

## NHS News

Thank you to hospital staff from Ward 16

Hospital staff who came forward to help seriously ill people with COVID-19 have been praised after their ward was "stepped down".

Nurses, health care assistants, doctors, admin staff, hygienists, caterers and therapists were called upon to help patients with suspected and confirmed COVID-19.

During March and April, staff on Ward 16 at Castle Hill Hospital, which normally looks after patients requiring plastic surgery or treatment for breast or ENT problems, treated scores of people with the virus, including some who lost their lives.

As the weeks progressed, the ward's 30-strong team were supported by staff from ENT Outpatients, the Breast Care Unit, Plastics Outpatients, Ophthalmology Outpatients, Ward 35, Hepatitis Clinical Nurse Specialists and Theatres.

In a message to her team, Senior Sister Melanie Jopling said: "A huge thank you to everyone that worked on Ward 16 during March and April.

"We worked together as an amazing team and we would not have achieved what we did without every one of you.

"You all gave 100 per cent and worked extremely hard during what was a very challenging time and you supported each other every step of the way. We have had positive feedback which is a credit to you all.

"Thank you again. Keep up the amazing work."

Staff are now returning to their normal duties following the discharging of their final COVID-19 patients.

Chief Nurse Beverley Geary: "Staff have undertaken a very difficult role these past few weeks as they dealt with a situation none of us have ever faced before.

"Many were moved to new roles and all gave the best possible care to the seriously ill and dying. They deserve our thanks and the thanks of people in Hull and the East Riding."

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Some operations to resume as hospitals move to second phase of COVID-19

Some operations and outpatient clinics at Hull Royal infirmary and Castle Hill Hospital will resume next month as hospital bosses prepare for the next stage of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (HUTH) will reintroduce some non-urgent surgical procedures, investigations requested by GPs and outpatient clinics as part of its plans for the second phase of the outbreak.

Patients with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 will be cared for in three designated wards at Hull Royal Infirmary to allow other wards to restart normal activities.

Retrained clinicians will continue to cover long-term absences, such as staff with underlying health conditions who are required to shield until at least the end of June.

Chief Operating Officer Teresa Cope, who is leading HUTH's response to COVID-19, said: "We apologise to every patient whose treatment has been on hold while we deal with the pandemic and we thank them sincerely for their understanding.

"We won't sugar-coat the situation or pretend this is not serious. We know many of our patients have waited " and will continue to wait - far too long. We are so sorry about that.

"But we are doing everything we can to restart services as soon as possible while ensuring we are not overwhelmed by the pandemic."

Although urgent and emergency surgery, as well as cancer treatment, continued, outpatient appointments and non-urgent operations were cancelled by hospitals all over the country in March to protect the NHS and create enough intensive care capacity for those with the most severe form of the virus.

Almost 90 patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are still receiving treatment at the hospital and 119 have died since March 19. Around 280 people have been well enough to go home.

As part of HUTH's second phase planning, COVID-19 bed numbers have been scaled back from more than 200 to 170. The long-term plan is to have all patients with suspected or confirmed cases of the virus at Hull Royal Infirmary unless their clinical teams decide they should be elsewhere.

Some non-urgent surgical procedures and treatment will be reintroduced over the coming weeks and telephone and video clinics will continue wherever possible to prevent people making unnecessary trips to hospitals.

People considered a higher clinical priority will be called in and tested for COVID-19 before their procedure goes ahead in line with the trust's policy to test all patients on admission or before surgery.

In line with national guidance, visitors will only be allowed onto wards in exceptional circumstances, such as to be with a loved one at the end of their lives, to protect staff and patients from the infection.

Services will only be introduced when there is enough personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep staff and patients safe from the risk of infection.

Teresa Cope said: "We coped really well with the surge in admissions, which wasn't as severe as the national modelling

originally predicted because people listened to the advice and stayed at home.

“This is far from over. We still have around 90 patients with COVID-19 on our wards, with new admissions every day, and we expect it to remain like this for most, if not all, of this year.

“People are aware of the global demand for PPE. The safety of our staff and patients remain a priority for us and we will only reintroduce services when we are confident of keeping everyone safe.”

