

PRESS RELEASE

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust is reassuring people that they can be confident in using its services and should put their health needs before coronavirus fears.

In line with national guidance, the Trust postponed some services such as non-urgent planned surgery, and these will now be coming back on line as the peak of the COVID-19 surge is passed.

Trust chief executive Diane Wake said: “We appreciate that some people will be anxious about coming in to our hospital or outpatient and community settings, fearing they may be exposed to the virus.

“However we have put a variety of measures in place to ensure we are providing a safe environment for both staff and patients.

“We are especially concerned that people who need urgent care do not hesitate to get the help they need. We’ve seen a big drop in the number of people coming to our Emergency Department, and also fewer people coming with stroke or heart symptoms. It is really, really important that anyone with suspected stroke or heart symptoms calls 999 and gets urgent help.

“Time is of the essence and people should not hesitate because they are worried about coming in to hospital. We have been seeing stroke patients who have delayed getting medical help and it means we cannot provide the time-critical treatments that make all the difference to how well they recover.

“At the same time we are asking people who are unsure if they need to come to our Emergency Department to ‘talk before you walk’ – call NHS 111 first and they will advise you whether you need to come to hospital, contact your GP, see a pharmacist or self medicate. Then we will be able to respond quickly to those people who really do need to be seen in ED.”

Diane Wake added: “The public should be reassured that we are taking their health and safety very seriously. Not getting the medical attention you need can be a far bigger threat than coronavirus.

“If you have an appointment, for instance at a clinic or outpatient department, please keep it.

“We are asking our communities, who have been so wonderful and incredibly generous in supporting us through this time, to now trust us if they need us.”

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Notes to Editors

Patients going to Russells Hall Hospital will notice a number of changes designed to keep everyone safe.

- The hospital has been zoned – green, blue and yellow – to make it clear which areas are treating COVID-19 patients. The areas are clearly marked with advice available on-site.
- Social distancing is being followed, with people asked to keep left in corridors and two metres away from others. Floor markings emphasise this.
- Face coverings are available for patients in all areas along with hand sanitisers.
- Staff remove PPE before leaving clinical areas to ensure they do not spread the virus.
- Where staff are working closely together to care for patients, they ensure that all NHS infection control guidance is followed although social distancing may be impossible.

Issued by the communications team at The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust.