

# Manchester University Healthcare Branch



## Newsletter – Covid edition

### Concerns over COVID issues? Problems with PPE supplies? Tell your union!!

**Thank you to everyone who has taken part in our COVID-19 survey so far. The responses we have received have enabled us to address and tackle issues with the Trust early, where people have reported concerns.**

**Our online form gives you the chance to tell us, in confidence, about a variety of issues in relation to the current crisis. Your comments are invaluable and we are raising them collectively on your behalf with the Trust on a daily basis.**

**So far our survey has painted a real and truthful vision of the challenging environment our members are currently working in and despite not being able to access workplaces to visit our members, our branch is continuing to work hard on behalf of all of you, tackling issues and difficulties when raised.**

**If you have not yet completed our survey, please use the below link. You can also request a call back from a representative within 24hrs for further advice and support.**

[www.unisonmanchesterhealth.org.uk/covid19survey](http://www.unisonmanchesterhealth.org.uk/covid19survey)



### Tributes flood in for a popular hospital security guard who has died after contracting coronavirus

Tony Kabia worked for many years on the security team at Manchester Royal Infirmary. The 58-year-old was treated on the intensive care unit at Wythenshawe Hospital and placed in an induced coma. He was unable to fight the virus and sadly died on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Tony's wife also works in the NHS as a nursing assistant for Manchester University Foundation Trust and is a Unison member

Tony was recently nominated for an excellence award by Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust and his family said he was really looking forward to the event. He purchased a suit and new shoes in preparation for the ceremony originally scheduled to take place in April, but due to the coronavirus pandemic it had been postponed to September.

In an emotional tribute Tony's family described him as "well liked, always cheerful" and said "he would go the extra mile for anyone".

A spokesperson for Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, said;

"It is with great sadness that we can confirm one of our Trust colleagues died from a COVID-19 related illness. Whilst Tony Kabia worked for Kingdom Security for eight years, he was part of the MFT family. He was a valued and respected member of both the security team and all the hospital teams who worked with him. We extend our sincere condolences and deepest sympathies to Tony's family and all our thoughts are with them at this incredibly difficult time. Tony radiated positivity, took pride in his work and brightened everyone's day. His infectious spirit will be greatly missed by both colleagues and patients alike at MFT."

His family have set up an online fundraising appeal to raise money towards funeral costs.

**To make a donation visit**

**[gofundme.com/TonyKabia](https://gofundme.com/TonyKabia)**

**Tel: 0161 291 5212**

**Website: [www.unisonmanchesterhealth.org.uk](http://www.unisonmanchesterhealth.org.uk)**

## Staff testing rolled out at MFT

UNISON has welcomed moves to increase the availability of Coronavirus staff testing at MFT, including the drive in facility at Manchester Airport.

We have raised concerns about the availability of walk in testing at some sites for staff who do not have their own transport, and we are confident that we can work through these issues to ensure as many staff as possible have ready access to a test when needed.

We have received some concerns from members who have been reluctant to access testing. Whilst we encourage members to talk through any concerns they may have about testing with their line manager, as a union we urge all members to get tested if it's identified you may need a test. This is incredibly important not only for your own safety, but for that of other staff and patients.

If you have any specific concerns regarding testing which you're unable to resolve from speaking to your line manager, please contact your UNISON branch so that we can talk through them with you.

there  
for you

supporting UNISON members  
when life gets tough

In these difficult and uncertain times and while many of our members are having to stay at home to protect themselves due to underlying medical conditions, or in self isolation to protect their families, we acknowledge that this may create financial pressure due to additional expense or loss of earnings

Should you need help, your first point of call should be your Branch Welfare Officers. They can be contacted via 0161 291 5212.

If you find yourself with mounting debts due to loss of earnings in this current crisis, please consider speaking to our debt management partners PayPlan on 0800 389 3302. The number should identify the caller as a Unison member but please advise the agent you are with Unison as our members get the support free of charge

## Keeping in touch

Your Unison Branch office is not accepting visitors at this present time. However, we are still working around the clock to support you and we are in regular discussions with MFT and the NHS regionally and nationally to resolve ongoing concerns. You can reach us via a staffed telephone service (please leave a message if we cannot pick up straight away or you are calling out of hours), and also via our website at [www.unisonmanchesterhealth.org.uk/getsupport](http://www.unisonmanchesterhealth.org.uk/getsupport)

So, if you have any questions, queries or concerns, please call 0161 291 5212, leave a clear message with your name and contact details and we will arrange for a representative to speak with you.

Tel: 0161 291 5212

Website: [www.unisonmanchesterhealth.org.uk](http://www.unisonmanchesterhealth.org.uk)



### NHS wellbeing support helpline now available

The NHS in England has launched a mental health hotline and a range of wellbeing support to care for and protect all NHS people during this challenging time, whether at the front line or in supporting services.

All NHS staff can call 0300 131 7000 or text FRONTLINE to 85258 to get help, support and advice from thousands of specially trained volunteers, for the pressures they face every day during the global health emergency.

The phone line will be open between 7am and 11pm every day, while the text service will be 24/7.











## NHS Nightingale North West launches at GMEX Manchester



The NHS Nightingale North West COVID-19 treatment centre has officially opened at the GMEX convention complex in central Manchester. It will primarily be a step down facility for patients who are recovering from a higher acuity of COVID illness, with an expanding capacity for up to 750 beds. Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust is the host organisation for the field hospital, but the majority of its staff will be sourced through NHS returnees via NHS Professionals. UNISON has been closely engaged in discussions with workforce leaders to ensure that health and care staff working at the hospital receive full Agenda for Change terms and conditions, that returnees are paid at the top of their band as per the national NHS Employers COVID guidance, as well as ensuring that other aspects of the guidance and health and safety considerations are fully adhered to. Our union is currently in negotiations regarding pay for Facilities Management staff at the Nightingale Hospital, who are employed by Interserve. It is only right and fair that all staff at the facility are treated no less favourably than a substantive NHS staff member would be under Agenda for Change. UNISON has a dedicated team available to support members who are working at the Nightingale field hospital, and members can e-mail [nwnightingale@unison.co.uk](mailto:nwnightingale@unison.co.uk) with any enquiries. Please include your telephone contact details, and someone will be in touch within 24 hours to speak with you.



### 10 ways to look after your mental health

 Remember it is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis	 Maintain a healthy lifestyle as far as you can, including diet, sleep and exercise
 Limit worry by watching or listening to media coverage less	 Don't smoke, drink or use drugs to deal with your emotions
 Keep connected to people by phone, email and social media	 Be kind to others and to yourself
 Get the facts to help you determine your risk and protect yourself	 Seek advice you can trust from the NHS and the Government
 Use skills you already have, and have used in the past to deal with stress	 Structure your day with things that you can realistically achieve

Ask a colleague to join UNISON today



Join online at [joinunison.org](http://joinunison.org)



Call us on 0800 171 2193



Ask your UNISON rep for an application form

Tel: 0161 291 5212

Website: [www.unisonmanchesterhealth.org.uk](http://www.unisonmanchesterhealth.org.uk)



**Come clean on PPE –**

**UNISON says ‘desperate measures’  
in leaked Government plans could  
lead to preventable deaths**

Frontline staff must be properly equipped to protect lives during the COVID-19 crisis, says UNISON, after ‘last-resort’ proposals on safety equipment were leaked. General secretary Dave Prentis said that the proposals from Public Health England contain “desperate measures” and “are a shocking indictment of the lack of proper planning and preparation for supplies in the pandemic.

“The situation in care homes is nothing short of an emergency and there will be preventable deaths if staff aren’t properly equipped.”

The proposals include re-using gowns and masks designed to be used just once, as well as using lab coats, patient gowns and off-the-shelf non-medical eye protection. NHS staff, care workers, frontline council staff, education workers and police staff are just some of the workers risking their lives to help the public during the coronavirus crisis.

The union also called on the government to clamp down on profiteering to stop some firms inflating prices for life-saving kit – and to immediately suspend VAT duties payable by care homes for imported safety equipment during the pandemic.

Mr Prentis said that Office for National Statistics figures showing more than 200 COVID-19 related deaths in care homes are “a national scandal”. “Elderly and vulnerable residents face a death sentence because staff lack personal protective equipment,” he warned.

UNISON continues to press the Government, and ministers directly, to urgently make sure frontline workers have the personal protection equipment (PPE) that they need.

“Our members are telling us of shortages across public services,” says Mr Prentis. “We have passed on their testimony to government ministers for action. Apologies and assurances that the UK has all the PPE it needs are of no comfort to staff whose workplaces are running low, says the union.

“No-one doubts the pressures the government is under,” says Mr Prentis. “But the time for excuses has passed. Ministers have been saying for weeks that the PPE situation is in hand; that there’s enough to go around and it’s just a matter of logistics. But it isn’t good enough.

“NHS, care and other key workers are falling ill in huge numbers. Some have already died – including nurses, doctors, care workers, healthcare assistants and porters. Staff fear for their own health, that of their families and those they care for and look after.

“Getting the necessary PPE to every workplace in the country that needs it – and ensuring the supplies keep coming so staff aren’t filled with dread as they watch stocks run low – must be the number one priority.”

**UNISON is demanding proper PPE for every member of staff who needs it, for every day that they need it. Will you add your voice?**

**<https://action.unison.org.uk/page/59627/petition/1?ea.tracking.id=web>**

**Tel: 0161 291 5212**

**Website: [www.unisonmanchesterhealth.org.uk](http://www.unisonmanchesterhealth.org.uk)**