



Thursday 31 December 2020

Open letter to our patients, partners and the whole Isle of Wight community

On behalf of everyone at Isle of Wight NHS Trust thank you for your incredible efforts to support the NHS during 2020.

We are truly grateful for the positive way you have responded to the challenges of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The impact that the restrictions have had on all of us has been huge and the news that our island is now in Tier 4 will come as a blow to many.

I understand how difficult this is for people, for families and for businesses.

But the situation is very serious and without urgent action our health and social care services will be put under unbearable pressure.

The number of positive cases locally has increased steadily over recent weeks and spiked dramatically in the last few days.

We are currently treating more people with COVID-19 in hospital than at any point during the pandemic and our services are already stretched by winter pressures.

The thousands of people that make up our Trust are working tirelessly to make sure that we can continue to provide safe care.

We have opened more general and intensive care beds and set up a second Isolation Unit.

Emergency and cancer surgery will continue but we have stood down non-urgent surgery to free up beds and clinicians to maintain the safety of our services.

Some outpatient appointments will have to happen by telephone or video call and we may have to reduce these appointments further in the weeks ahead.

The impact of the increased spread of COVID-19 on the NHS is real and it is impacting all of our services.

We need your help now more than we ever have.

This virus is dangerous and it is spreading more quickly than before.

You can help us by doing everything you can to stay safe. Now that we are in Tier 4 restrictions we need you to stay at home.

Please follow the Hands, Face, Space and ventilate rules:

- Hands – wash your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds
- Face – wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet
- Space – stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings)
- Ventilate - opening a window for 15 minutes per day helps to ventilate indoor areas and keep air circulating

You can read more about the Tier 4 restrictions on the Government website [here](#).

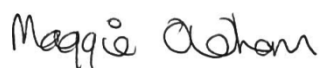
There is hope on the horizon with the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccines but the next weeks and months are so crucial.

Don't forget there are a range of NHS services here to support you:

- Visit 111 online for advice. It's easy to use – go to www.111.nhs.uk.
- Contact your GP practice for advice – check their website for their opening times and out of hours services.
- Your local community pharmacy may also be able to help.
- If you need urgent medical help, call 111 first, who can also book you in to be seen at your local A&E or urgent treatment centre.
- Finally, please remember, if it's a life threatening emergency, please call 999 immediately.

If we come together as a community and support one another through the difficult times ahead then we can all look forward to better times in 2021.

Thank you for your ongoing support.



Maggie Oldham, Chief Executive
Isle of Wight NHS Trust