

Staff Briefing

Derbyshire health and care system declares Critical Incident and announces measures to protect patient safety

Due to the significant and sustained demand for a number of services, the Derbyshire health and care system has declared a critical incident and is taking additional steps to prioritise and maintain safe services for patients. This decision was taken at 5.23pm on Wednesday 20th July. The system's Gold and Silver command is in operation to manage the incident, working in conjunction with NHS England. The critical incident status will be kept under review.

We continue to see an increased number of patients arriving at hospital by ambulance, extended waiting times to access beds in our hospitals and difficulties discharging patients due to lack of capacity across our care sector.

Our aim is to prioritise patients with the highest level of need and ensure that we continue to be able to manage emergency care. This means that we will need to postpone some non-urgent operations where patients require a stay in hospital to accommodate those patients with the most urgent clinical need.

We are very sorry we have had to take this step but it is important that we focus on patients needing urgent and emergency care. If patients are not contacted directly, they should continue to attend their appointment.

Health and care services continue to work together to resolve the situation, and there are steps everyone can take to help.

What members of the public can do to help

Our teams continue to work exceptionally hard and we would like to reassure our patients and the public that despite the challenges faced and the changes highlighted, essential services remain fully open for anyone who needs them so if someone requires urgent medical help, they should continue to come forward.

Other things which everyone can do to help the NHS right now, include:

- Only call 999 or attend accident and emergency departments for serious accidents and for genuine emergencies.
- When needing urgent medical care but it's not an emergency, [visit NHS 111 online](#) or call NHS111 for advice on how to get care at any time of day or night.

- Urgent treatment centres – like the ones at Florence Nightingale, Ilkeston, Ripley, Samuel Johnson and Robert Peel Community Hospitals can help get the care needed for dealing with the most common issues that people attend emergency departments for. They will often be able to help get the care needed more quickly than accident and emergency departments if suffering from things like a burn or a sprain.
- For other non-urgent cases when needing medical advice and it's not an emergency, speak to your GP practice or a pharmacist.
- Please continue to treat all NHS and care staff with the respect they deserve. Our hard-working staff and volunteers are doing all they can to keep patients safe and supported.
- If unable to make any NHS appointment, please contact the number on appointment letters so that it can be reallocated to another patient.

Services are also expecting to see an after effect from the recent record high temperatures, with exacerbations of respiratory illnesses, so there may be further measures introduced in the coming days to ensure we can maintain urgent care for the most acutely ill patients. We are encouraging neighbours and friends and family to check on anyone who has an existing respiratory condition, to ensure they are okay and not suffering from additional wheeziness or shortness of breath. If anyone has these symptoms, please contact NHS 111 to seek clinical advice. It is essential that they receive treatment early and seek to prevent an admission to hospital.

