**Staff Helpline**

A helpline for Staff and Volunteers has been set up.

If you have questions about coronavirus (COVID-19), please try the Health Protection Scotland Website in the first instance. If you can't find what you are looking for, call our advice line for Health and Social Care staff and volunteers in Lothian on:

**0131 537 8530 (ext. 88530). Lines open: Mon to Fri 8am to 6pm.**

Please **do not** call colleagues in RIDU, Public Health or Infection Prevention and Control who are already under extreme pressure. Thank you

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**Important Information**

**Guidance for staff in at risk categories**

The Scottish Government have now issued guidance related to staff with underlying health conditions. NHS Lothian has now issued this with guidance for those staff and the over 70s in an All Staff email.

Guidance relating to pregnant staff is still being finalised by the Scottish Government and will be issued as soon as we are able. Please read this guidance and approach your manager if you believe you are in these categories and they have not spoken with you about what you should do.

To access the full guidance for staff in a risk category [click here](#)

**School Emergency Placements**

Local Authorities are working hard to process the requests that they have received for children to attend the childcare schemes they are running in some ‘hub’ schools.

It is becoming clear that demand for places exceeds safe supply of placements. The assumption staff should make is that if there are 2 parents/carers in a household and only one of them is a key worker, you are unlikely to be eligible.

Places are being prioritised for vulnerable children as well as those households where there will be no adult at home and no alternative arrangements can be made.

**Car Parking**
The Scottish Government are actively engaging with PFI parking providers at affected hospitals across the country to suspend parking charges, we will update you as soon as we can.

We have been working with parking providers in areas adjacent to our adult Acute sites, and secured additional parking for staff at the RIE, WGH and St John’s.

We are currently working through an implementation plan to avoid gridlock and to prevent potential health and safety issues arising. This will be managed and brought into service over the next few days.

We are still looking for available options for RHSC and will update you further about what spaces are available to each site in upcoming speed read bulletins.

**Public Transport**

The use of public transport has reduced significantly in recent days and this has caused some issues for our staff getting to and from work. We are currently in discussions with bus operators around core shift times and will update you with progress made.

**Launch of Community Hubs**

As part of a national approach, we have launched a new Community Hub. This is designed to help reduce pressures on GP practices and hospitals amid the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The Hub will be staffed by a mixture of nurses and doctors. It will handle calls with members of the public, triaged initially through NHS 24’s 111 phone line, who may be experiencing symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and who may need further assessment and advice.

As well as providing information and reassurance, The Hub service will facilitate face to face scheduled appointments for those individuals who may need further clinical assessment, but who do not need emergency care.

The public should continue to use NHS Inform for information and advice, and to call NHS24 (111) if they have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) which are not improving. Calls will be triaged to the Community Hub if they require more specialist advice.

**Homeworking**

As the government guidance on social distancing is becoming stricter, a number of staff will be moving to home working over the next few days, for those staff in a role that can be undertaken from home. It is recognised that for a period of time, they may not be able to do their current role, due to IT equipment issues or their area of work not being considered an essential service. It is anticipated that this will impact mostly on those staff in corporate support services but not exclusively.

As planning progresses, we hope to be in a position to support those staff offering essential services the capability to work at home. If this is not possible, or your usual duties do not fall within the essential category, you may be allocated to duties elsewhere to support the overall response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Guidance on homeworking, including how to stay connected with your team will be issued in the next few days.

In the meantime, if you have personal IT equipment you would be able to update your mandatory training on LearnPro, as this is a web-based system. Contact should be maintained with your manager during this period by an agreed method to ensure you can be supported to work in a way that is most beneficial to the service.
Microsoft 365 / Teams – Correction

In Friday's Speed Read, we told you that NHS Lothian has rolled out Microsoft Teams to all staff to help support collaboration. Please note that this should only be used to collaborate with colleagues and not with patients.

Microsoft 365 / Teams – Issue

An issue has been identified with Microsoft Teams. This is a national issue and is not only affecting NHS Lothian. Currently users are unable to set up individual teams, however all other functionality is working as normal. This means that you can continue to chat, share documents and video call with colleagues, using the chat functionality. This issue has been escalated to Microsoft as a Priority, and we hope to be back to full functionality very soon. Further communication will follow.

RefHelp & SCI Gateway (For Referrers to Secondary Care)

Access to outpatient services are changing significantly and in response, the RefHelp Team is updating relevant pages to reflect changes to patient pathways. Please visit the RefHelp Covid-19 page for the latest updates. SCI Gateway is also being modified to ensure alignment, please see notice on SCI Gateway Homepage for further details.

If you have updates you want made to a RefHelp page, please email a request to: RefHelp@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Changes to our visiting policy

With the exception of some areas (Maternity and Children’s Services) across NHS Lothian, visiting is currently restricted to two visitors at a time unless there are exceptional circumstances and following discussion with the nurse in charge, and unfortunately children under the age of 12 will not be permitted to visit.

Given the changing environment as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19), we are continually reviewing this policy and any further changes will be communicated to staff, as well as the public through the usual channels.

A Reminder

This Section contains important information previously issued which is unchanged.

Essential supplies and PPE

There remains an understandable degree of anxiety from staff about what PPE should be used and what is available. Please be assured that the guidance on PPE has been robustly risk assessed, and you should continue to refer to the guidance issued by Health Protection Scotland on Infection Prevention and Control in Healthcare Settings and as outlined below.

In terms of the continuity of supply of essential products, such as face masks and hand gel, it has been necessary to manage demand based on the priority of clinical need, and this means generic alternative products are being provided in place of what you order. Dependent on stock held nationally, you may also see a restriction in the quantity of items you receive.
It is worth noting that NHS Lothian does not operate local warehouses or stockholdings; rather our supply needs are met from the National Distribution Centre (NDC). If national stockholdings encounter gaps in supply, the national team will apportion each NHS Board an equitable allocation of what is available at the time.

As a result of unprecedented demand, the NDC remains at least 24 hours behind normal delivery schedules. This means that you may see a change in your scheduled deliveries, but be assured your needs will be met as soon as possible.

Just as the public are being advised against panic buying, and clearing supermarket shelves of essential items, so it is with essential healthcare supplies. It is important that we request and consume stock carefully, according to what each situation demands in order to conserve stocks for the weeks and months to come.

**Personal Protective Equipment**

*This PPE Guidance was first issued on March 18 and is still current:*

It is important that all NHS Lothian staff follow the correct infection control policy and guidance to protect themselves at work whilst ensuring safe and effective patient care. It is essential that clinical staff wear the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) if required, including the use of respiratory protective equipment (RPE) such as face fit tested respirators when needed. Staff who do not provide direct patient care do not require to wear PPE or RPE unless specifically advised to by a member of nursing or medical staff.

1. Standard infection control measures must be followed by all staff for all patients in all areas of patient care. Hand hygiene is vital in reducing the risk to staff from passing on infections, including COVID-19.

2. Staff who do not provide patient care but work in clinical areas – for example domestic staff, porters – do not require to wear any PPE unless directed to by a member of nursing or medical staff -if carrying out a task in a patient isolation room or patient bay where patients have possible or confirmed COVID-19 or other infections.

3. In most cases when delivering clinical care to a patient with possible or confirmed COVID-19 PPE will consist of a fluid resistant surgical mask, disposable apron and gloves (droplet transmission based precautions). There may be some circumstances where eye protection is also indicated e.g. when there is a risk of splash or spray of body fluid to the eyes.

4. When carrying out an aerosol generating procedure (AGP) on a patient with possible or confirmed COVID-19 and at all times in intensive care settings where a cohort of possible or confirmed cases has created clinical staff must wear a face fit tested respirator (FFP3); long sleeved gown; eye protection and disposable gloves.

This guidance is in line with Health Protection Scotland advice and national policy.

**Working, Self-Isolation and Return to work**

- **If you are well, come to work.**

**If you develop symptoms:**

- If you live alone and you develop a new continuous cough and/or high temperature (37.8 degrees centigrade or higher), regardless of your travel history or contact with confirmed cases you should stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started. You will not be tested.
If you live with others then all other household members, whether they develop symptoms or not, must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. **The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.**

If after 7 days, you feel better and no longer have a high temperature, you can return to work.

If someone in your household has symptoms:

- You must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days whether you develop symptoms or not. **The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.**
- Anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms needs to stay at home for 7 days from when their symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period.
- After 7 days, **if the first person to become ill feels better** and no longer has a high temperature, they can return to their normal routine.
- If anyone in the household develops symptoms late in the 14-day household-isolation period (e.g. on day 13 or day 14) **the isolation period for the household does not need to be extended, but the person with the new symptoms has to stay at home for 7 days.**

You must contact your line manager before returning to work so they can do a risk assessment. Before you return to work you must have had 48 hours without fever. Cough in itself does not prevent you from safely returning to work.

**Refresher training**

The Clinical Education Team has set up a range of specific upskill and refresher training to support clinical services.

These sessions are open to all clinical staff - nurses, midwives, AHPs, medics and support staff. The focus is PPE, Infection Prevention & Control, Deteriorating Patient and Respiratory/Airway Management. These are rolling drop-in sessions - most do not require pre-booking. [Click here for information on these sessions.](#)

**Validated Statistics**

**UK Statistics - As of 9am on 22 March 2020:**

- 78,340 people have been tested in the UK,
- of which 72,657 were confirmed negative and 5,683 were confirmed positive.
- 281 patients in the UK, who tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) have sadly died.

**Scottish test numbers: 23 March 2020**

A total of 9,364 Scottish tests have concluded. Of these:
- 8,865 tests were confirmed negative.
- 499 tests were confirmed positive.
- 14 patients who tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) have sadly 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

World Health Organisation Covid-19
https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

UK Government Covid-19 Action Plan

Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland

If you have any communication related questions please email: lothian.communications@nhs.net