

**18<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

## **North East and North Cumbria NHS thanks patients and staff for their support over the cyber attack**

As NHS organisations across the region start to return to normal services, NHS leaders want to thank patients, NHS staff and their families whose combined efforts has meant the impact on patient care has kept to a minimum.

Patients have been understanding and supportive of the NHS by using services wisely, which allowed local organisations to deal with the cyber-attack and protect their computer systems and therefore recover more quickly.

GP practices across the North East are continuing to ask patients to consider delaying contacting their practice unless they really need to for the rest of the week, so to allow time to clear backlogs caused by the cyber-attack and bring services back to full capacity.

Speaking on behalf of NHS organisations, Dr Neil O'Brien, who is chair of the Northern Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Forum said:

“Across the region’s NHS we’ve heard countless stories of NHS teams and individuals who have gone above and beyond to help deal with the cyber-attack. From NHS frontline staff in hospitals, IT and support staff, GP and practice staff, community pharmacists, out of hours doctors and their teams, NHS 111, paramedics and emergency call teams – our staff response has been nothing short of superb.

Dr O'Brien continued: “I’d like to particularly thank the families of our staff also, they have supported their relative at home to allow them to come to work and respond in the way they did.

“I would also like to thank our local and regional journalists and media organisations, who have played an important role in getting essential messages out. This without doubt played a critical role in helping public and patients understand the situation and what they needed to do for their own health needs.

“We do need to understand why this has happened and it is important that work to gain insight is carried out in a co-ordinated way with all NHS partners and this will take some time.”

Dr O'Brien concluded: “How we have responded to this situation just shows how our whole NHS community is greater than the simple sum of its parts, and makes us all proud to serve our patients and public together, making sure they get the best and safest healthcare possible.”

Although the NHS is starting to return to normal, the public is still asked to think before using A&E, GP practices or calling NHS 111 and to use services wisely.

**What you can do to help**

The public are being advised that this continues to be a busy week for all NHS services in the region and to support the NHS in the following ways to help services to return to normal.

Remember many common illnesses can be best looked after at home with over the counter medication, plenty of fluids, rest and recuperation – and no need to visit A&E

Pharmacies are open and can help if you start to feel unwell with a cough, cold or other minor ailment or injury – details of your nearest pharmacist can be found at [urgentemergency.co.uk](http://urgentemergency.co.uk)

Parents and carers of children under five can get medical advice on a range of common childhood illnesses from the 'NHS Child Health' app available from Google Play or the App store.

People should continue to access emergency services in the usual way if there is a genuine need for urgent medical help that cannot wait.

Please continue to keep A&E and emergency 999 service free for those with serious or life threatening needs

For all NHS appointments including GPs and hospital services please bring with you any medications, letters or paperwork you already have.

If you already have a GP appointment, please attend as usual

If you feel unwell then contact

- Your GP or
- Community Pharmacist or
- NHS 111