An important message from your local NHS regarding coronavirus

NHS

Dear friends of the NHS,

Your local NHS is currently under immense pressure from the impact of Covid-19.

Within our hospitals we are currently treating double the patients with Covid-19 than we did at the height of the first peak. More than a quarter of all our in-patients have the virus. The number requiring intensive care is also significantly higher than we saw during the summer. These are people of all ages and all backgrounds, and not all of them have pre-existing conditions.

This is in addition to the normal increases in seasonal illnesses we usually see at this time of year, with pressure being felt right the way across the local NHS including GP practices and community and mental health services. It also comes at a time when we are working around the clock to administer the Covid-19 vaccine to as many eligible people as possible, as quickly as we can.

It is physically and emotionally exhausting on doctors, nurses, healthcare assistants, porters and so many more who witness first hand the terrible effects of Covid. They have worked incredibly long hours, caring for people who are breathless and gasping for life. Too often they have witnessed the tragic death of someone's husband or wife, mother or father, son or daughter.

We're working hard to create as much additional capacity as we can, including intensive care, so that we can continue to care for as many patients as possible. But as the number of coronavirus cases goes up so does the risk of our hospitals and other local NHS services being overwhelmed.

We've been touched by the support and love shown for our NHS and social care heroes – as well as other frontline workers such our emergency services, teachers and shop assistants – throughout the pandemic. It has been genuinely humbling to see.

Many people have asked us what more they can do to show their support for our staff. Our message is simple: Covid-19 is spreading more easily and more quickly than before. It is vital that we bring infection rates down to curb the spread of the virus and protect patients and local services.

We know lockdown restrictions have been a burden and difficult for many people. We're grateful that the vast majority have complied with the rules. And whilst we now have a vaccination programme, which offers us the best hope of beating coronavirus, the impact of this will take time. So, for now, we must all carry on acting as though we have the virus to protect ourselves and others.

Don't think this virus cannot or will not affect you.

Please stay at home as much as you possibly can. Only go out it if it is genuinely essential. If you must go out wear a mask and stay as far away from others as you can, and at least 2 metres wherever possible. Keep on washing your hands thoroughly and regularly.

If you develop symptoms please book a test immediately and stay home until you receive the results. If you test positive you must isolate for 10 days.

We understand how tough it is. But following the guidance will help to keep you and your loved ones safe as well as helping to ensure that your local NHS can provide care to people who need it, whether as a result of coronavirus or another health issue.

Stay home. Protect the NHS. Save Lives.

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