



Belfast Health and
Social Care Trust

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Statement: Temporary changes to the Mater Hospital's Covid Intensive Care Unit

DATE 23.04.21

STARTS

In the last few months the number of people admitted to hospital with Covid-19 has reduced significantly. The number of patients with Covid requiring intensive care has also steadily dropped. There are currently a small number of patients in Intensive Care (ICU) in Northern Ireland with Covid, and none currently in Belfast Trust.

We have always said that our plan to combat the pandemic needs to be agile and flexible and our staff are the very example of this. Contrary to what was anticipated, we are not experiencing or now expecting a significant increase in the number of Covid patients requiring ICU in the very near future. We are therefore, from Monday 26 April, able to temporarily stand down our Covid ICU in the Mater Hospital.

Our plan is flexible. Should we have 3 or more patients with Covid needing ICU and who are not under the care of one of the regional specialities in the Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH), we will trigger the reinstating of the Covid ICU in the Mater. If there are less than 3 patients with Covid requiring ICU, we will care for them in ICU in the RVH. The Mater Hospital remains the primary hospital in Belfast Trust treating and caring for Covid patients. That is not changing.

The pandemic has taken a huge toll on our ability to provide surgery over the last number of months. By temporarily standing down the Mater's Covid ICU we are able to provide an ICU in Belfast City Hospital. This will enable us to ensure more patients who are waiting for urgent, complex surgery and oncology care with the need for ICU support will be treated. We will continue to work within the Critical Care Network for Northern Ireland (CCaNNI) and will keep our plan under continual review to meet the needs of the population who need ICU care.

The currently low number of Covid-19 hospital admissions is also indicative of how much effort has gone into combatting the disease across every aspect of society in Northern Ireland. We urge everyone to continue to follow public health advice: wash your hands frequently, wear a face covering, keep your social distance. And while we know the course of the pandemic is not yet over, we want take the time today to again thank our staff for their herculean efforts over the past year in the fight against Covid-19 and its ever changing landscape.

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