

**PRESS STATEMENT ISSUED BY UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL SOUTHAMPTON NHS
FOUNDATION TRUST**

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**HOSPITAL TRUST TRANSFORMS EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AS PART OF
COVID-19 RESPONSE**

The emergency department at University Hospital Southampton has been transformed as part of preparations to manage COVID-19.

From this week, all patients who self-present or are referred by their GP are now assessed in the marquee outside of the department.

Patients of all ages with respiratory symptoms are sent via a new corridor to the current adult department, while all patients without respiratory symptoms are sent to what is normally the children's emergency department.

Those brought in by ambulance are split on arrival between those with respiratory symptoms and those without and follow the same routes.

For patients who require admission, the acute medical unit and same day emergency care (SDEC) unit are used solely for patients with respiratory symptoms.

A separate acute medical unit has been established for patients with no respiratory symptoms.

This follows an announcement last week that adult patients attending the emergency department with minor injuries are now diverted to urgent treatment centres at the Royal South Hants and Lymington hospitals.

This does not include children, who will continue to be seen for minor injuries – including burns – at the emergency department as normal.

In addition, eye casualty remains open for urgent eye problems while patients due for ophthalmology outpatients are being triaged on clinical need, with those who still require a face-to-face appointment being asked to continue to attend following a “worrying drop” in numbers.

“In just a couple of weeks we have completely changed the footprint of the emergency department and we want to share the positive message that so much care and attention to detail has gone into our plans and preparations to manage COVID-19,” said Professor Robert Crouch, a consultant nurse in emergency medicine and deputy director of major trauma at UHS.

However, he also urged people to remember the department is still open to patients with other urgent healthcare needs after seeing attendances at the department drop significantly over the past three weeks.

“While it is really positive to see everyone heeding the national guidance on staying home to curb the spread of coronavirus, it is equally as important people who have an urgent medical problem do not delay seeking help,” he said.

“The message for everyone is that we are extremely well prepared, we have planned effectively and we are here to help patients of all ages who are seriously unwell, not just those with COVID-19 symptoms.”

Dr Clarissa Chase, a consultant in paediatric emergency medicine, added: “We want to remind everyone the children’s emergency department and other relevant children’s services remain open as normal and parents shouldn’t delay coming to us.”

More information for parents about services at Southampton Children’s Hospital is available on our [website](#).

<https://www.dailyecho.co.uk/news/18365680.emergency-department-transformed-university-hospital-southampton-manage-covid-19/>