- 2. Choose which bike they should win.** There are bikes from Marin, Raleigh, Ribble, Specialized and Trek. Choose the model that best suits the person you're nominating.
- 3. Why should they win?** Explain why this person is brilliant and how a new bike could positively impact their life.

Nominations for each bike close at regular intervals up until the 30th April 2020.



## GENERAL RD&E ENQUIRIES

If you have an urgent enquiry, please telephone the main hospital switchboard on 01392 411611 available 24 hours a day. If you are a patient, relative or carer and want to discuss someone's care at the RD&E, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01392 402093 or [rde-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:rde-tr.PALS@nhs.net).