



Salisbury
NHS Foundation Trust

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Open letter to patients and members of the public

Salisbury District Hospital continues to experience intense pressure

Salisbury District Hospital continues to experience intense pressure as it treats an ever rising number of COVID-19 positive patients. We are now treating over 100 patients that have tested positive - this is over double the number we saw in the first wave and equal to over 25% of all our inpatients. And the number is rising daily. In addition we have now recorded 99 deaths where the patient had tested positive.

To me and all my colleagues at the hospital this data is more than simple numbers, behind every number is a person with a family, friends and neighbours, all of whom are either worried about their loved ones health or are mourning a life cut short.

In order to continue to provide care for those suffering the severe impact of COVID-19 infection and those with other critical conditions, we are having to make changes to the way the hospital works and how we prioritise who we can treat. To that end we are now limiting the number of surgical procedures we undertake. Sadly this means we are having to postpone some operations. We will continue to perform all cancer, high priority, emergency and trauma surgery. By making this difficult decision we can continue to provide professional, compassionate care when it is most needed.

We will contact you if your appointment has been postponed. If you do not hear from us please attend as planned.

If you are feeling unwell please contact the NHS by calling 111, your GP or in an emergency 999. Our A&E remains open 24/7 to treat emergencies and the hospital continues to provide critical and urgent care, and of course our maternity team never stop delivering babies.

We've been dealing with this pandemic day in and day out for almost 10 months, it's exhausting, it feels relentless and it has impacted all areas of our lives, both at work and at home. I know that this must be taking its toll on the whole community. That's why it's so important we continue to look out for one another, be kind and support each other wherever we can.

In all parts of the NHS and across partner organisations staff are working through extraordinary times and regularly going above and beyond to care for patients, residents in care homes and numerous other settings. Every day the team at Salisbury Hospital amaze me with their professionalism, compassion and flexibility. As we ask staff across the hospital to work in different ways and in an ever changing environment they consistently step up to

the challenge. My heartfelt thanks goes out to every member of staff and all those that support them at home and in their personal lives.

While the situation is serious, the vaccination programme offers real hope that things will begin to get better soon. Across the NHS the vaccination teams are working hard to vaccinate as many of the over 80s, high priority NHS staff and care home workers as quickly as possible. I encourage everyone that receives an invitation from the NHS to be vaccinated to accept. It is through a wide spread and successful vaccination campaign that we will be able to start getting our lives back to normal. However, please do not contact your GP or hospital to ask about the vaccine, the NHS will contact you with an invitation when it is your turn.

With such a rapid rise of COVID-19 in the community, and with such high numbers of patients in our hospital, we must remain extra vigilant and continue to do all we can to protect each other from this new infectious strain. This means limiting the amount of contact we have with other people and adhering to all the lockdown regulations and continue to follow the hands, face and space guidance at work and at home.

Together we can protect our friends and family, beat the virus and eventually get back to normal.

Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stacey Hunter', written in a cursive style.

Stacey Hunter
Chief Executive, Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust