

newsrelease

Outpatient appointments suspended at North Cumbria Integrated Care

North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust is suspending most outpatient appointments from today unless it is urgent.

As the number of patients with COVID-19 continues to increase in the trusts hospitals, the difficult decision has been made to suspend outpatient clinics at the Cumberland Infirmary, West Cumberland Hospital and community sites from Friday the 8th of January 2021.

Urgent appointments will still go ahead and will be assessed on a case by case basis. This will be for a period of two weeks and reviewed on a weekly basis. This will enable us to redeploy medical staff to the wards where extra support is required at this time.

Dr Rod Harpin, Medical Director at North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust, said:

"In the last week, we have seen a doubling of patients with COVID-19 being admitted into our hospitals and we are expecting this to increase in the coming weeks. Combined with the fact that many of our staff are having to self-isolate, this brings challenges in delivering our normal services. It is for that reason; we have taken the difficult decision to begin to stand down some routine services including all non-urgent outpatient clinics; and to redeploy staff from these services to assist in maintaining core and emergency services across our hospitals.

"We realise this can be distressing for patients awaiting appointments; however, this decision has been made to prioritise the safety and healthcare needs of our patients. We will endeavour to restart all services as soon as it is safe to do so and will continue to share regular updates. We thank all of our patients for their cooperation at this time."

The Trust is contacting all patients affected, so patients are not required to contact the Trust. If you have not been told your appointment has been cancelled, or you are invited to attend, please do so as this means your case will have been assessed and we would like to see you.

The Trust has strict infection prevention measures in place for your safety in the hospital, please wear a mask or face covering, available at the main entrances if you do not have one, use hand sanitisers on entry and exit, stick to the marked one way systems and stay 2m away from others.

- Choose our services wisely – if you have been invited for an appointment, please attend. The NHS is still here for you, but please choose the service most appropriate for their need when they need to access medical help. This includes:
 - 111 – this service provides 24 hour advice on any healthcare need
 - Pharmacy – think pharmacy first where there are trained professionals who can prescribe medicines and give advice
 - GP – for ongoing or persistent medical issues

- Minor injuries and Urgent Treatment centres – for urgent but not life-threatening issues
- A&E - for life-threatening and serious emergencies only.
- Maternity guidance - If you have any worries regarding your maternity care, your points of contact have not changed. Your midwife is here for you and will be able to discuss your queries.

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

We provide hospital and community health services to a population of around half a million people. We're responsible for delivering over 70 services across 15 main locations and we employ over 6500 members of staff.

The communications team contact is 01228 603890 or communications.helpdesk@ncic.nhs.uk