Over the coming weeks, people waiting for treatment will be notified by the trust’s administrative team if their appointments have been rescheduled. Please do not contact the trust directly to find out if your treatment is to be rescheduled as this will only add to the pressure on the organisation.

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### Meet the heroes with brown cardboard boxes

They are united by a purpose to keep hospital staff as safe as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For two months, the Supplies team at Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (HUTH) have battled against global shortages to ensure ward staff have enough personal protective equipment (PPE).

Thanks to the team led by Head of Procurement Julie Lumb, every ward and department has enough PPE to keep their staff and patients safe.

Chief Nurse Information Officer Steve Jessop said: “I wouldn’t be able to sleep at night if we didn’t have enough PPE for our staff but, thanks to Julie and her team, we’ve never had that problem.

“Just like every other large teaching hospital, we’ve had problems sourcing PPE but the team have found solutions to every one of those issues, coming up with alternatives and never giving up.

“We owe them huge thanks for the supreme effort they make every single day to keep our staff as safe as possible.”

Hull Royal Infirmary and Castle Hill Hospital have used millions of items of PPE since the trust confirmed the country’s first two cases of COVID-19 at the end of January.

Each week, Hull Royal Infirmary and Castle Hill Hospital uses

403,600 pairs of gloves

67,500 surgical masks

164,600 plastic aprons

7,180 FFP3 masks for high-risk procedures

10,870 coveralls

2,050 sterile surgical gowns

4,720 visors

26,500 orange waste bags

750 bags for contaminated waste

900 surgical hoods

96 boxes of disinfectant

624 bottles of alcohol hand rub

555 bottles of hand rub

540 bottles of hand wash

In the first weeks as countries scrambled for PPE, the trust used local manufacturers and suppliers outside its normal supply chain.

Businesses including ARCO, Siemens, Howden and organisations such as the University of Hull and Humber Fire and Rescue and local schools helped by supplying the trust with everything from visors to scrubs and goggles. Hull tailor Cock of the North supplied the trust with almost 1,000 reusable gowns and hundreds of pairs of scrubs have been donated,

Stocktakes are undertaken every day, with emergency supplies held at both hospitals to ensure no ward, team or department ever runs out. Daily reports on stock levels are sent to the tactical response group set up by the trust to tackle the outbreak so any shortages are prioritised.

Mr Jessop said: "We are trying, wherever possible, to source reusable items and we are very grateful to firms and organisations in East Yorkshire which have stepped forward with offers of help.

"When there has been a national shortage of one item, such as the recent gowns, the team had already sourced coveralls as an alternative before it was suggested at a national level.

"They've found us masks which surpass the required standard, making our staff among the safest in the country.

"Although certain brands or types of PPE have run out, we've always had an acceptable alternative for staff thanks to the efforts of Supplies."

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Help keep Hull's A&E for medical emergencies during COVID-19

People will be turned away from Hull Royal Infirmary this week if they show up at A&E with minor injuries and illnesses to protect services for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is once again seeing an increase in people turning up at its Emergency Department when they could go elsewhere.

While attendances fell to under 200 at the start of the lockdown, attendances climbed to 290 again last week.

Chief Operating Officer Teresa Cope said: "We have had a long-standing problem with people using Hull Royal's Emergency Department for minor health complaints which are not serious, let alone an emergency or life-threatening.

"Now, more than ever, we need people to use alternatives like the Urgent Treatment Centres, pharmacies and the GP walk-in service at Wilberforce Health Centre so our limited resources and staff are used for the people who need us most, such as those with breathing difficulties caused by the virus, and those having heart attacks and strokes.

"We appreciate the amazing support people are showing the NHS but the best way to help us is to only come to A&E with genuine emergencies.

"If you help us spread the word and make sure all your family and friends do the same, we'll have a better chance of coping with the outbreak."

In the past fortnight, frontline staff have been asked to see people with skin complaints like verrucas, minor sprains and long-standing complaints which would be treated best by a GP, pharmacist or Urgent Treatment Centre.

This week, anyone who comes to Hull Royal will be triaged by a senior nurse before they are allowed into the Emergency Department. Anyone coming to the hospital with a problem which is not a genuine emergency will be diverted to another service in the city.

Mrs Cope said: "Most people know if their problem is a serious or not yet many still choose to come to our Emergency Department. We don't know if that's because they think they'll be seen more quickly or by a more experienced practitioner but neither is true.

"You're likely to be seen far more quickly if you go elsewhere and the staff at Urgent Treatment Centres or the walk-in centres are highly experienced.

"If you come to here with a minor illness or injury, you will have a wasted journey as we do not have the resources or time to spend with anything which is not a genuine emergency."

If you need urgent medical help, use the NHS 111 online service. If you cannot get online, call 111. UTCs can treat minor ailments such as cuts, burns and suspected fractures, with no appointment necessary. Find out more about East Riding UTCs [here](#) and Hull UTCs [here](#).

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NHS staff to thank the public

For the past six weeks, the UK has been in lockdown. During that time, hospital workers at Hull University Teaching

Hospitals NHS Trust have been inundated with generous and kind offers of help and support from the public; everything from the production of PPE to donations of bread, toiletries, hot dinners, even Easter Eggs.

Now it is the turn of hospital staff to say thank you back to the public and other key workers for playing their vital role in the fight against coronavirus.

Simon Nearney, Director of Workforce and Organisational Development at Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, said:

“We have been sincerely moved by the generosity and kindness of so many people and local businesses. The local community has also played and continues to play its part in the fight against Covid-19 and as such our staff wanted to say a massive thank you to the people of Hull and East Riding. We want people in our region to know how much we value their efforts just as they have appreciated ours.

“In the spirit of social distancing, we’ll be sharing a special thank you message on social media today. We want to acknowledge the sacrifices people across our area are making in order to protect themselves and the NHS. We also want to show our support for our fellow key workers, such as supermarket staff, bus drivers, postal workers and care workers who also continue to put themselves at risk to serve our community.

“By staying at home, remaining distanced from loved ones and friends, socially distancing in supermarkets and observing good hand-washing practices, the public are making it possible for us to cope with a gradual rise in the number of Coronavirus patients.

“It’s important to understand that this situation is not over by any means, but we are in a better position locally thanks to the measures that people have taken so far. By continuing to observe the rules we can maintain that position and ensure our recovery is more effective and sustainable.

“Thank you to everyone who has shown their support for us in recent weeks, however large or small the gesture. Let’s keep up our collective efforts, and together we will beat this.”

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Humber Bridge coronavirus testing centre: Testing extended to include care home residents and staff, as well as over 65s with symptoms

More people are now eligible for COVID-19 testing at the Humber Bridge car park after eligibility was extended to include care home staff and residents, people aged 65 and over, and those who need to leave home to work.

The extended eligibility means that care home staff and residents with or without symptoms of COVID-19 can now be tested, while people aged 65 and over can now be tested if they have symptoms.

Those who are required to leave home to go to work, such as shop keepers, delivery drivers and construction workers, can also be tested if they have symptoms of COVID-19. This means those who test negative for COVID-19 can return to work as soon as possible, and those who test positive are able to recover.

NHS staff and other key workers continue to be eligible for testing at the Humber Bridge car park facility, which continues to operate on an appointment-only basis.

Anyone who has symptoms and lives with someone who meets any of the above criteria can also be tested.

Those people eligible for testing can book it themselves via the Government's self-referral portal: <https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/>

The drive-through testing facility at the Humber Bridge car park (north) opened last week as part of the Government's UK-wide drive to increase testing for thousands more NHS and other key workers.

The site sits alongside a rapidly expanding network of testing sites being set up around the UK, and follows the launch of the Government's partnership with universities, research institutes and companies to begin rollout of the network of new labs and field testing sites across the UK.

Alternatively, those eligible can be tested at the mobile testing units in operation in Grimsby and Goole this week.

The Grimsby site, at the Duchess Street Car Park, Grimsby DN32 0RH, will be open at the following times, for people with booked appointments only:

• Thursday, 30th April 11am to 3pm

The Goole testing facility, at Goole Hospital Car Park, Woodland Avenue, Goole, DN14 6RX, will be open at the following times, for people with booked appointments only:

• Thursday, 30th April 10.30am to 4pm

• Friday, 1st May 10.30am to 4pm

• Saturday, 2nd May 10.30am to 4pm

Eligible people can book a test themselves via the Government's self-referral portal: <https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/>

Professor Stephen Eames, Independent Chair and System Lead for Humber, Coast and Vale Health and Care Partnership, said: "I am delighted that COVID-19 testing has been extended beyond health and social care staff and key workers to also include care home residents, and people aged 65 and over and those who need to leave home to go to work.

"This is an important part of our overall strategy in Humber, Coast and Vale to ensure our health and care system continues to meet the health and care needs of people in our region. It is a testament to the commitment and cooperation

of all partner organisations across the Humber that we have been able to get the site up and running in a short space of time.â€•

Chris Blacksell, Chair of the Humber Local Resilience Forum, said: â€œThe addition of another Mobile Testing Unit in Goole, so soon after the Grimsby location, is pushing up the numbers tested each day in our region even further and giving health partners and employers a much clearer picture of the local levels of confirmed cases.

â€œAgain, the number of positive cases of coronavirus reported in the Humber region will naturally increase sharply over the coming days as we expand the number of tests carried out. This should not alarm anyone, it will simply allow the NHS to be better informed and prepare their staffing and resources accordingly.â€•

For more information about COVID-19 testing, including who is eligible for a test, how to get tested and the different types of test available, visit: [www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested) .

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Chief Nurse asks people to stay at home to support #ClapForCarers

Hullâ€™s most senior nurse is appealing to the public to stay at home to mark the #ClapForCarers event tomorrow night.

People have been coming to Hull Royal Infirmary on Thursday nights to take part in the national round of applause for NHS staff, carers and key workers.

However, concern is growing that people are putting themselves and others at risk by making a non-essential journey to take part and are then failing to observe the two-metre distancing rule.

Now, Beverley Geary, Chief Nurse at Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, is appealing to the public and the media not to come to the hospital tomorrow night.

She said: â€œOur staff are deeply moved by this amazing show of support by the public and we want to say how grateful we are to everyone taking part.

â€œBut weâ€™ve become increasingly concerned that people are coming to hospital just to clap and are putting themselves and others in danger by standing too close to each other, the numbers are increasing week on week.

â€œWe would like to thank you for your fantastic support and You can help the NHS and save lives by staying at home this week.â€•

The trust dealt with the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the UK when its Infectious Diseases team, based at Ward 7, Castle Hill Hospital, received the first two patients at the end of January.

Thanks to the national observation of the lockdown, Hull Royal Infirmary and Castle Hill Hospital have coped well with the admission of hundreds of patients suspected with or diagnosed with COVID-19.

Sadly, 8x people with the virus have died since March 19. However, more than 200, including 21 who have undergone treatment in the trust's five Intensive Care Units, have recovered well enough to go home.

There are still around 130 patients with COVID-19 or suspected of having the virus in the hospitals.

Mrs Geary said: "If people start making non-essential journeys once again before the lockdown is lifted, there is a very real danger that we will start to see a sudden spike in cases once again which could overwhelm the NHS.

"Please stay at home on Thursday night to protect your NHS, save lives and support our staff in the best possible way."

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#### Nurses supporting Intensive Care families during COVID-19 outbreak

A new nursing team has been created at Hull Royal Infirmary and Castle Hill Hospital to support families unable to visit their loved ones in Intensive Care during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (HUTH) has set up the special nursing team, working seven days a week, to act as the link between families and clinical staff working in its five Intensive Care Units.

Members of the team update families following doctors' rounds every day and act as a liaison for families, on hand to answer any questions relatives may have while their loved one is being cared for by the critical care team.

Senior Matron Rebecca Smith said: "We understand how hard it is for families during this time because they can't come and visit their loved ones in hospital.

"Families of all patients admitted to Intensive Care, not just those with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, are being supported by this new team and we hope it is making a difference."

Intensive Care nurses Alex Wray, Sarah Hill, April Ablitt, Jade Courtney, Sarah Gibbins, Jade Marson, Jodie McBride, Hannah North, Emily Rooke, Jennifer Smith, Melissa Smith, Amy Tomlinson, Jasmine Barraclough and Elizabeth Wright with Rachael Melia providing administrative support have been redeployed to support families of the sickest patients throughout COVID-19.

Families receive a photograph of the nurse who will act as their main point of contact while their relative is in Intensive

Care.

The nurses provide them with a telephone number and an email address so they can get in touch if they have any questions. They then contact them by telephone every day after ward rounds to update them on the condition of their loved ones. They will also pass on additional information from the clinical team.

As well as providing regular updates, the nurses also find out about the patients in Intensive Care so they can pass on the information to their colleagues.

Alex Wray, who is leading the team with Sarah Hill, said: "In normal times, staff would get an insight into the patient from their loved ones when they come to visit them or stay with them in the unit.

"Sadly, that's not possible just now because we can't have visitors on the units to protect our most seriously ill patients from the risk of infection.

"Asking their families about their loved ones allows us to get to know the person we are nursing and ensures relatives are still involved in their care."

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Appeal to the seriously ill to come to hospital

during COVID-19 outbreak

Hospital bosses are appealing to people with serious health concerns to seek urgent medical attention during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (HUTH) has seen a dramatic fall in urgent referrals from GPs and emergency admissions since the Government introduced a national lockdown four weeks ago.

Now, fears are growing that people with serious illnesses are placing their lives in further danger by not coming to Hull Royal Infirmary or Castle Hill Hospital soon enough for help.

Professor Russell Patmore, Consultant in Haematology and one of the trust's Medical Directors, said: "We understand people may be worried about coming to hospital right now, either because they fear they'll catch the virus or they think they'll be a burden to us.

"We want to reassure everyone that we are there to help you and your loved ones, whether you've got a problem with your heart, you think you're having a stroke, you've found a lump or anything else that's causing concern."

In a direct appeal to the public, Chief Operating Officer Teresa Cope said: "We are here when you need us.

"If you need to come to hospital, please be assured that we are taking every precaution against COVID-19. Our staff are well-versed in infection control measures to keep you safe.

"Please do not stay away because you're worried about catching the virus or are concerned you will be putting us under pressure.

"But, as always, use our emergency service wisely. Please do not come here with anything that could be treated by your GP or the Urgent Treatment Centres. You will be redirected if you come here with anything other than emergencies so call NHS 111 if you're not sure where to go for help before turning up at Hull Royal."

Like other NHS organisations around the country, HUTH cancelled non-urgent operations and outpatient appointments in March as part of national preparations to prevent the health service being overwhelmed.

However, patients requiring life-saving surgery and urgent treatment, such as those with cancer, have continued to attend both East Yorkshire hospitals.

Over the next few weeks, it is anticipated that some services including planned operations and other procedures will be reintroduced as latest analysis suggests the region may not experience the major surge in cases which had been originally forecast.

With social distancing working to lower the rate of infection, the trust will "step down" the number of wards on standby to accept COVID-19 patients and lower its critical care capacity from around 130 beds to just under 100.

However, staff will continue to be redeployed, recruited and retrained to support frontline services in the expectation that staff will care for patients with COVID-19 for months rather than weeks.

Teresa Cope, leading the trust's Gold Command in response to the outbreak, expressed sympathy to the families of the 79 patients who have died from COVID-19 since March 19.

She said: "They will never be just a number to us and their deaths drive us to help everyone affected by this terrible disease.

"Our strength has been our flexibility in reconfiguring resources coupled with the dedication and commitment of our fantastic staff. But we must respond to an ever-changing environment where no one can predict what the next few months will bring.

"Senior teams from every part of the trust are constantly reassessing and readjusting our response which means we are yet to go over 60pc bed capacity despite the rise in admissions.

“We know we may not have faced the peak yet. We know we may face more than one peak. And we know our staff could be dealing with COVID-19 for months.

“But we are now looking to the future and a “new normal”™ where we can provide excellent hospital services alongside care of patients with COVID-19.”

Test results suggest only a small proportion of people in Hull and the East Riding have become affected with COVID-19 because so many are following the rules to remain at home.

However, if people start to ignore Government guidance, there is real danger both hospitals will be put under severe strain by a large outbreak spreading through the local population.

Mrs Cope renewed her appeal for people to continue to stay at home, only making essential journeys and always remaining two metres apart from others outside your household to give the NHS a chance of coping with the virus.

“While so many uncertainties exist, we know social distancing measures are an effective way of halting the spread of infection,” she said.

“Please continue to stay at home to protect your NHS and save lives.”