

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS, FAMILIES AND CARERS

COVID-19 and planned procedures/course of treatment where written consent is required

COVID-19 has changed the day to day planning of hospital activity and our ability to continue with both planned and urgent surgery will vary. This may have the potential to alter your experience and it has introduced unusual uncertainties into the informed consent discussions regarding:

- The timing of your procedure/course of treatment.
- The increased risk of either **contracting** coronavirus during a hospital stay or **transmitting** it to healthcare workers/other patients.
- The potential for increased risk of serious complications after an operation if a procedure/course of treatment is performed on asymptomatic patients (these are patients who are infected but never develop any symptoms) or pre-symptomatic patients (these are patients who have not yet developed symptoms but go on to develop symptoms later).

If you contract the virus when you have your procedure/course of treatment or while in hospital, this could make your recovery more difficult or increase your risk of serious illness and even death. You may wish to delay your operation and we understand your reasons for this. However, future dates for surgery may take much longer than normal to arrange.

The COVID-19 vaccination programme

This is open to all adults in England. While the vaccine does not prevent you from contracting COVID-19, it does offer increased immunity, a potential reduction in transmission of the virus and a reduction in symptom severity should you contract it. You must be vaccinated more than seven days and ideally more than two weeks before your planned admission date. We do recommend that you are vaccinated as soon as possible, as it protects you and other vulnerable people who may also be in hospital at the same time. If you have any concerns about vaccination, please ask us and we will be happy to discuss your concerns.

Your assessment and care

This may be disrupted, delayed or performed differently, for example:

- Many of the consultations will occur by telephone or by email/letter. Your anaesthetic assessment may be by telephone with a nurse or possibly an anaesthetist too.
- Before your admission to hospital we will arrange for you to have COVID-19 testing before your operation where appropriate. Your operation is likely to be postponed if your test is positive or you are unwell. On the day of admission of your planned procedure you **may** undergo a further test for COVID-19 **before or after** your procedure. We may not have the results of the test if this is taken before the procedure. Routinely, we will ask you to go into isolation before and after a procedure (and this may include any other people living in your household) unless it is an emergency. This is to reduce your risk. You will be given clear information about the isolation period required, which will depend upon the favoured information/guidance at the given time. It is in your best interest to strictly follow the advice given for isolation. If you have to stay in hospital for some time, you may also be tested regularly during your stay. For children (before their 17th birthday), a swab to test for presence of COVID-19 is taken 72 hours before surgery and they are advised to isolate after this but they do not need to isolate once discharged after their surgery.

- Your procedure/course of treatment may not take place at the hospital that you were expecting it to. The Trust is currently using various sites such as King's Mill Hospital, Barlborough Hospital, Park Hospital and in future may use Newark Hospital and Woodthorpe Hospital in Nottingham. Your procedure may be cancelled or delayed at short notice.
- Circumstances will be very different in hospital. Wards have been reorganised and staff will be wearing personal protective equipment, for example masks, gloves, aprons and visors. If you have hearing difficulties and you rely on lip reading, please tell staff this so that they can make changes to the way they communicate with you.
- You may not meet your consultant/surgeon/healthcare professional until the day of the procedure/course of treatment and they may not be the ones you expected, however, they will be experienced and trained to perform your procedure.
- We will do everything we can to perform your procedure/course of treatment according to the most up to date Trust clinical and hygiene policies, procedures and guidelines to keep you safe and to provide you will all the information at all stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will listen to your concerns and discuss them.
- Due to increased demands on intensive care, if complications occur following your procedure/course of treatment, it may be necessary to transfer you to a different hospital.
- Visitors may not be allowed during your admission or visiting times and/or the number of visitors may be limited depending on the hospital policy at the given time.

We would like to point out the particular importance of any advance decisions that you may have made when considering treatment during the pandemic. This may include an Advance Directive to Refuse Treatment (ADRT) or completion of the Recommended Summary for Emergency Care & Treatment (ReSPECT) process. This allows care teams to make critical time sensitive medical decisions that respect your wishes and dignity.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

<p>To be completed by the Communications office Leaflet code: PIL202110-01-C19PP Created: October 2021 Review Date: October 2023</p>
