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[for immediate publication]

Final May bank holiday brings renewed call for public to support local NHS

Residents of Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire are being asked to support their local NHS once again ahead of the third May bank holiday weekend.

Many non-urgent health and care services, such as GP practices and pharmacies, will close at the end of the day on Friday 26 May, and not reopen until the morning of Tuesday 30 May.

During this time, the public are asked to use local urgent and emergency care services appropriately by seeking help from 111.nhs.uk and treating minor illness and injuries at home where possible.

Andrew Hollowood, Chief Medical Officer, Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust, said: “Before visiting an urgent treatment centre or hospital emergency department, please consider all the local healthcare options available.

“We see patients in order of clinical need, so people arriving with conditions that are not critical or life-threatening could be waiting some time to be seen.

“Any person not sure of what to do should use NHS 111, which is open 24/7, 365 days a year, and can offer health advice and information on the best local service.

People can support their local NHS from home by treating minor illness and injury with common over-the-counter items and seeking help from one of the pharmacies staying open over the weekend.

A full list of which pharmacies in the region will be open and when is available on the Your Health pages at www.bswtogether.org.uk/yourhealth/pharmacies.

Gill May, Chief Nurse, Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board, said: “We all know there is never a quiet moment in the NHS, and that it doesn’t take a lot for the everyday pressure to really ramp up.

“That is why we are once again making a direct plea to our residents to do whatever they can to support us before, during and after this next bank holiday weekend.”

“Simple steps, such as restocking the medicine cabinet, knowing how to use NHS 111 and making use of those pharmacies that are open, may seem small actions in isolation, but when repeated across the entire region, will really make a difference.”

Great weather is also forecast for the bank holiday weekend and people are urged to prepare for spending time outside to avoid sunburn and heat-related illness.

Chief Medical Officer, Andrew Hollowood continued: “When out and about in the sun this long weekend, do take care, as sunburn doesn’t just happen on holiday.

“Even when it’s cloudy, use SPF 30+, wear a hat and sunglasses, seek shade and cover up, particularly during the hottest parts of the day.”

Further information on all local NHS services, including those specialising in mental health, can be found at www.bswtogether.org.uk/yourhealth.

Notes to Editors

- Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board is a statutory organisation that is responsible for developing a plan of how to meet the health needs of the local population, managing the local NHS budget and arranging the provision of local health services
- As a sovereign corporate entity, the ICB has a Board made up of representatives from various organisations across the BSW health and care system
- Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board is part of the wider BSW Integrated Care System, which brings NHS providers, local authorities, community providers and voluntary sector partners together to collaboratively plan and organise how health and care services are delivered
- The local integrated care system is also known as BSW Together, and is home to 87 GP practices, two mental health trusts, three local councils, a single ambulance provider, three acute hospitals, a number of other NHS providers and more than 2,800 voluntary organisations and community groups
- Visit www.bsw.icb.nhs.uk for more information