

Information for Primary Care

Elective Care - Referrals and Waiting Lists during Covid-19 Pandemic – Information for GPs

These are unprecedented times and it is not possible for NHS work to continue as usual. The principal aim of this information is to reduce the spread of Covid-19 and maximise the NHS's ability to manage the pandemic. This information is based on risk assessment and the UK Government new movement restrictions. It is correct at the time of publication (3rd April 2020) and is subject to change. Where this guidance says GP it also refers to other primary care clinicians in practices.

Hull University Teaching Hospitals approach is that clinically appropriate routine and some urgent referrals will be retained by the provider during Covid-19 and will be booked once we have the ability to do so. The patient will receive a letter notifying them of this.

Referrals that are not clinically appropriate or do not require secondary care input will be returned to GP's. It is expected that GP's fully utilise the e-Referral system.

How to Contact us for Routine non-Clinical enquiries

Waiting times or referral queries - hyp-tr.performance@nhs.net

Non-clinical service or pathway queries - hyp-tr.hey.contracting@nhs.net

Hospital Switchboard – 01482 875875

Outpatient Services

1. Advice and Guidance Services

Where the specialty offers A&G we would encourage you to use this service. It may not be possible to respond to all requests within the 2 working day turnaround.

2. 2 week wait Services

At present the Trust is still offering directly bookable appointments (DBS) for 2ww referrals. There are two exceptions to this.

The first is in Lung where these are sent to a Referral Assessment Service (RAS) for triage to a face to face or telephone clinic, due to the Respiratory Clinicians input into Covid-19.

The second is in Colorectal, which is not currently able to operate the standard pathway due to capacity limitations in the diagnostic tools that support this pathway (Colonoscopy or CTC). An Advice and Guidance service is being set up to support discussion of these referrals and to provide advice for GPs.

3. Rapid Access Chest Pain Clinic (RACPC)

At present the rapid access chest pain appointments are continuing but rather than a face to face appointment, it will be a telephone consultation. This clinic is continually reviewed by the consultant team during the pandemic.

4. Paediatrics

Children already booked into clinics will either be offered a telephone or face to face consultation. Referrals will be assessed by a member of the consultant team who will advise on the level of clinical urgency and best mechanism for review as outlined above.

5. Routine Outpatients – booked appointments

Along with other trusts in the Humber Coast and Vale partnerships, HUTH has suspended all non-urgent routine outpatient appointments for at least three months. Notifications to patients have been done via telephone or letter.

6. Appointment Slot Issues / Deferred to Provider

Referrals received prior to 18th March 2020 are undergoing a clinical review. Urgent patients will be offered a telephone or face to face appointment. Some may be sent straight to test if clinically appropriate. Any routine referral will be paused and the patients will receive a letter notifying them of this.

7. Referral Assessment Service (new referrals)

All routine and urgent referrals will now be via a Referral Assessment Service (RAS). These will be clinically triaged and either:-

- clinically rejected as inappropriate
- returned to referrer with advice to manage in primary care
- accepted to be booked (either face to face or telephone) for Urgent
- down-graded to routine
- routine to be held and booked later
- potential straight to test if appropriate

Diagnostic Services

Radiology Referrals

Routine referrals

Routine referrals into radiology continue to be accepted but the appointment will not be made for at least 12 weeks. Therefore, consideration as to the appropriateness of a referral at this time, given the significant delay prior to the appointment, is requested.

Urgent Referrals

Newly accepted referrals for urgent clinical indications will be appointed depending upon capacity thresholds within radiology. Any referrals deemed to be routine will be placed on hold until normal service resumes. At this time, where appropriate, appointments will be sent to patients to attend for their imaging accordingly but referrers need to be aware that you may be contacted to review the clinical case and assess the appropriateness of any referral over 12 weeks old.

Walk in Service

The walk in service has been postponed. For all would be 'walk in' chest x-ray and recent injuries referrals, please ask your patients to contact the Radiology department on 01482 622047 so that COVID-19 screening can be completed before sending the patient and referral. Patients who have not contacted radiology prior to attendance will not be accepted.

Hornsea and Withernsea X Ray Service

This service has been closed and separate communications have been sent out for GPs who currently refer into this service.

8. Endoscopy

In line with Jag and BSG guidance all non-urgent endoscopy and bowel screening is stopping as risks to staff and patients of catching Covid-19 are greater than the pick-up rate of endoscopy. Emergency Endoscopy services will continue to be provided.

9. Pathology

GPs can still refer for pathology tests into the laboratories at Hull Royal Infirmary. However, due to the changes in volumes of testing the normal turnaround times cannot be guaranteed.

10. Community Cardiology Diagnostic Service (Hull GPs Only)

This service has been paused until further notice. The referrals will still be accepted but put on hold until normal service resumes.

11. Bone Densitometry Scans (DEXA)

This service has been paused until further notice. The referrals will still be accepted but put on hold until normal service resumes. A briefing note has been prepared for GPs to provide general advice for bone protection.

Inpatient and Day Case Services

12. Elective Surgery Waiting lists

Patients who have already have a confirmed date for surgery will be contacted by the trust to cancel their routine surgery. Patients who do not receive a letter or phone call from the hospital, should turn up for their scheduled surgery as normal unless they have symptoms of Coronavirus, a cold, flu or Norovirus in which case they should contact the hospital to cancel their surgery. The admission letters have been updated to reflect this guidance if the patient has, or develops any symptoms.

Patients on a waiting list with a priority of urgent will be clinically reviewed and if following that review it is deemed that they need to be treated during the Pandemic the risk will be assessed. All patients who it is deemed safe to wait will be notified by letter.

All patients who are undated for routine surgery will be sent a letter informing them that the Trust is unable to appoint them at the present time. Should their condition deteriorate they are asked to seek advice of 111 or ring 999 in an emergency. The letter will also advise them to seek advice from their GP who can request input from the specialist via Advice and Guidance.

13.Planned waiting lists

Patients who are on a planned waiting list who have a due by date before 15th June will be clinically reviewed. If it is safe for them to wait, they will be contacted via letter to explain that their surveillance procedure has been clinically reviewed and due to Coronavirus the trust will need to delay their recall to hospital. The trust will be in contact when another appointment can be offered.

14.Maternity Services

Maternity services are reducing the number of face to face appointments and replacing with telephone or video. Remote blood glucose monitoring is being introduced for Gestational Diabetes women. There will be a reduced number of antenatal and postnatal clinic attendances in line with RCOG guidance.

During the Pandemic there can only be 1 birth partner for women in labour and all other visiting is not permitted at this time.

15.Screening programmes (Bowel, Breast, Diabetic Eye, AAA)

All the screening programmes provided by HUTHT have been paused in line with the national guidance.

Emergency Services

16.Access to Emergency Medical and Surgical Services

Please contact the on-call consultant or registrar via the Switchboard.

17.Trauma Clinics (Orthopaedic Fracture and Plastics Trauma)

Where possible these will be delivered via a virtual review and telephone consultation.

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