Important Information

Important Change in Guidance to the Public
If people are experiencing symptoms indicative of Coronavirus - a fever or persistent cough – the new guidance is that they should self-isolate for seven days. If their condition deteriorates or does not improve after 7 days they should call their GP or, out of hours, dial 111.

Community Testing is Stopped
Most people will experience mild symptoms from which they will recover. It is important to focus the efforts of healthcare staff on the most vulnerable patients and serious cases. With immediate effect, community testing has been stopped. This will free up RIDU and Laboratories staff to focus on those people requiring hospital admission.

Contact Tracing is Stopped
The change in guidance to the public also means the Public Protection Team will no longer carry out contact tracing since the advice now to all members of the public is to self-isolate if they experience any of the symptoms associated with coronavirus, irrespective of contact or travel history.

PPE Guidance – a reminder
If you are dealing with a suspected case you do not need a face fitted mask. You must wear:

- Fluid resistant mask, gloves and apron. Eye protection should be worn if the situation demands.
- This change is in line with national guidance. It follows robust risk assessment as we learn more about how coronavirus is spread and will help conserve stocks of face fitted masks for RIDU staff caring for patients who have the disease.

Mandatory Requirement to be clean shaven for Face Fitted Mask work
Staff are reminded that FFP3 Masks are not effective on skin that is not clean shaven. This is because it is not possible to achieve an airtight seal of the mask and the skin. It is therefore essential that staff required to wear a FFP3 to carry out their duties must be clean shaven. If you
cannot do so for religious or cultural reasons please speak to your line manager.

**Conserving Supplies: Hand Gel**
It is important that we conserve stocks of hand gel across the organisation for the coming weeks and months. For this reason we wish to prioritise the supply of hand gel to clinical areas. Staff are reminded that washing hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds is just as effective as any hand gel. You should do this several times a day, particularly before eating and drinking, and try to avoid touching your face, mouth and eyes with your hands.

**Visiting Hours**
Across our acute and community hospitals the Welcoming visiting policy has been suspended. For the duration of the outbreak:
- visiting times will be 2pm – 3pm and 7pm until 8pm.
- Visiting should be restricted to two visitors at a time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Children under the age of 12 are not permitted to visit.
- Visitors should be discouraged if they are feeling unwell, have persistent cough or high temperature.
- In some circumstances it is vital to patient care that visitors are permitted to attend and this should be discussed with families.

**Workforce**
We are taking action in a number of ways to boost our capacity. This includes writing out to members of healthcare staff who may have recently left us or who have recently retired offering them the opportunity to work with us on a temporary basis. This invitation is also being extended to nursing bank staff.

**Training Cancellation and Implementation of a Rapid Induction Process**
In order to allow frontline staff to fully focus on service delivery we have taken several steps:
- Cancelled: all non-essential training
- Cancelled: all work experience, observational and Princes Trust placements
- Induction and specific covid-19 related training will go ahead

From Monday 16th March we will implement a rapid induction process. This induction will be one day only and cover core aspects such as fire safety, manual handling, resuscitation, TRAK PPE and infection control.

The rapid induction will run daily at the Comely Bank Centre. Staff due to attend induction on Monday 16th will be ready to start in the workplace on Tuesday 17th March.

We will make efforts to bring forward any staff booked to attend induction in the coming week to
get them into work at the earliest opportunity.

Plans are being put in place to ensure access to a supply of uniforms and ID badge availability on all acute sites.

NHS Lothian’s Workforce Guidance is attached.

**Important Staff Health Information**

**Covid-19 Pandemic- Occupational Health Guidance**

This is the latest guidance for staff on what to do if you are unwell, when to come to work and when to stay at home:

- If you are well, come to work.
- If you have been in contact with someone with CoVid-19 you should still come to work unless you are unwell with fever and a dry cough.
- If you have symptoms of fever and a dry cough, you should stay at home for 7 days. Do not come to work. You will not receive any testing as community testing has now stopped.
- You should return to work after 7 days if your symptoms have resolved. You should not have had a fever for 48 hours. You can return to work after 7 days with a persistent cough if you are otherwise well.
- If not recovering after 7 days, contact NHS through advertised routes – on-line rather than by phone and not in person.
- If you become more unwell, contact NHS through advertised routes – on-line rather than by phone and not in person.

When you are at work, you should protect yourself and your patients. Use rigorous hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette and PPE as indicated (face masks, eye protection, gloves and apron).

**Pregnant or Immunosuppressed?**

Health Protection Scotland have stated that staff who are pregnant or otherwise immunosuppressed should not provide direct care for a patient with possible or confirmed COVID-19, this includes obtaining samples. There is however scope to deviate from this guidance at a local level as the situation evolves.


However, the advice at present, **is that pregnant and immunosuppressed workers should avoid working with known or suspected cases.**

If a key member of staff needs to work with a known or suspected case and is within one of these staff groups, then a detailed risk assessment supported by guidance from occupational health and infection control should be undertaken urgently. These staff members will need to work with full PPE and support.
Immunosuppressed groups include (but are not limited to): 

- cancer treatment
- treatment for autoimmune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, multiple sclerosis (MS) and inflammatory bowel diseases
- HIV
- having an organ transplant or a bone-marrow transplant
- long term oral steroid treatment

Recommendations:

- All healthcare workers must continue to comply with recommended infection control guidance. [https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2526/documents/1_infection-control-acute-care.pdf](https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2526/documents/1_infection-control-acute-care.pdf)
- All staff should contact their line manager promptly if they develop Covid-19 compatible symptoms while away from hospital.
- This guidance will be regularly reviewed in line with the changing situation.

Validated Statistics : at 1400 on 13/03/20

- As of 2pm today there were 3314 Scottish tests: 3229 negative, and 85 positive. Sadly one patient in Scotland has died.
- Across the UK, DHSC report a total of 32,771 tests concluded: 31,973 confirmed negative, and 798 positive. 10 patients who tested positive have died.

Important Reminders

Please refer to these website for the latest guidance and information:

Health Protection Scotland Covid-19
This includes guidance documents for clinicians, advice for staff in other settings, etc [https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/wuhan-novel-coronavirus/#news](https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/wuhan-novel-coronavirus/#news)

HPS Travel Guidance
[https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home](https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home)

World Health Organisation Covid-19
[https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus)

UK Government Covid-19 Action Plan

Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland