



DR DAN POULTER MP

Member of Parliament for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich

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Content from Dr Dan Poulter, MP

Perhaps it is because I am an NHS doctor myself, but ever since I was first elected as an MP almost 10 years ago, I have always taken a very keen and protective interest in Ipswich Hospital.

My first battle on behalf of local patients was to fight to keep cardiac services based at Ipswich Hospital, and to ensure that people with a heart attack would not have to travel many miles for life saving treatment. We won that battle and I was pleased to play my part in helping to gain funding for the new cardiology unit.

Since then, Ipswich and Colchester Hospitals have merged. Understandably, hospital mergers can cause anxiety and of course, there can be challenges, but in my view, this particular merger has largely been a success. Ipswich Hospital will soon see further improvements to its Accident and Emergency department, and there will be a new purpose built elective surgical unit for orthopaedic patients at the Colchester site.

This new elective surgical unit does not mean that patients in Suffolk will be missing out, but quite the opposite as instead, it will help to improve and expedite care. Far too often during the busy winter periods, patients from Suffolk awaiting a hip or knee operation unfortunately have operations cancelled due to bed capacity issues. Emergency orthopaedic operations and all follow up care will still take place at Ipswich Hospital, but the new and dedicated elective unit will mean fewer cancelled operations, which can only be good news for patients waiting in pain and discomfort for their operations.

At a recent visit with Ipswich Hospital Chief Executive, I was shown around the newly commissioned isolation pods for people presenting themselves with possible Coronavirus symptoms and to learn more about the plans in the event of any cases in Suffolk. These isolation pods are ready for use in every general hospital around the country and our clinical professionals are very well prepared to deal with potential cases.

Understandably, people are becoming increasingly concerned about the potential for Coronavirus to arrive in Suffolk, but it's important not to worry too much. Our NHS is in a good place and our local health services are well prepared. The best way of helping to stop the virus spreading is by ensuring good hand hygiene measures – washing your hands regularly, for at least 20 seconds and covering your mouth or nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and disposing of the tissue in the bin. Further advice is available from NHS Online (www.111.nhs.uk) – if you think you may have coronavirus, or have been in touch with someone who has the virus, do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital, but first call 111 for advice.