

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland stakeholder bulletin #2

Issued on behalf of the NHS in LLR

Date of issue: 31st March 2020

This is the second in a series of regular bulletins to keep you updated on the NHS response to Coronavirus (COVID -19) in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

We will try hard to ensure you have the latest information but as you are aware the situation is rapidly changing.

Through these bulletins we will keep you informed of developments and if you have any questions or would like to ask about a topic please email us at: PressOfficeLLRCCGs@leicestershire.nhs.uk.

We will be very grateful if you could continue to support the message on staying at home and in particular help us to tackle misinformation by promoting the official sources of information: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.

Declaration of Major Incident

We explained in the first bulletin that the NHS in LLR was managing the incident as a partner in the Local Resilience Forum - the multi-agency partnership of local public services including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS and others. On 24th March the Police declared Covid – 19 a major incident and have now taken the leadership for strategic planning and response to the incident.

Coronavirus cases

As at 5.00 p.m. on Monday 30th March there were 213 confirmed cases in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR). A total of 15 deaths at Leicester's Hospitals have sadly been confirmed.

PPE

You will be aware of concerns about the availability of PPE. More PPE is being distributed and new guidance being implemented. It is of course essential that we ensure that those caring for patients have the equipment they need, so getting the PPE to the frontline as quickly as possible is a priority.

Service changes

We are inevitably making changes to the way services operate to focus on the management of Covid – 19. This will have an impact on most patients but is essential to manage the current and anticipated increase in demand for Covid-19 related services across LLR.

[Urgent and Emergency Care](#)

From Monday 30 March 2020 the following changes will be made for urgent and emergency care. Out of hours booked appointments provided by Derbyshire Health United at Leicester Royal Infirmary will be delivered from Loughborough Urgent Care Centre only.

All adult face to face appointments which are currently delivered in the Adult Emergency Department will be delivered from Westcotes Health Centre, 08:00-20:00 Monday-Sunday. From 8.00 p.m. to 8.00 a.m. these appointments will be delivered by the out of hours service.

Patients will continue to be signposted and managed according to their presenting symptoms.

[Extended Access to Primary Care Appointments/Urgent Care Centres](#)

As a result of Covid-19 significantly fewer patients, particularly walk-in patients, are attending these sites. This is not the best use of valuable clinical staff working at these sites during the Covid-19 outbreak. In order to keep staff and patients safe, practices have introduced their own telephone triage systems and most patients are also choosing to use NHS 111 when they need urgent care. These changes will be regularly reviewed.

Services suspended:

- The five peripheral Urgent Care sites in East Leicestershire and Rutland area - Enderby, Melton Mowbray, Lutterworth, Oakham and Market Harborough
- The three GP extended access sites in West Leicestershire area – Coalville, Loughborough and Hinckley
- Two of the Healthcare Hubs in Leicester City – Belgrave (Brandon Street) and Saffron

Services remaining open:

- Loughborough and Oadby Urgent Care centres will see patients (walk-in and booked via NHS 111) as normal but will also be designated as sites where potential COVID-19 symptomatic patients can be seen in specific areas
- Merlyn Vaz Hub – will see patients with booked appointments only.
- Westcotes Hub – for patients without symptoms only.

NHS111 will be offering patients needing face to face assessment booked appointments only. Walk-in services will no longer be advised. However, patients who do self-present will be managed in the usual ways.

[University Hospitals Leicester](#)

UHL now has the equivalent of 14 wards worth of capacity for patients requiring admission; we have a plan to triple our intensive care capacity, we have significantly increased the numbers of patients we can care for on ventilators and we have increased the number of outpatient consultations carried out by phone from 6% to 20%.

Like every other Trust in the country UHL has postponed many non-emergency patients (those waiting for elective procedures). Understandably this will concern some patients, but the Trust must prioritise saving lives over everything else. To that end many of our clinical teams have been training in wider clinical skills which will enable them to support Covid - 19 patients.

We have also taken the decision to restrict visiting of patients in hospital and visiting will not be allowed except in certain exceptional circumstances.

Further information is available at: <https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/aboutus/our-news/coronavirus/>

[Leicestershire Partnership Trust](#)

Over the last week LPT has been continuing to discharge patients as soon as they are medically fit to create the capacity for patients being transferred from UHL and other acute hospitals.

Within some community hospitals dedicated wards have been set up to treat patients with coronavirus. Steps have been taken to ensure appropriate spaces exist to treat patients either with, or suspected of having, COVID-19 within mental health and learning disability inpatient facilities.

This week, for example, we will be creating more space on Charnwood ward at Loughborough hospital, and we've negotiated additional beds from the independent sector as surge wards for the oncoming emergency capacity required.

A reminder, that to protect staff, patients and visitors we have cancelled visiting to all our wards. Some services are also being temporarily closed in line with national guidance and we are communicating this to patients and service users. Further information is available at: <https://www.leicspart.nhs.uk>.

Staff testing for Covid-19

A free testing programme for Covid-19 is being rolled out. It is initially aimed at identifying NHS frontline staff in critical care, emergency care departments and ambulance services and other high priority groups who are self-isolating at home and may be able to return to work.

Looking after NHS colleagues

We are of course aware of the need to look after the welfare of our teams during the Covid -19 outbreak. Ensuring their wellbeing is essential and working with other agencies in LLR we are promoting and putting in place measures to provide them with information and support.

It was fantastic to witness the Clap for Carers, this was well received by colleagues and provided them with a massive boost to know that their hard work is appreciated by the public in LLR.

Many of those working in the NHS and social care will be could be directly impacted through their loved ones as well in their caring role. Their commitment to provide the best care possible for patients has been remarkable, but not surprising.

Volunteering to help

As you are probably aware there has been a massive response to the call for help from people wanting to help the vulnerable patients in LLR by delivering food and medicines. This is great news and is another example of how local people are responding enthusiastically to help. Coordinating the community response is being led by our local authority colleagues. The first food packages should be delivered this week. See more at <https://valonline.org.uk/covid-19-coronavirus-support-volunteers/>.

A free testing programme for Covid-19 will begin to be rolled out for staff from today. It is initially aimed at identifying NHS frontline staff in critical care, emergency care departments and ambulance services and other high priority groups who are self-isolating at home and may be able to return to work.