

## **INFORMATION ON YOUR APPOINTMENT**

### **Waiting Times**

We would firstly like to sincerely apologise about the length of your wait to be seen. We understand the impact of delaying medical care, but please let us reassure you that we are committed to doing everything we can to provide the best medical care possible during these most challenging of times.

COVID-19 has resulted in unprecedented pressures on the whole NHS and many of our services have been unable to operate at their usual capacity, meaning that waiting times are longer. This is not just due to the need to allocate the resources required to treat patients with COVID-19 in our hospitals. Other ways we have been impacted include the need to reduce the number of patients we can see each day in order to maintain social distancing, the result of the extensive additional infection prevention controls implemented in our hospitals, and availability and absences of staff, including cases where staff have needed to self-isolate in accordance with Government guidelines.

We would like to thank you for your patience so far and reassure you that you have not been forgotten. We are working through our waiting lists and you will be seen as soon as possible. We are continually reviewing individual cases and are prioritising patients who need care more urgently; we ask for your understanding with this. We will contact you as quickly as we can.

We are increasingly delivering more non-emergency services, such as planned operations, outpatient appointments and diagnostic tests. Patients who require urgent treatment, have cancer, or are in a vulnerable group will be prioritised.

### **Your Appointment**

If we need to make changes to your appointment we will try and let you know in plenty of time. We will try not to postpone any appointments or procedures that have been booked, but if your appointment is cancelled, we will make sure you know why this has happened.

If your condition has got worse whilst you have been waiting, or you are worried about new symptoms, please contact us. Our clinical team will review your symptoms and will contact you to make a telephone or outpatient appointment.

For non-urgent advice you can also call NHS 111 – or access the online advice hub that can tell you if you need medical help by visiting: <https://111.nhs.uk/>

Emergency departments are open and treatment is available day and night, seven days a week, in cases where immediate emergency care is needed.

If you think you no longer need an appointment, please contact us using the telephone number on your original appointment letter. This is important, so that we can use that time to see other patients.