

# **Coronavirus outbreak reported at Western General Hospital**

## **NHS Lothian is investigating an outbreak of Covid-19 in a ward in the Western General Hospital.**

Sadly, a very small number of patients, who had tested positive for the virus, have since died. NHS Lothian say their thoughts are with their family. They are unable to be specific about the number because the total is fewer than five.

Six other patients have been confirmed with Covid-19 and the oncology ward has been closed to new admissions and discharges while investigations are underway and to allow tests to be carried out.

All patients have been told of the outbreak and contact tracing, where necessary for visitors or outpatients, is being carried out by NHS Lothian's Health Protection Team and the nationwide Test and Protect teams.

A multi-disciplinary Incident Management Team (IMT) has been set up and a series of robust and enhanced infection control measures have been put in place in the ward.

Rounds of routine Covid-19 screening of staff and patients are being carried out as part of the enhanced outbreak response to prevent the spread of the virus and minimise the risk to patients and staff.

Patients who would normally return home for the weekend to spend time with families and go back to the hospital on a Monday have been asked to remain in the hospital to reduce the risk of further transmission.

Dr Donald Inverarity, Consultant Microbiologist, NHS Lothian, and Chair of the IMT, said: "Our thoughts are with the family of the deceased and I would like to express our sincere condolences.

"A multidisciplinary Incident Management Team (IMT) was immediately established and all necessary infection control measures are in place. The situation will continue to be reviewed and monitored very closely.

"The enhanced outbreak testing regime allows us to identify staff and patients who have the virus before they become symptomatic.

"That gives us the opportunity to introduce enhanced infection control measures and barriers sooner than we would previously have been able. It allows staff to begin self-isolation and patients to be moved into co-horted groups before they become symptomatic, which in turn reduces the likelihood of passing on the infection to others.

"Patient safety is our main priority and while we understand that the request not to go home for the weekend may be upsetting, it is necessary. It will help reduce the risk of onwards transmission and protect their families and the wider community. I would like to thank patients and their families for their co-operation and understanding."