

Your Health

Update for patients and the public in Berkshire West
(Includes West Berkshire, Wokingham and Reading)



February 2022

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Covid Restrictions Still in Place Within NHS Sites

 HOW YOU CAN CONTINUE TO KEEP YOURSELF AND YOUR LOVED ONES SAFE	 VACCINES Get vaccinated to reduce your risk of catching Covid-19 and becoming seriously ill, and to reduce the risk of spreading the virus to others.	 FRESH AIR Letting fresh air in if meeting indoors, or meeting outside to disperse Covid-19 particles and reduce the risk of spreading the virus.
 FACE COVERING Consider wearing a face covering in crowded, enclosed spaces.	 STAY AT HOME IF UNWELL Try to stay at home if you are unwell.	 HAND WASHING Wash your hands regularly to limit the spread of Covid-19.

Although Covid restrictions within England have now ended, most NHS premises will still ask patients and visitors to stick to the 'hands, face, space'. This is to comply with infection prevention and control guidance while Coronavirus remains in circulation.

The Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust's hospital sites will continue with these guidelines to prevent Coronavirus spreading.

Individual GP surgeries have the option to do the same, so please check what arrangements your surgery has in place before you visit.

[Find out how to stay safe and help prevent the spread of coronavirus](#)

Vaccine Walk-in Sites

As well as the 'hands, face, space' guidelines, the most effective way you can protect your loved ones and those around you, is to have your Covid vaccination – whether that's your first, second or booster shot.



Our Health on the Move van is still supporting the Covid vaccination programme by visiting locations across the Berkshire West area that don't have their own vaccine centre.

You can get a dose of the Covid-19 vaccine from a walk-in site or the Health on the Move (HOTM) van, without an appointment, and you don't need to be registered with a GP.

Upcoming vaccine walk in sessions include:

Location	Date 2022	Time	Doses available
Health on the Move van at: Finchampstead Baptist Centre Gorse Ride North Finchampstead Wokingham RG40 4ES	Mon 28 February Tues 1 March	10.00-16.00 10.00-16.00	First, second and booster doses if you're aged 16 years old and over
Health on the Move van at: Lower Earley Library Chalfont Close Earley Reading RG6 5HZ	Weds 2 March Sun 6 March	10.00-16.00 10.00-16.00	First, second and booster doses if you're aged 16 years old and over
Health on the Move van at: Rainbow Centre Rainbow Park Winnersh Wokingham RG41 5SG	Fri 4 March	10.00-16.00	First, second and booster doses if you're aged 16 years old and over
Weekly Vaccination Centre Wokingham Central Library Denmark Street Wokingham RG40 2BB	Fri 4 March Sat 5 March Sun 6 March	11.00-17.00 13.00-19.00 11.00-17.00 11.00-17.00	First, second and booster doses if you're aged 12 years old and over

Visit the [NHS Covid Vaccine site](#) for details of more upcoming vaccine sessions near you.

Are You Reluctant To Have Your Covid Vaccine?

Healthwatch Reading has launched a [survey in seven different languages](#) to find out why eligible people in Reading haven't yet had a Covid vaccine.

Healthwatch is an independent champion for health and social care users, and wants to give the people of Reading a chance to express the different reasons that may be stopping them from having the vaccine.

This short survey is anonymous and runs until 7 March 2022.

Current Situation at the Royal Berkshire Hospital Emergency Department

Like most of the NHS, the Royal Berkshire Hospital's Emergency Department is currently under extreme pressure. Please remember that unless it's a medical emergency, calling NHS 111 or visiting 111.nhs.uk may be the best port of call to get the care you need.

