

By email

12/03/2020

Covid-19 Update

Dear Provider,

As you may be aware there have been three confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the Wolverhampton area, with the sad news announced on Monday that one patient passed away. I wanted to write to you to provide some reassurance and clarity regarding COVID-19 as I understand that this may be concerning for providers of community and residential/nursing care services, who may be anxious about patients returning to care from New Cross Hospital.

Public Health England (PHE), The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust (RWT), NHS Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group (WCCG) and the City of Wolverhampton Council (CoWC) have been working in partnership preparing for and expecting cases for some time, in line with national guidance.

We would like to assure all providers that the vast majority of discharges will have had no specific exposure to coronavirus, and are able to return home or to their care facility with no extra precautions.

For the small number of patients who are well but may be a potential contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 they will need a short period of observation when they return to their usual care setting. This will be an early identification of the following symptoms:

- cough
- difficulty in breathing
- fever
- unexplained Flu like symptoms – such as aches and pains of muscles and joints

The infection prevention and control team based at The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust will provide all appropriate advice for care providers before discharge. Most contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases do not go on to develop any infection, and can, if you follow the advice given from the discharging team, be cared for safely outside of hospital.

If an individual does become unwell, or you may be concerned about, please contact the Rapid Intervention Team at The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust. A team will come and

assess the individual and will provide an appropriate plan for their care. You can contact the team on 01902 446647.

In general, it is much safer for a patient to be discharged to their usual home environment rather than remaining as an inpatient at the hospital given the risks that the patient may be exposed to by staying in hospital unnecessarily.

The majority of care settings/providers in Wolverhampton have now been contacted directly with support and advice, but we would like to assure you that all decisions in the context of this issue are made with complete regard to keeping care providers in the community safe and supported. All advice issued is based on expert advice and mutual consensus between Public Health England and Infection Prevention specialists at RWT. We will continue to engage with providers and keep you updated.

We would encourage you to ensure your business continuity plans are up to date. If in the unfortunate circumstance a member of your staff or a patient does develop symptoms of COVID-19, there is clear guidance on the steps to take, and we will support you during this process. The guidance for social or community care and residential settings on COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

The risk of infection is still low, and partners are working at a local, regional and national level to help reduce the risk of further cases. Good hand hygiene is the best prevention and we are encouraging everyone to wash their hands regularly and thoroughly using soap and water for at least 20 seconds at a time, as well as covering their mouth and nose when coughing with a tissue, and disposing of it immediately before washing their hands.

If you have any questions regarding the information in the letter, please do not hesitate to contact Sally Roberts, Chief Nurse and Director of Quality, NHS Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group, sally.roberts11@nhs.net / 01902 444741

Links to relevant PHE guidance:

- Current cases and risk - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>
- Guidance for health professionals and other organisations - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>
- Decontamination in non-healthcare settings - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>
- Guidance for healthcare providers who have staff with relevant travel, healthcare or household contact history - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-guidance-for-healthcare-providers-with-staff-who-have-travelled-to-china>

Thank you,

Sally Roberts
Chief Nurse and Director of Quality
BCWB STP Board Nurse
NHS Wolverhampton CCG

Sent on behalf of:
City of Wolverhampton Council
Clinical Commissioning Group
Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust
Public Health England West Midlands