

16th February

Dear friends and relatives,

January 2021 has been a very difficult time for patients, their loved ones, and for staff at Holy Cross.

Covid-19 impacted on the hospital more heavily than before. We believe that asymptomatic transmission, the increased transmissibility of the Kent variant and the general prevalence of coronavirus in early January were all factors. Patients who tested positive (and who are out of self-isolation) have now recovered. But very sadly the outbreak did not pass by without loss.....and for staff, some are still on the journey back to health.

Vaccinations:

The majority patients and staff were vaccinated with their first dose on 21st January. Arrangements are in place for doctors to vaccinate patients who were either deemed at risk, or for those who had contracted Covid and were unable to have the vaccine at the time. We will update you when we have finalised the details. We expect second doses to be administered around Easter time and will confirm in due course.

Covid tests:

PCR Tests - We continue to test patients and staff on a weekly basis using the PCR method. Negative results have been returned for all patients and staff over the last two weeks. Lateral Flow Tests – The NHS has provided Holy Cross with lateral flow tests for staff. These can provide results within 30 minutes (although with less reliability than the PCR method) – again results are negative.

Staff Returning to work and Clinical Interventions:

We are back up to 80% of our clinical staffing levels, with numbers improving weekly. Because staff are returning gradually, treatments are provided on a priority basis at the present time.

Outpatients:

As part of minimising risk to patients and staff, we closed outpatient physiotherapy services before Christmas. We are reviewing these arrangements with the possibility of reopening in March.

Vigilance:

Things are beginning to return to more familiar ways of working, yet we remain vigilant. Enhanced cleaning and all other precautions remain in place.

Visiting arrangements:

We keep visiting arrangements under constant review and will contact you next week after the UK Government's announcement on the 22nd February. We hope to provide a plan soon after, and look forward to welcoming you back to Holy Cross in the not too distant future.

Finally, our thoughts and prayers are with those experiencing bereavement, and also with colleagues who are still on the road to recovery.

Kind regards

Ross White – CEO, Holy Cross

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.