



QPARA Community Support Network

Update No.3

Dear Zone Co-ordinators

We hope you continue to stay well. Brent has experienced **the second highest number of Covid-19 related deaths in London** and among the highest in the country, as recorded in hospitals. There have also been a large number of cases and deaths in care homes in Brent, though the picture is incomplete. We express our sympathy to those who mourn for the devastating loss so many have suffered and our huge admiration for those putting themselves in harm's way on behalf of the community across a whole range of services.

Apologies for the delay in producing this update – our excuse is that we were waiting for some developments to clarify or settle down in what is a constantly changing scene. We would be grateful if you could **pass this on** to your Zone contacts, i.e. QPARA members and others who have volunteered or been in touch for help.

To begin with matters medical, but non-Covid, the recently merged **Lonsdale Medical Group**, with surgeries in Lonsdale Road and Kilburn Lane, has been adapting to the situation by holding many consultations by phone and some by the new tool of video. By arranging the internal layout at Lonsdale into red, amber and green zones the team are also enabling a number of face to face consultations to take place. However the first step needs to be a call to the Practice for what is called “triaging”.

Today's news is that the Practice is ready to resume pain-killing injections and some minor surgery. **Please pass this information around your street network.** The Practice is also building up a volunteer support network: let us know if you have any volunteers interested in joining and we will put you in touch with Amanda, the Practice Manager. There was a hugely informative Patient Participation Group meeting by Zoom on 29 April. A record will soon be on the LMG website.

We are pleased to confirm that the Brent-organised scheme for seconding volunteer deliverers of medications to pharmacies that agree to take them is now up and running. This service is for all who need or want to avoid face to face contact in a pharmacy – not just for the “shielding” group (see below for what this means.) **Please urge anyone in your Zone who needs medications delivered to use this service.** It much reduces the number of people needing to enter pharmacies.

When people from this part of Brent have contact with a **hospital** it is normally one of those in the Imperial Group. This is information from that Group about how they have re-arranged services during the pandemic:

“Imperial College Healthcare has already extended beyond our normal critical care/ventilator capacity of 68 beds, towards our first phase of expansion to 143 beds. To ensure all patients who may need critical care in London over the coming weeks get that care, we plan to increase our capacity rapidly by up to another 157 beds across our three main sites at Charing Cross, Hammersmith and St Mary’s hospitals.

For the period covering our response to the coronavirus emergency, we are consolidating our acute neurosurgery service at St Mary’s where our major trauma centre creates the largest demand, with a small amount of critical cover at Charing Cross for the small number of acute neurovascular cases linked to the hyper acute stroke unit. We expect this change will mean providing emergency neurosurgery at St Mary’s for up to 10 patients per week who would previously have had their surgery at Charing Cross. The change does not impact on our stroke services, which will remain at Charing Cross including thrombectomy.”

A big thank you for the comprehensive responses to the enquiries we made in Updates1 and 2. The results still show that there are so far more offers of help than requests, but that the system is working. In addition two or three Co-ordinators were in touch about setting up WhatsApp groups. Thanks to Keith Anderson for working with them.

If you have access to the NextDoor networking site, Keith has posted an overview here https://nextdoor.co.uk/news_feed/?post=17592194085644 . Failing that, a list of streets covered in QPARA territory and Kilburn Ward is here (with a slightly misleading introduction) <https://www.kensalqueenspark.com/covid-19-mutual-aid-local-info> .

To join a group, or talk about starting one for your street, you can contact Keith at streetgroups@mistral.co.uk, or call or text him on 07879 403 467. **Ward Councillors’ telephone conferences:** Queen’s Park Ward Councillors (Ellie and Neil) regular Zoom video discussions with Chairs of Residents’ Associations and one or two others are continuing. Please be aware that Brent are continuing normal business in some areas such as planning applications, even if special initiatives are delayed. Most staff are working from home but can be contacted.

Brent’s 4-page coloured leaflet with contact details for the main emergency services, mentioned in our last update, has now been superseded by a **special edition of the Brent Magazine**, delivered house to house. This is the best account of help available from the Council or designated voluntary bodies to those who are vulnerable in the current pandemic. In this context “vulnerable” generally means “finding it hard to cope because they have insufficient income to pay for basic needs.”

There is however another important meaning of “vulnerable” which is being used by national officialdom in a somewhat slipshod and confusing way. Here it means “liable to experience a severe episode of Covid-19 if you catch it”.

Some people may be vulnerable on both counts but many may be vulnerable in just one.

We mentioned in Update No.2 that letters had been or were being sent by the Government or GPs to these clinically “extremely vulnerable” patients, essentially advising them to stay at home for 12 weeks. In the end it was not clear exactly what clinical conditions were covered by the letters sent out – but getting one seemed to entitle people to food parcels and potentially other help from the National NHD Volunteers scheme being run by the RVS. Less well known is the fact that it is impossible to join some national supermarket online delivery services unless you have a “12 week” letter.

The Over 70s, people with heart, lung, stroke, blood pressure problems and pregnant women were the original group identified as needing to take special care to ‘social distance’, based on the data from China, S Korea and Singapore. They should not be shopping or getting their medications in any situation where full distancing of 2 metres cannot be maintained. That’s why the QPARA Support Network remains aimed at this wider group.

We are grateful to Richard Gentry, his team and the Corporation of London for keeping **Queen’s Park** open. Most people seem to be maintaining distancing, though prohibitions on sunbathing and ball games seem to be more honoured in the breach than in the observance. We are glad that a few benches are being kept in use for older people to sit on during their walks.

Other matters

An interesting new scheme called GiftYourNeighbour has been launched, allowing local residents to donate food, toiletries etc for needy families is now operating at Salusbury School on Mondays. Details here: <https://www.kensalqueenspark.com/giftyourneighbour>

Some of the local specialist delivery firms also listed on www.kensalqueenspark.com are doing well, but they can’t substitute for general grocery shopping. We should keep looking for ways of distributing the tasks now falling on willing volunteers. We thank them warmly – and of course our Co-ordinators.

Robin Sharp robisharp@gmail.com 0208 969 0381

Virginia Brand virginia@brandbc.co.uk WhatsApp on 07791 533035

6th May 2020