**Information about planned (routine) care and referrals to local hospitals**

We acknowledge that this is a difficult time for many of our patients who may be waiting for routine treatment at Airedale Hospital or Bradford Royal Infirmary.

The NHS is working extremely hard at the moment to once again respond to a high number of coronavirus cases, and make sure that care is delivered in the safest way for our patients. At the moment, they need to focus on caring for those patients admitted with coronavirus, as well as help patients with the most urgent and emergency care needs, cancers and maternity care.

We want to reassure you that the hospital that you have been referred to will be in touch with further information about your care and treatment.

We would like to thank everyone for their continued patience and understanding at this difficult time.

**Information from Airedale Hospital**

You can read further information about the temporary pause of non-urgent operations at Airedale Hospital on their website: <http://www.airedale-trust.nhs.uk/blog/suspension-of-non-urgent-operations-for-two-weeks-27-october-2020/>

**Information from Bradford Hospitals**

You can read further information about the temporary pause of non-urgent operations and outpatient appointments at Bradford Hospitals on their website: <https://www.bradfordhospitals.nhs.uk/2020/11/04/bradford-teaching-hospitals-suspends-some-non-urgent-surgery-and-outpatient-appointments-following-covid-rise/>

**What to do if you need help while you wait**

NHS services are still here to help while you wait for your care and treatment.

If you have an existing referral, or are waiting to be seen at one of our hospitals, please contact the department listed on your last patient letter.

If you are yet to be referred and notice changed in your condition, or things are getting worse, please contact us at the GP practice, we are still here to help. We are doing lots of appointments over the phone or by video consultation, but you will be seen face to face if needed.

You can also still go into your pharmacy for advice on lots of conditions such as common colds, headaches, minor aches and pains. You don’t need to book an appointment and they can give you expert advice on which medicine(s) may be best to help. Please wear a face covering when you go to your pharmacy and follow their guidance to stay safe.

If you need urgent help, or don’t know where to go, you can use NHS 111 online – [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk/) – or call NHS 111 if you do not have access to the internet. They are open 24/7 and it’s free to call. Their expert advisors will either give you advice over the phone, or direct you to the most appropriate service near you who can help.

The [nhs.uk website](https://www.nhs.uk/) also has lots of advice and information on a number of conditions, including a symptom checker.

Staying healthy while you wait is one of the most important things you can do. This includes, keeping a healthy weight, stopping smoking, exercising more (if your condition allows) and reducing alcohol intake. There is lots of advice on keeping well on the NHS Better Health website - <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/>

**How services are working now**

If you do come to an NHS service at the moment, you will notice that we are working differently to keep our patients and staff safe, and minimise the risk of coronavirus spreading.

Just some of the extra things we are doing to keep you safe include:

* Offering telephone and video consultations wherever possible
* Introducing social distancing measures, which means less people can be in the same area at the same time
* Using additional personal protective equipment (PPE) which means it takes our staff longer to get ready for appointments, and change PPE after each appointment
* Following extra hygiene measures, which means we need to take more time to clean down following each appointment.

**What to do if you wish to raise a concern**

Each service is being reviewed regularly to ensure that, when we can open safely to more patients, we do so.

However, if you wish to raise a concern or a complaint, we would urge you to speak to the service whose care you are under – this will be stated on your last patient letter. This will allow the service to have the first opportunity to help you and resolve any concern you have about their services or decisions that have been made about your care and treatment.

If you feel that you have not had your concern or complaint resolved you can speak to the patient support teams at the following organisations:

* Airedale NHS Foundation Trust (Airedale General Hospital) - <http://www.airedale-trust.nhs.uk/contact-us/complaints-and-compliments/complaints/>
* Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Bradford Royal Infirmary and St Luke’s Hospital) - <https://www.bradfordhospitals.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-experience/>
* NHS Bradford District and Craven CCG - <https://www.bradfordcravenccg.nhs.uk/patients/how-we-can-help-you/patient-support-line/>

We would like to reassure you that your NHS is #StillHereToHelp while you wait, and we thank you for your continued patience and understanding at this time.