

Coronavirus – NHS Lothian action plan to provide extra beds

NHS Lothian announces action plan to deal with coronavirus (COVID-19)

NHS Lothian has today confirmed the steps it is taking to provide extra hospital beds, staff and training as a result of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

In line with other boards across Scotland, NHS Lothian is taking urgent action to ensure that the system is prepared to meet the challenges ahead for patients and staff.

Non-urgent procedures, such as elective gallbladder and hernia surgery, non-trauma orthopaedic surgery, such as hip and knee operations and elective gynaecological operations have been postponed to ensure beds are available for the sickest of patients.

Non-urgent outpatient and diagnostic appointments are being scaled back. For patients who are affected, they will be contacted by the relevant department in the coming days.

The number of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds will be increased, while extra beds to manage Covid-19 will also be opened up.

The number of doctors and nurses available is also to be boosted by offering short term contracts to bank staff, asking recently retired staff to return and working with senior nursing and medical students.

NHS Lothian stressed that the measures which have been

introduced would not impact maternity, emergency or cancer services.



Jim Crombie, Deputy Chief Executive, NHS Lothian, said work with colleagues in the four health and social care partnerships in Lothian was well advanced to reduce the number of patients who are waiting to be discharged home.

He added: “We know that this is a challenging and worrying time, but I hope that by sharing our plans, we can offer reassurance to the public that we are as well-prepared for the increased demands that coronavirus (COVID-19) is likely to cause.

“For many weeks now, we have already been working hard to increase capacity across our acute services, and many of the measures had already been deployed.

“I know that disruption to services, such as the postponement of non-elective procedures can be very frustrating and worrying for patients, but I would like to stress that these decisions have not been taken lightly.

“While coronavirus (COVID-19) will undoubtedly present ongoing challenges for our health service, I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you to all staff across NHS Lothian and our four Health and Social Care Partnerships. The dedication, commitment and flexibility that staff have shown in what is a difficult time is to be commended.”

[To stay up to date with the latest coronavirus \(COVID-19\) advice, visit NHS Inform here](#)

A free helpline has been set up for those who do not have symptoms but are looking for general health advice. This can be accessed by calling 0800 028 2816. The helpline is open Monday to Friday: 8:00am – 10:00pm, Saturday and Sunday:

8:00am – 6:00pm.