

# Forum Focus News Extra



April 6, 2020 .... Issue 2

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**Colchester Hospital's COVID-19 death total and wards named**  
LATEST figures show 14 virus deaths have been recorded at Colchester Hospital. Take extra care if you are visiting the hospital for any reason during the pandemic because two wards have been earmarked to deal with virus patients. They are East-horpe and Mersea which are not handling their usual categories of patients.

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**Community Shield trying to ensure no-one goes hungry**  
FRIDAY'S News Extra included contact details for our two local hubs, Colchester and Tendring, being organised by our two local councils to get food to those residents being contacted by the NHS, through letters, because they have underlying health conditions. The overall Essex service ... called Community Shield ... is being organised by Essex County Council. This umbrella set-up is called the Essex Welfare Service (EWS). It can be contacted on 0300 303 9988, Monday to Friday, 8am to 7pm and Saturday and Sunday between 10am and 2pm.

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**Hospices taking the lead on end of life planning**  
DETAILED proposals have been received from three local hospices .. St Elizabeth, St Helena and St Nicholas ... on how they can lead on out of hospital End of Life work due to the expected rise in COVID-19 deaths. A key will be to encourage communities to consider making end of life arrangements for their vulnerable family members through Advanced Care Planning, Action supported by a joint statement from the British Medical Association (BMA), Care Provider Alliance (CPA), Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Royal College of General Practice (RCGP).

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**Extra beds created and negotiated for COVID-19 patients**  
MEANWHILE Colchester and Ipswich hospitals are working closely with local private hospitals over arrangements to use beds made available through funding from central government. By Friday evening, discharges of existing patients and talks with the private hospitals had sourced 70 extra critical care beds.

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## Massive thanks to neighbours from Colchester nurse

NURSE Samantha Parker sent this special note of gratitude: "I've just walked down my road in the Cowdray area of Colchester for the first time in a couple of weeks to see all the lovely rainbow drawings in the windows. It made me really smile for the first time in a while. As an NHS nurse at Colchester general ... I have been self isolating due to medical conditions but will be returning to work soon. It's so nice to see the support and I just wanted to say a massive thanks to all my neighbours."

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## Volunteer card to ease food payments for the isolated

ASDA is the first supermarket we have heard about launching a dedicated volunteer shopping card to help the many people self-isolating and unable to go out to buy their shopping. Customers can buy these shopping cards online, top up and give them to their family member, friend, or NHS volunteer to pay for their shopping without the hassle of using cash or bank cards. They can be bought at: <https://tinyurl.com/snoukgh>

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## COVID-19 information and advice in 36 languages

MEMBERS who need virus advice in other languages can surf to the Doctors of the World web site where NHS and Government statements are being updated and translated into 36 different languages .... all available to download. It is at: <https://tinyurl.com/rda5csv>

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## Mental health crisis line now on NHS 111

THE 111 option 2 mental health crisis line is now live across North East Essex and special discussions are being held on how more local support can be provided to mental health patients to help with COVID-19 stress issues.

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## Leave space for fire fighters to get through to blazes

WITH so many of us spending so much time at home, fire engines are finding too many streets crowded with parked cars they cannot get through and fire fighting efforts are being hampered. Please ensure you park considerately.

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## Announcing service to replace broken or lost spectacles

OPTICIANS Vision Express now offer to replace broken or lost spectacles of its customers while most branches are closed. They can be ordered by phone from existing prescriptions and delivered by courier. Details at: [www.visionexpress.com](http://www.visionexpress.com)

## Warning ... even in the pandemic they're out to scam you

TAKE care because the scammers are working to get what they can during the COVID-19 outbreak. National Trading Standards warn they are everywhere:

**Doorstep crime:** Targeting older people on their doorstep and offering to do their shopping. Thieves take the money and do not return; Offering fake doorstep cleaning services to clean drives and doorways to kill bacteria ... but vanishing when paid to 'buy' cleaning products.

**Online scams:** Fake online resources such as false Coronavirus maps that deliver malware; emails tricking people into opening malicious attachments, which put people at risk of identity theft with personal information, passwords, contacts and bank details at risk.

**Refund scams:** Companies offering fake holiday refunds for individuals who have been forced to cancel their trips and web sites set up to claim holiday refunds.

**Counterfeit goods:** Fake sanitizers, face masks and Covid19 swabbing kits sold online and door-to-door..

**Telephone scams:** Take care of criminals claiming to be your bank, mortgage lender or utility company.

**Donation scams:** Thieves extorting money by claiming they are collecting donations for a COVID-19 'vaccine'.

**Loan sharks:** Lending money before charging extortionate interest rates and fees through threats and violence

For more details surf to: <https://www.nationaltradingstandards.uk/news/beware-of-covid19-scams/>

If you or someone you know is vulnerable and has been a victim of fraud, please call Action Fraud at [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk) or call 0300 123 2040.

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## UK on track to host largest trial of Covid-19 drugs in the world

ALMOST 1,000 patients from 132 different hospitals have been already recruited in just 15 days to the largest randomised trial ever in the UK. Thousands more are expected to join the Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 Therapy-Recovery trial in the coming weeks, making it the largest randomised controlled trial of potential COVID-19 treatments in the world. It is some months before definitive results on whether treatments are safe and effective are expected.

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## New computers to assist the working of GP practices

SOME 300 laptops for local GP practices are due to arrive at North East Essex and Suffolk GP Practices this week. This will make a huge difference to the way staff operate over the coming weeks and months in supporting and managing patient demand and increasing opportunities for video conferencing

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## Network to assist clarity over patient transport guidelines

A PATIENT transport network is being established with local providers Ezecc, East of England Ambulance Service, Care UK, East Suffolk and North Essex Foundation NHS Trust and West Suffolk Hospital to discuss logistics following national guidance from NHS England issued last weekend.

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## Chief Exec campaigning for suspension of prescription charges

ED Garratt, North East Essex CCG Chief Executive, has been pressing nationally for the suspension of prescription charges on the grounds of practicalities and safety issues. He is being supported by Bury St Edmunds MP Jo Churchill who was already thinking along these lines.

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## .... and fighting over the distribution of protective equipment

ED Garratt has also supported Harwich and North Essex MP Sir Bernard Jenkin's efforts to ensure social enterprise organisations, such as ACE, are given greater levels of priority over the issuing of protective equipment. Ed reports the NHS regional team have agreed to review this "which is positive news", he says. Meanwhile fresh guidance on what type of protective equipment should be worn and where, was issued in a joint guidance from all strands of the NHS at the end of last week.

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## Suspension for research that is not connected to COVID-19

THE NATIONAL Institute of Health Research (NIHR) Clinical Research Network has suspended any new or ongoing studies at NHS and social care sites that are not nationally prioritised COVID-19 studies. The network says this will enable the research workforce to focus on delivering the nationally prioritised COVID-19 studies and will allow research staff to be redeployed to frontline care where necessary.

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## New ventilator wins approval for safety testing

A LOW-COST ventilator prototype built by a multidisciplinary team of engineers and medics at the University of Oxford and King's College London has received green signal from the UK Government to conduct further safety and usability tests. The OxVent group's prototype was developed in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and predicted acute shortage of ventilators. The ventilator design incorporates off-the-shelf components and equipment with elements that can be 3D printed.

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**Next edition of Forum Focus News Extra  
expected on Thursday with the latest local news  
as well as updates from our voluntary organisations**