

Draft example template letter to Patients informing about change in service

This is an example only. To be adapted accordingly in line with your agreed local arrangements.

We are writing this to inform you that in light of the Covid-19 pandemic it has been decided to stop all non-urgent clinical work within the NHS, to focus on only life or limb-saving treatments, to enable us to tackle this unprecedented situation. It is imperative that NHS resources are now diverted to looking after sick and vulnerable patients to help us treat and prevent the spread of this disease. Most of the doctors working in the pain clinics are anaesthetists and as such their skills and expertise are required to support colleagues in intensive care units, acute medical wards and in theatres. This is necessary to deal with the increasing number of cases that are being admitted to hospitals who require ventilatory support and also to manage patients who are seriously ill with organ failure. Most of the nursing staff and healthcare assistants working within pain clinics are also likely to be redeployed in other clinical areas and will not be available to work in such clinics.

We have decided to suspend all Face-to-Face clinic consultations as well as Pain Interventional Procedures and Pain Management Programmes to limit the spread of the virus. We are fully aware that some of you have been waiting for quite some time for your scheduled appointment at the pain clinic, so we have not taken this decision lightly. The aim will be to try and offer Telephone/ Skype/ Facetime/ Virtual clinic consultations so as to minimise the impact of clinic cancellations and appropriate advice and prescriptions could be delivered via a nominated local pharmacy, an online NHS pharmacy or your GP practice.

Those of you who have symptoms or have been exposed to a contact with suspected infection are strongly advised not to attend the pain clinic and should follow procedures as advised by the Department of Health and your local health authority.

At this point in time, we are unsure when normal services can be resumed (we hope this will not be prolonged) and we shall be guided by the Department of Health and the World Health Organisation. We aim to continue to support you through various resources as best as we can, though your patience is requested since most medical staff will be involved in managing very sick patients. In the meantime, please continue to stay active whilst ensuring that you are following the guidance on preventing the spread of Covid-19. Please take care of yourselves and your loved ones at this difficult time. Should you need further advice the following online resources will give you some pointers on self-management of your pain.

These links, if typed into your web browser, will take you to some useful videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/HunterBrainman/videos>
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXTg1eVjEp06jyz3mNKRtIA>
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8BjHclD7geGhiKixXwdzuw>
<https://www.paintoolkit.org/resources/for-patients>
<http://my.livewellwithpain.co.uk/>