

King's Mill Hospital
Mansfield Road
Sutton in Ashfield
Nottinghamshire
NG17 4JL

04 June 2020

Open letter to Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS FT patients, community and partners.

I want to say a huge thank you to the patients, the public and partner organisations who are helping Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. This has been a difficult year for us all and the local community has been a huge part of our response to Covid-19. We are grateful for the humbling support you have given us through donations, kind messages, equipment and Clap for Carers on a Thursday at 8pm. You have made our jobs and personal lives easier, thank you.

At Sherwood, we have made rapid changes to our services including restricting visitors to our sites, postponing and cancelling appointments and delivering services in different ways such as outpatient appointment on the telephone or computer. Throughout this, our aim is to keep patients and colleagues at Sherwood safe and we are proud of our safety record. I believe we have made the right decisions based on the evidence available but I do recognise these changes will have impacted on you and we are sorry for this.

It is clear we will be living with Covid-19 in our hospitals and communities for a long time to come, whilst we also provide care for the many other patients who do not have Covid-19. I want to briefly explain what we are doing to restore services and what you can expect when you come to one of our hospitals.

It is far more challenging to resume services than to pause them and our plans take into account our understanding of the future demand for Covid-19, likely staffing levels, access to Personal Protect Equipment and many other factors. We know "winter pressures" will begin in less than four months' time and it is important to remember how difficult winters were before Covid-19.

In the last couple of weeks we have started additional cancer and urgent endoscopy services and additional radiology services at King's Mill, Newark and Mansfield Community Hospitals. We are also working with other services to safely provide cancer care from other locations as well as at King's Mill Hospital. In the next couple of weeks we plan to restart surgery at Newark Hospital. We will continue to listen to doctors, nurses, other clinical and non-clinical colleagues to reintroduce more services based on clear prioritisation when it is safe to do so. If you are waiting for an appointment or procedure at one of our hospitals you will hear from us directly.

When you return to our hospitals you will notice some differences. We will expect you to follow social distancing rules, for the majority of appointments you will be asked to attend on your own and you can expect to be seen by a professional who will probably be wearing PPE. These steps are to protect you and the people providing your care but we know we will not get everything right first time and we want to hear what your experiences are to help us learn and improve.

The emotional impact of Covid-19 will continue to be felt by our community and colleagues and anyone who has lost a family member or friend has our deepest condolences. We have a clear responsibility to look after the physical and mental wellbeing of our colleagues and we will continue to make that a key priority in the coming weeks and months.

I fully recognise the response to Covid-19 is wider than the NHS and I would like to say thank you again. I have huge respect and admiration for all colleagues and volunteers at Sherwood whether they have been actively caring for patients with Covid-19 or working from home. Thank you to the partner organisations we work with across health and social care, to the key workers who get us to and from work, make products, look after our children and keep food on the shelves, to everyone who has volunteered, or made sacrifices at home to help stop the spread of the virus, and to all the individuals, community groups and companies that have reached out to us at this time. These are difficult times and we have many challenges ahead of us but we will get through this because of the community spirit we have across Nottinghamshire.

Richard Mitchell

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

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