

We are still here to help!

During these extremely challenging times, we would like to remind members of the Western Isles community that your Health Service remains available to you when you need us!

We are acutely aware of the national and local position, with reduced attendances at Emergency Departments, GP Practices and people not wanting to bother health service staff with issues that they would, under normal circumstances, seek help for.

NHS Western Isles Medical Director, Dr Frank McAulay, said: “For the past number of weeks, we have all been constantly overwhelmed on a daily basis with information on COVID-19 and we are all aware of the impact it has had on how we all live our lives and on the NHS. Normality for us all has become something very different in a rapid space of time, which causes alarm and confusion.

“What has not changed, however, is the issues that members of our community still continue to experience. Whilst so much has stopped as a result of COVID-19; issues with our physical, non physical and social wellbeing do not just stop. Coping or simply accepting health issues at this time is not necessary and not something we would advise.”

Whilst non urgent procedures have regrettably been cancelled across the country, health services are still available for communities to access; whether it be cancer services, mental health, emergency care or chronic disease management. These services remain available and, whilst we appreciate all people are doing to help the NHS during this time, it is vital those with non-coronavirus health concerns still seek help as they would have before the outbreak.

Some services may be provided differently – for example some services are being delivered virtually by a video link system called ‘Near Me’ – but the normal routes to access the services themselves has not changed.

Dr McAulay continued: “The NHS is here for you, so don’t ignore the warning signs. You are not being a burden, you are looking after yourself and our NHS by seeking help. Please don’t put your health at risk. Your community pharmacy and your GP are open, please contact them for advice or with concerns that are not COVID-19 related. If you notice a deterioration in your health or the health of someone in your household, call your GP in normal hours, 111 out of hours, or in an emergency dial 999.

“Please do not be frightened to attend healthcare premises. Whilst physical distancing continues and we are all very aware of the advice to stay at home, there are very legitimate and important reasons that people have to leave the house – one of those being for issues relating to your health. We would also reassure you that those displaying COVID-19 symptoms are being treated separately to patients attending for other reasons.”

NHS screening services for breast, bowel and cervical cancer have been paused during COVID-19 but if you’ve noticed symptoms and are concerned, your GP practice is open and ready to help. Getting checked early is one of the main reasons why more people are surviving cancer. For further information visit www.getcheckedearly.org

If you are experiencing mental health issues, please do not delay in accessing your local mental health service by contacting your CPN (Community Psychiatric Nurse) or your local GP Practice.

If you or your child has an immunisation appointment, make sure you attend, or reschedule if you’re showing symptoms of COVID-19.

If you have a regular appointment for a chronic condition such as asthma or diabetes you should contact your GP and they will advise you. If your hospital appointment has not be cancelled you should still attend.

IF IT'S URGENT, IT'S URGENT

Call your GP surgery or 111 out of hours.
For emergencies phone 999.



The NHS is Open



GENERAL

If you have a non-coronavirus health concern, GP surgeries and hospitals are still here for you. Don't ignore the warning signs of serious conditions. Please promptly seek help for emergencies, possible cancer signs and attend immunisation appointments. Find information and advice at www.nhsinform.scot

CANCER

If you or a loved one is concerned about a potential cancer sign or symptom, don't delay contacting your GP practice. It's best to get checked as the earlier cancer is found the easier it is to treat. The NHS is still here for you. Find information on signs and symptoms at www.getcheckedearly.org

IMMUNISATION

Immunisations for pregnant women and young children are continuing during this time. They are an important part of helping protect against serious, preventable diseases. The NHS is still here for you – please attend your vaccination appointment. Find information at www.nhsinform.scot/immunisation