

# Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland stakeholder bulletin #1

Date of issue: 25th March 2020

**This is the first in a series of regular bulletins for key stakeholders. It sets out the latest local position in relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the response of NHS partners in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.**

**It brings together key information to help you and update you on local services. It also sets out how you can help us to help you. Our aim is that these will be issued twice weekly following meetings of the Health Economy Strategic Control Group, which is overseeing the local NHS response to coronavirus.**

## Latest local situation

As at 4pm on Tuesday, 24th March there were 75 confirmed cases in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR). A total of 6 deaths of LLR patients have sadly been confirmed via the daily national announcements.

## The national approach

Monday evening the Prime Minister announced a series of new measures to help suppress the spread of the coronavirus. This included new rules on staying at home and away from others.

When we reduce our day-to-day contact with other people, we will reduce the spread of the infection. That is why the government is introducing three new measures. These are:

1. Requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited purposes
2. Closing non-essential shops and community spaces
3. Stopping all gatherings of more than two people in public.

Every citizen must comply with these new measures. The relevant authorities, including the police, will be given the powers to enforce them – including through fines and dispersing gatherings. These measures are effective immediately. The Government will look again at these measures in three weeks, and relax them if the evidence shows this is possible.

Full information on these measures can be found by visiting: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.

## NHS Advice

### Stay at home to stop spreading coronavirus

Everyone must stay at home to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

This includes people of all ages – even if they do not have any symptoms or other health conditions.

People should only leave their home to:

- to shop for basic essentials – only when really needed
- to do one form of exercise a day – such as run, walk or cycle, alone or with other people you live with
- for any medical need – for example, to visit a pharmacy or deliver essential supplies to a vulnerable person
- to travel to and from work – but only where this is absolutely necessary.

### **What to do if you have coronavirus symptoms**

Continue to stay at home if you have either:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means a coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)

To protect others, do not go to places like a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Stay at home.

Use the 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do.

## **Local preparedness**

The local NHS and its partners are continuing to prepare for and respond to the Coronavirus situation. We are doing this through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

The LRF is the multi-agency partnership made up of representatives from local public services including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS and others. We are working together to implement the well-rehearsed plans already in place to deal with a pandemic.

However, we are not underestimating the scale of the challenge. In the coming days and weeks we know we will continue to see a significant growth in the number of patients suffering from the disease, including those who are critically unwell. Sadly, it is also inevitable that we will see an increase in the number of deaths reported locally, although we will do everything we can to minimise this number.

### **University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust**

Work has been prioritised to free up as much bed capacity as possible within Leicester's hospitals. This has included ensuring the timely discharge or transfer of appropriate patients, as well as beginning the process of cancelling elective (non-urgent) surgery for at least the next three months. We have also been reconfiguring wards and other clinical spaces to ensure that the hospitals can be used as flexibly as possible.

Sadly, as confirmed via daily national announcements, a total of 6 patients at Leicester's Hospitals who had tested positive for COVID-19 have died. The Trust routinely cares for patients from across the country so it should not be assumed the individuals were residents of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

To protect staff, patients and visitors the Trust has introduced strict visiting restrictions for the hospitals. From the 24th March UHL are not allowing visitors.

There will be exceptions made for people in the following circumstances:

- Birthing partners
- Parents of patients under 18 years of age
- Immediate family/partners of those at end of life
- Relatives collecting patients being discharged
- Immediate carers for patients requiring assistance.

People who believe they fall within these criteria are being asked to pre-arrange their visits with the nurse in charge. The Trust recognises that these measures will be very difficult for families, but this decision is necessary for everyone's safety in light of the situation we face.

For the latest guidance, visit: <https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/aboutus/our-news/coronavirus/>.

### **Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust**

LPT has also been working hard to discharge patients as soon as they are medically fit so as to create as much capacity as is possible to be able to respond to patients being discharged from acute hospitals. Wards have been dedicated within some community hospitals in order to treat patients with coronavirus safely, while steps have been taken to ensure appropriate spaces exist to treat patients either with, or suspected of having, COVID -19 within mental health and learning disability inpatient facilities.

To protect staff, patients and visitors the Trust have cancelled visiting to all their wards with the exception of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) unit. Some services are also being temporarily closed in line with national guidance, but LPT is ensuring that this is effectively communicated to patients and service users. For the latest guidance, visit: <https://www.leicspart.nhs.uk>

### **General practice**

GPs across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are using telephone and internet consultations wherever possible to see as many patients as possible without putting them at risk of spreading Coronavirus. Routine face-to-face appointments have now been cancelled for most patients, except the most vulnerable or urgent cases after being triaged by GPs. All patients should call their GP practice in the first instance.

### **NHS 111**

The NHS 111 service is experiencing unprecedented levels of demand. Extra capacity is being provided, but it is important that patients concerned about symptoms use the online 111 coronavirus service if they possibly can.

## **Additional private sector capacity**

Announcements were made over the weekend of a national NHS deal to acquire 8,000 extra beds, 1,200 extra ventilators and almost 20,000 fully qualified staff from the private sector. We welcome this extra capacity and are currently working with local private providers to understand what this may look like, and how it will work, locally.

## **What you can do to help**

Help us to save lives by reinforcing key messages in this bulletin with your key contacts. In particular, this should include the essential message that everyone must stay at home to help stop the spread of coronavirus. This includes people of all ages – even if they do not have any symptoms or other health conditions.

Please use your social media accounts to share only official messages from Government and NHS websites and accounts. There is a lot of misinformation about coronavirus being shared online, which is causing confusion about the virus and how it spreads.

## **Maintaining well-being**

It's more important than ever that people look after their mental health and well-being., particularly if they are worried about the coronavirus and the effects of self-isolation or social distancing.

## **Volunteering and supporting vulnerable people**

We know that there are many people who want to support vulnerable people by helping them with everyday tasks such as shopping, walking dogs or collecting medications. Others may want to help by being a friendly voice on the end of the phone for vulnerable people who are feeling particularly isolated and may be living alone.

LRF partners, led by the local councils, are working with the voluntary sector to co-ordinate the community response. Anyone interested in providing support can find out more by visiting: <https://valonline.org.uk/covid-19-coronavirus-support-volunteers/>

## **Contact**

If you have any feedback, or questions, please email us at: [PressOfficeLRCCGs@leicestershire.nhs.uk](mailto:PressOfficeLRCCGs@leicestershire.nhs.uk). We are sure you will understand that we are very busy, but we will endeavour to respond to all queries within 72 hours.