

Media Release

Date: 18 March 2020

HSC develops plans for any escalation from current COVID-19 'containment' phase

Plans continue to be developed by Health & Social Care for any escalation from Guernsey's 'Containment' phase of COVID-19.

Currently, normal service levels are being provided across HSC wherever possible, but should demand change or the threat level increase the community can be assured HSC will undertake every effort to minimise disruptions for patients and service users.

HSC is determined to remain proactive in response to this global crisis, and among the steps being taken this week are:

- Changes to the **Gloucester Room Restaurant** at the PEH. The facility will continue to provide hot and cold food options, but there will be restrictions introduced in the range of dishes available and a reduction in the usual on site seating. The PEH are asking users of the restaurant to continue to ensure they have washed their hands in advance of their visit, use the onsite sanitizers provided, and ensure customers remain distanced from each other in queues for food and the tills.

Customers are also asked to note that food will be provided primarily for takeaway rather than eat in for the foreseeable future and only a handful of tables will be provided for those who have no option other than to eat at the Gloucester Room. The tables are intended for individual use and will be placed to ensure adequate separation of diners. Posters to explain the new arrangements have been produced and placed in the Gloucester Room to support the implementation of the changes.

Food service for hospital in-patients will not be affected. Spare capacity generated by reducing the usual restaurant offering temporarily will be focused to manage the increasing demand being experienced by the meals on wheels service.

- HSC recognise that the ability of families and friends **visiting** relatives and loved ones who are in-patients within HSC facilities is very important. In the present situation, it would be appreciated if no more than one person visits any of our wards, and all visitors must ensure they wash their hands and use the sanitizers available at every ward entrance. Visitors are also asked to use technology options wherever possible,

such as Skype, FaceTime or WhatsApp if possible for some of their contact with PEH patients and make sure they do not visit at all if they are otherwise required to self-isolate as a result of advice from Public Health – **this really is incredibly important as people self-isolating must remain at home.**

- Likewise, the public/service users are asked not to attend any scheduled appointment they may have across HSC if Public Health advice requires them to self-isolate and specifically if they have any flu-like symptoms. Please call the service in question for advice on rescheduling if this is necessary.
- Elective surgery for the week beginning 23rd March has been postponed to allow HSC to train a range of staff to increase resilience in the provision of critical care. A further decision will be made after this week in terms of scheduling future electives. **Islanders requiring urgent elective care or emergency care will not be affected as a result of this decision.**

Plans that **may** need to be introduced in the future to cope with spikes in demand arising from COVID-19 include:

- Wards in the PEH may need to be reconfigured to manage COVID-19 patients separately if this becomes necessary to do so.
- Staff who are professionally registered but are not currently working in a clinical setting (for example colleagues working within governance or in a teaching/lecturing capacity) may be asked to support front line services if necessary. This response may also need to include recently retired healthcare professionals and will also involve additional agency staff in due course as and when necessary.
- If there are any retired nurses/midwives or allied health professionals on island who would wish to support the services during this evolving situation they could contact Human Resources and the necessary training will be supported to enable them to work alongside our health and care practitioners.

Matt Jones, HSC Director of Operations said:

“What we are managing is a threat on a global level, with the situation changing daily, if not hourly. Our local response will always seek to place our community and staff at the heart of all our decisions. We continue to prepare across all our teams and a lot of these plans exist in the hope that we never have to use them. I want to reassure the community that the senior management team of HSC are ready to swiftly make the changes necessary to our services and facilities to increase our resilience in the face of this new and sudden challenge as it evolves. We will provide further updates as and when necessary.”

HSC appreciates the support of the whole community and all of its staff and partners in managing the response to this rapidly changing situation and apologise for any disruption that they may unavoidably experience as services respond to changing demand in the coming weeks.

Ends

Notes to Media

Please contact pressroom
pressroom@gov.gg