

News Release

24 April 2020

NHS Nightingale Exeter Hospital

NHS Nightingale Exeter is set to open in a new location, it was announced today.

The NHS' newest hospital will now be built on the site of a former retail unit on the outskirts of the city. Earlier plans had indicated that this hospital would be based at Westpoint. However, having carefully considered the value which Westpoint brings to the community north of Exeter, and the disruption it could cause to its everyday operations, we have used the time available to us to consider alternatives.

We are very grateful to the charity which runs Westpoint for their help, hard work, and kindness in welcoming us over the last ten days as we considered our decision.

“Westpoint have been nothing less than exemplary and were the first to heed the call,” said Dr Michael Marsh, Regional Medical Director for the NHS in the South West. “They understand why we have made the decision and support us in doing the best we can for patients.”

The new hospital will be a regional facility providing care and treatment for patients from Devon, Cornwall, Dorset and Somerset. The lower than expected COVID-19 transmission rates in the SW combined with updated modelling of care needs also shows that a smaller site would be a better use of resources, and enable the NHS in the South West to use the site for a longer period of time if needed.

Conversion of the former Homebase store to a fully functioning hospital will begin over the next few days and as it is currently vacant, there shouldn't be a material impact on its planned opening in late May.

The Army is helping with logistics for the build, working alongside contractors BAM Construct Ltd, who also built the NHS Nightingale Hospital in Harrogate.

The NHS Nightingale Exeter brings the total to seven confirmed NHS Nightingale Hospitals in a matter of weeks, with others in Bristol, Birmingham, Harrogate, London, Manchester and Sunderland.

-ends-



Notes to editors.

- The Nightingales are part of a nationwide effort to respond to the greatest global health emergency in more than a century. The seven facilities will take the initial number of additional beds to be created by the Nightingale project nationally to more than 3,600, with the ability to add more if they are needed.
- All Nightingales will draw on existing NHS staff, as well as the thousands of returning staff and training clinicians who have already begun to swell their ranks.
- The NHS Nightingale Exeter provides the region with additional dedicated ventilator facilities to help manage any additional capacity needed for critically ill COVID-19 patients, in addition to that provided by ICUs in existing hospitals across the region – including the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust; Northern Devon Hospitals NHS Trust; Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust; University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust and the Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust.

Please note that interviews are not being offered at present. However, a press event is due to be held. Invitations will be sent to media outlets across Devon to this in due course.

