

CEOs, MDs and COOs Kent, Surrey and Sussex Acute Trusts
Sent by email

6 April 2020

Dear colleagues

This letter is to support the timely referral of appropriate cancer and trauma patients to QVH. I would be grateful if you could cascade it to all those in your organisation who need this information.

Cancer surgery – head and neck, breast and skin cancers

As communicated by Anne Eden, Regional Director South East, in her letter dated 24 March 2020, during this period of management of the COVID19 pandemic QVH is a surgical cancer centre for head and neck, breast and skin cancers from across Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

Attached are the standard operating procedures (SOPs) to support referrals in these specialisms.

- Head and neck SOP and referral pro-forma (word version of pro-forma attached)
- Skin SOP (standard referral required)
- Breast SOP and related pro-forma (word version of pro-forma attached)

These have been developed with and approved by the South East Region COVID-19 management of cancer cell; Chris Tibbs, Medical Director, specialist commissioning South East Region; Surrey and Sussex Cancer Alliance; Kent and Medway Cancer Alliance.

For admitted patients please note the COVID-19 screening process agreed with Cancer Alliances and NHS England to help protect patients. For head and neck cancer surgery patients the PCR swabbing process will be conducted at QVH. For breast cancer patients the referring organisation needs to arrange the PCR swab, as set out in the SOP. We appreciate there are issues with access currently and these are being escalated by Cancer Alliances. We are therefore also asking that patients self-isolate for up to 14 days to help mitigate the risk, and patients will be CT chest scanned at QVH on the day of admission.

Any exceptions to the screening process will need to be considered on a case by case basis.

We are very pleased to be able to support continued timely treatment for cancer patients at this difficult time.

Trauma and acute conditions – hand, maxillofacial, eyes, burns

In addition, we will also continue to provide services for hand trauma, maxillofacial trauma, and acute eye conditions, as well as burns, expanding these services to a wider catchment across Kent, Surrey and Sussex, focusing on urgent and emergency treatment.

To manage trauma separately from our cancer patients and increase capacity, we are working with the McIndoe Centre, the Horder Healthcare private provider on our East Grinstead site.



We hope this will reduce some of the pressure on your operating capacity and emergency departments at this difficult time.

Attached are further details of the services that we are providing for trauma together with the process for accessing those services

Screening

Please note that to enable us to continue to provide these services we have had to put in additional processes to try to ensure that we minimise COVID-19 exposure at QVH. We are unable to accept any patients who are known to be COVID-19 positive, or who are showing signs of the virus.

Should patients be positive or symptomatic for the disease, their treatment at QVH will need to be delayed until they are symptom-free. If their presenting condition cannot be delayed, we will work with you to find an urgent solution.

Contact point for queries

If you would like any further information or to discuss any of the services we are providing please use the contact details provided in the respective SOPs and guidance attached to this letter.

For more general points please contact our executive assistant team through the email address qvh.eateam@nhs.net who will ensure timely redirection to the appropriate lead within QVH.

I hope that the attached cancer referral processes and trauma guidance is helpful. We recognise that we will need to adapt and exercise flexibility as matters develop, and will write again should there be significant changes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Jenkin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Steve Jenkin
Chief Executive Officer

Attachments:

QVH Trauma

SOP – Management of Breast Cancer Surgery during COVID-19

SOP – Management of Head and Neck Cancer Surgery during COVID-19

SOP – Management of Skin Cancer during COVID-19

QVH – Breast Surgical Referral Pro-forma

QVH – Head and Neck Referral Pro-forma