

Our Ref: FC/CP
Date: 5 June 2020

Radiology & MIS Clinical Services Unit
1st Floor, Lincoln Wing
St James's University Hospital
Beckett Street
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS9 7TF

Direct Line: (0113) 2065229

Dear Colleague

RE: COVID-19 PANDEMIC RECOVERY PHASE - UPDATE ON RADIOLOGY SERVICES

As you will be aware from previous communications, all routine diagnostic tests, including Radiology, were suspended for a 12-week period between March-June 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This had taken place across all Trusts regionally and nationally that were affected by the pandemic, as per National directives from NHS England.

During this period, we have continued to undertake all urgent and 2-week wait requests for imaging. However, as a consequence of a concurrent reduction in clinical activity in surgeries and clinics across all specialties, we found that at the nadir, we were only receiving about 25% of the usual volume of referrals in these categories of patients as well.

As the initial COVID-19 peak has now passed, we have entered a period of recovery across all of our services including diagnostics, with our initial priority being the longest waiting patients. In Radiology, this 'backlog' includes almost 18,000 routine category patients across all modalities and referring services. As part of this process, you will be aware that a list of routine patients whose tests were postponed was sent out to individual GP practices. Thank you for providing clinical triage and revalidation of those requests. Our administrative teams have been contacting these patients to arrange appointments and ensure that they are brought back into our departments safely to have their imaging undertaken. **Please note that if you have not returned this list to us with updated clinical validation, these scans will potentially face further delays, so we would urge that these lists are returned to us as soon as possible.** As per the previous communication, please send back this information (in a batch as far as possible) in an e-mail communication to d.langler@nhs.net, m.heer@nhs.net or agata.wiorowska@nhs.net.

Chairman Linda Pollard CBE DL LLD

Chief Executive Julian Hartley

In the next phase of our recovery, we will open to new routine referrals from primary care from 22 June 2020. IMPORTANT: Please note that there will be no walk-in services, e.g. x-ray, and all requests will need to be made electronically on ICE.

We usually see between 45,000-50,000 patients coming through our imaging services every month, with one of the highest utilisation rates of scanners of any Radiology department in the country. However, it is clear that for the foreseeable future, we will be operating under considerable constraints in order to maintain a COVID-19 'protected' environment for patients and staff, with need for patient screening, social distancing, use of PPE, cleaning of scanning equipment, maintaining 'cold' and 'hot' patient flow, etc. We also have ongoing staffing challenges, e.g. about 9-10% of our workforce are shielding, and about 33-40% of our medical workforce, who are from a BME background, are undergoing individual risk assessments which may require some modification to their work that may also impact upon our service capacity. **Given these considerable challenges, we would anticipate that our overall capacity will be reduced by 30-50%, with some important modalities, e.g. CT, worse affected than others for some weeks to come.**

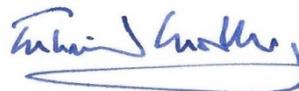
We are working extremely hard to find new ways of working to minimise the disruptions and delays, including use of the CT facilities in the Independent Sector and the Nightingale Hospital in Harrogate. We are also monitoring the imaging capacity and demand on a weekly basis to ensure that we expedite our recovery phase as far as possible and continue to deliver a high-quality and safe service to our patients.

We will need your ongoing assistance and understanding that strict clinical triage prior to imaging request will be required to ensure that prompt access to imaging continues to be available for those who require it.

Please also be aware that some patients are extremely reluctant at present to come into the hospital environment for routine tests, so if you feel that the patient falls into this category consider deferring the referral until a stage when they are more willing to attend, as we are seeing an increased DNA rate for appointments.

More information is provided in appendices attached to this letter, which we hope you will find helpful. We remain very grateful for your help and cooperation in these extraordinary times.

Yours faithfully



Catherine Cotton, General Manager | Penny Dutton, Head of Profession |
Fahmid Chowdhury, Clinical Director
Radiology & MIS Clinical Services Unit

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Chief Executive Julian Hartley

The Leeds Teaching Hospitals Incorporating: Chapel Allerton Hospital Leeds Dental Institute Seacroft Hospital
St. James's University Hospital The General Infirmary at Leeds Wharfedale Hospital

APPENDIX 1: IMAGING TESTS AVAILABLE TO PRIMARY CARE REFERRERS ON ICE FROM 22 JUNE 2020

IMPORTANT: PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL REQUESTS MUST BE MADE ON ICE - THERE IS NO 'WALK-IN' SERVICE

Plain x-ray

Diagnostic plain x-rays available:

All plain film examinations

Site where these tests will be provided to GP referrals:

SEA/ WGH/ CAH/ limited capacity at SJUH and LGI sites

DEXA

Site where this test will be provided to GP referrals:

WGH/ limited capacity at LGI initially

Ultrasound

Diagnostic U/S Scans available:

All Abdominal, Pelvis, Head and Neck, Vascular, Paediatric, MSK, Small Parts, Obstetric and Early Pregnancy.

Site where these tests will be provided to GP referrals:

SJUH / LGI / CAH / WGH/ SEA

CT

Diagnostic CT scans available:

Please follow all GP CT pathways as before

Site where these tests will be provided to GP referrals:

LGI/ SJUH

MRI

Diagnostic MRI scans available:

Please follow all GP MRI pathways as before

Site where these will be provided to GP referrals:

SJUH/ LGI/ CAH

Nuclear Medicine

Diagnostic NM Scans available:

Radioisotope bone scan

Site where these tests will be provided to GP referrals:

SJUH

Please note that there are duty general and sub-specialist Radiology Consultants on site at both SJUH and LGI who can provide advice and guidance on imaging requests.

Radiology office manager numbers: (0113) 20 64894 and (0113) 20 66802

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APPENDIX 2: COVID DIAGNOSTIC LETTER - INFORMATION BEING SENT TO PATIENTS WITH TEST APPOINTMENTS

Radiology Booking Office
Lincoln Wing
St James University Hospital
Beckett Street
Leeds
LS9 7TF

Diagnostic test appointment and COVID-19

Enclosed is a letter offering you an appointment for a Diagnostic test. In light of the recent Covid-19 pandemic we are changing many ways of working to ensure the safety of patients and staff. It is extremely important that you read this letter and the accompanying appointment letter and ensure any preparation which is required prior to your test is completed.

If prior to your appointment you or anyone in your household develops symptoms that might be related to Covid-19 please **do not come into hospital**. Ring the booking team on the contact number on your appointment letter and we will rebook your appointment.

Covid-19 symptoms

A high temperature

You don't need a thermometer or to know a precise temperature. If you feel hot to touch on your chest or back

A new continuous cough

New: means a cough that you've not had before, or if you usually have a cough, it's got worse.

Continuous: means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours.

Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

This means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

In line with government guidance we are doing everything we can to maintain social distancing rules. **Please do not come early for your appointment**, attending no more than 10 minutes prior to the expected appointment time. If your letter asks you to come early for any preparation, please follow those specific instructions.

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We kindly ask that where possible and appropriate only the patient attend the department for the appointment in order to minimise the number of people in the hospital. Where carer support is needed please ensure numbers are kept to a minimum.

There are some steps that you can take to protect yourself and others from the spread of coronavirus.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after using public transport. Use a sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.
- Always carry tissues with you and use them to catch your cough or sneeze. Then bin the tissue, and wash your hands, or use a sanitiser gel.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell.

If you think you have the symptoms of coronavirus, such as a high temperature or a new continuous cough, please use the new online advice hub that can tell you if you need medical help: <https://111.nhs.uk/service/COVID-19/>

We thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter and if you have any questions please contact us.