CALL 999
IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

This is when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk. Medical emergencies can include:

- signs of a heart attack
- signs of a stroke
- severe difficulty breathing
- heavy bleeding
- severe injuries
- seizure (fit)
- sudden, rapid swelling - of the eyes, lips, mouth, throat or tongue

VISIT 111.NHS.UK
FOR URGENT MEDICAL CARE

NHS 111 can help if you have an urgent medical problem and you're not sure what to do. Go to NHS 111 online, if you have:

- Minor head, ear or eye problems.
- Fractures, sprains, strains, cuts and bites.
- Children's minor injuries and ailments.
- Abscesses or wound infections.

Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme

Did you know that patients and carers on low incomes can reclaim their travel costs for attending hospital appointments?

If you're a patient or carer who receives benefits or is on a low income, you may be eligible to claim back the cost of travelling to specialist healthcare appointments by public transport or car.

You might be able to claim back your healthcare travel costs.

Find out if you are eligible with the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme leaflet

Dom Hardy, Chief Operating Officer of the Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust, said "It's vital for patients to be able to attend hospital appointments to prevent long-term problems with their health. The Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme is a great arrangement that will help people who find the cost of travelling to

appointments a challenge, and make sure everyone has an equal opportunity to access the healthcare they need.”

You can submit your claim up to three months after the appointment date. Patients of the Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust can find further information is available on their [patient leaflet](#) or on the [NHS Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme](#) website. Alternatively contact: Royal Berkshire Hospital Cashier’s Office on 0118 322 7054 or email: income@royalberkshire.nhs.uk.

Team Effort to Reduce Ophthalmology Waiting List

Trusts across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West have been working together to treat patients who have been waiting the longest for cataract, squint and ocular plastics surgery.

Earlier this year, the Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust completed 315 additional cataract, corneal transplants and squint operations in just two weeks. These procedures were carried out across three Trust sites: the Prince Charles Eye Unit in Windsor, the West Berkshire Community Hospital in Thatcham and the Royal Berkshire Hospital. As a result, the number of patients waiting longer than 18 weeks has reduced to just 31 patients – largely due to lack of donor material.

The Trust set up ‘one-stop cataract clinics’ so that most patients were able to be diagnosed, and prepared ready for surgery in a single visit. They also arranged for patients to have their post-operative checks carried out with community optometry practices. All of this work was helped by switching patient records to a fully digital system, providing greater flexibility and allowing the Trust to treat patients at whichever site has capacity.

Online Mental Health Support For Children & Young People in Berkshire West

Kooth is an online support network for children and young people struggling with mental



The youth counselling service will complement a range of other mental health support packages provided for youngsters across Berkshire West.

Kooth provides a seven day a week online platform with a trained counsellor available until 10pm each night. It offers self-help and useful psychological information,

moderated peer support, and supervised and professional support.

There’s access to a magazine with personal experience stories and self-help tips from other young people, a discussion board and live chat facilities.

The service, which is aimed at 11 to 18 year olds, is run by Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in partnership with Wokingham Borough, Reading Borough and West Berkshire Councils, with support from Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and our local voluntary sector.

Kooth will give online support to children who are waiting to see a counsellor and also divert those who don't need a face to face appointment – freeing up places for more pressing cases.

Visit www.kooth.com to join.

Covid Test Payment Scam

Now that the Government has announced that free Covid tests will be coming to an end on 1 April 2022, please be aware of a related scam where people are receiving text messages requesting payment for Covid tests.

A person recently targeted by fraudsters reported that they had received a text message requesting payment for Covid tests. Given the recent news that free tests are coming to an end, the targeted person clicked on the link in the text.

The target then received a phone call purporting to be from their bank, advising of suspected fraud and the need to protect their accounts.

The caller advised the target to check the telephone number that they were calling from against their bank website to prove that the call was genuine. The target did check their bank's website, and confirmed that it was the same phone number calling them.

However the caller, who was a fraudster had cloned the bank telephone number when making the call.

Fortunately, the target became suspicious and ended the call. They later reported the incident to their bank who told them that this was a known scam.

Have You Experienced Excellent Care At The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust?

The Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust has announced the return of its annual staff excellence awards - the Royal Berkshire CARE Awards – which are their opportunity to celebrate and showcase their staff members' excellence all across the Trust.



NOMINATIONS OPEN UNTIL 11 MARCH

For the first time ever, the Trust is opening nominations to the public. The Compassion in Care Award celebrates staff who have demonstrated empathy, respect, integrity and dignity in their care of patients. Nothing is more important than the care they provide to patients, and each day staff accomplish outstanding work in how they treat patients and their families.

If you've experienced excellent care in the past year from a member of staff at the Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust, and would like to nominate them for the Compassion in Care Award, please complete this [online form](#). Please provide as much detail as possible to help the judging process. Nominations close on 11 March 2022.

[Building Berkshire Together – Join The Hospital Redevelopment Project](#)

In 2019 the Royal Berkshire Hospital was announced as one of 48 sites across the UK that was selected for the Government's New Hospital Programme.

We have submitted our Strategic Outline Case, and while we await feedback to progress to the next formal stage, we have devised a [range of options](#) to either redevelop or relocate the main site of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, which we plan to evolve further to reach a preferred option.

We have established a small Building Berkshire Together team, led by Programme Director, Alison Foster to work on developing the options with patients, carers, staff and the local community. We would love you to join our network and be part of the team to design the hospital with us.

We will be looking for people from across the community to be involved as much or as little as they wish, either with a general interest in the hospital or those with specific skills. Please email buildingberkshiretogether@royalberkshire.nhs.uk or call Lynn Bushell, Communications and Engagement Lead on 0118 322 5360 for further details.

[Building Berkshire Together website](#)

[Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust Awarded 'Veteran Aware Status'](#)

We're pleased to announce that the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust has been awarded Veteran Aware accreditation.

In the UK there are nearly 3 million veterans who have additional healthcare needs. In Berkshire, we have a particularly large veteran community - right across the spectrum of the services.

We already have a strong record of supporting patients who are veterans, along with the wider veteran community, and of championing improvements in veterans' health care. A significant portion of our staff and patients are either veterans, in active service, or a family member of the aforementioned, and it's important to us that we provide ideal working environments to care for all of them.

Becoming a fully Veteran Aware accredited Trust proves our commitment to ensuring members of the armed forces community do not face disadvantages compared to other citizens when accessing NHS services.

Did You Notice Our Winter Campaign?



Over the past few months, the Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust in conjunction with Berkshire West CCG has been running a campaign to help reduce the pressures on local NHS services over the busy winter period.

The campaign is coming to its close and we'd like to find out more about its impact. We're running a short anonymous survey about the campaign which we will use to help improve our public health campaigns.

We'd be grateful if you would take a few minutes to complete our [online survey](#).

Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust's Green Plan To Reach Net Zero

The NHS has pledged to reach net zero direct carbon emissions by 2040 and net zero indirect emissions by 2045. The Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust is proud to support this NHS goal by [launching its Green Plan](#) which sets out how it will get to net zero carbon.

Example projects include promoting alternative travel options to staff and patients, increasing recycling, and developing sustainable models of care.

The Trust has already achieved a lot:

- Removed two miles of leaking, inefficient underground pipework on the main hospital site and at the same time installed a new eco-friendly boiler.
- Introduced five electric staff pool cars
- Embedded their Wastewatchers initiative to ensure no waste goes to landfill
- Ensured recycling options are more readily available

The Trust is engaging with staff, patients and the wider community to help them reach their net zero goal and would welcome any ideas, comments and suggestions.

They are also looking for people who would like to join their Net Zero team to help them shape activities. If you would like to be involved however much or little, please email green@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Royal Berks Charity Quiz Night, Earley Home Guard Social Club, Wednesday 9 March 2022

The Royal Berks Charity are holding a quiz night to help raise funds to support the Paediatric Appeal at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. For more information visit: <https://www.royalberkscharity.co.uk/event/quiznight/> or contact the charity team on 0118 322