

Covid-19 (Coronavirus) – St Luke’s response

I’m sure that you have been following the spread of Covid-19 and the wall-to-wall coverage in the media. There is a lot being said about the disease, the response to it both in the UK and across the world, and how we should be acting as individuals to best combat it. Some is clear guidance, some is supposition, and some is hearsay.

What we know is:

- Covid-19 is spreading rapidly across the world and is now doing so across the UK
- It has been labelled as a notifiable disease – so it isn’t trivial or to be ignored
- That for some people – especially the elderly and those who are more vulnerable because of other conditions – it has a much higher death rate than other similar viruses.

You will be aware that St Luke’s has been sharing guidance from Public Health England as this has developed, and that we’ve been working on plans to help us cope as and when the disease takes effect in Sheffield. Listed below are the actions that will be taking effect imminently:

1. Services and relocation of activities

In order to ensure that we protect our key clinical services both in the community and for our in-patients, we’re taking the following actions:

- From Wednesday 18 March St Luke’s Little Common Lane site will be partitioned with the ground and upper floor (and parts of the lower ground floor) under the control of clinical management, tasked with maintaining this as a Safe Bubble for patients, visitors, and the clinical and support teams. The lower corridor will be partitioned, ensuring separate entrances and safe exits for those working there.

ONLY AUTHORISED EMPLOYEES WILL BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE SAFE BUBBLE AND INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES WILL ESCALATE AS NECESSARY AND BE MANDATORY FOR ALL EMPLOYEES ACCESSING IT.

- To facilitate this, the AIC will suspend its normal activities after Friday 13 March until further notice. In addition St Luke’s Retail operations will relocate away from Little Common Lane from the same date, again until further notice.
- Clifford House will suspend normal client activities after Thursday 12 March, although it will still be in use for meetings after this date if these can be delivered safely, with attendees being required to undertake screening. It is likely that the House might be used for other purposes as the situation develops, and this will be communicated when determined.
- From Wednesday 18 March no external meetings will be held at Little Common Lane, these being redirected to Clifford House if safe to do so.

We hope to provide some support services (eg phonenumber) for those patients and clients affected by these changes.

2. Volunteers

St Luke's volunteers are vital to our charity and we know that they are passionate about our cause.

However, we recognise that a large proportion of our volunteers fall into the age and vulnerability categories where Covid-19 is most dangerous. We also recognise that the changes we are making to create the safe clinical space at Little Common Lane will have a significant impact upon many volunteer roles. As a result, we are taking the following actions:

- Little Common Lane and Clifford House volunteers

Any volunteers whose role involves being physically present to deliver services at Little Common Lane or Clifford House will be stood down from those duties from the above dates, until it is deemed safe to recommence. No volunteer will lose their place as a result of this instruction. Volunteers affected will be advised as soon as possible.

Little Common Lane-based volunteers whose roles can continue safely and with appropriate oversight without the need to be physically present in the building will be given clear instructions on how their services may continue, and at what location.

- Retail volunteers

Retail volunteers will continue to be managed and supported through their retail managers, and their safety will be taken into account on a shop-by-shop basis overseen by the Head of Retail.

Volunteers will be able to stay in touch with the Volunteering Team at St Luke's through Joy Wigfield and her team. We look forward to normality being restored and welcoming back all those volunteers affected by these temporary changes.

3. Employees

The changes above will require the relocation of some employees to maintain the integrity of the Safe Bubble, with certain employees being located within the Bubble and others outside it to best support services across St Luke's.

At this stage we are not expecting an immediate wholesale move to 'home working' for relevant employees. However, we expect this will happen at some point, and we also expect that we will need to redeploy some employees to maintain services, safely as and when the need arises. Each manager is developing their action plan.

It is vital that all employees follow their managers' guidance and adhere to St Luke's policies and instructions – in particular with regard to reporting sickness, remaining in contact whilst working away from the office, and following good hygiene advice. Employees should continue to attend their place of work until told otherwise.

We hope to facilitate home working with suitable IT services wherever possible.

Employees still attending Little Common Lane and Clifford House might find that some facilities (eg the restaurant) will no longer be accessible to them. We will try to arrange

alternative facilities where possible, but that cannot be guaranteed and so it will be up to employees to make appropriate alternative arrangements.

From Wednesday 18 March we will be asking staff not to park on Little Common Lane in order to provide social distancing from our neighbours. Segregation of parking spaces will be introduced between staff working in the Safe Bubble and those working outside it. We will also be reviewing the use and segregation of designated smoking spaces. Instructions will be circulated regarding these issues as soon as possible.

4. Looking forward

We have no idea how Covid-19 will spread, nor how it will affect us. Our priorities are to stay safe and, as far as possible, to deliver the key services that our patients and families will need. We rely on everyone following instructions and guidance. Thank you for doing so.

We are taking this issue very seriously and the changes we are announcing are not taken lightly. Clearly things will change and we will let you know as a when they do.

If you have any queries, please speak with your manager in the first instance.

I hope that you and your family stay safe throughout.

Kind regards,

Peter

Peter Hartland

Chief Executive

11 March 2020