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University Health Board

## FAQs for Temporary service restrictions at Royal Glamorgan Hospital

### 01 - What is happening?

Significant temporary service restrictions will be put in place at Royal Glamorgan Hospital from 14.00 Wednesday September 30th as increased action is taken to contain a COVID-19 outbreak within the hospital.

Teams have been working at pace to implement robust measures to manage the outbreak, however additional cases linked to transmission within the hospital have been confirmed in recent days with the number of cases currently standing at 82 (as of September 29th).

Given the extent of this outbreak, and on advice of Public Health Wales, the Health Board is taking a number of urgent and significant actions to ensure the safety of our staff, patients and communities.

### 02 - What is an outbreak and how has this happened at RGH?

An outbreak means that disease has occurred at a level greater than what we would normally expect and in this case, within a short period, there have been more cases of COVID-19 acquired within the Royal Glamorgan Hospital. Early intervention is critical to ensure the disease does not spread and that vulnerable patients and staff are protected. There are a number of different ways this could have happened in this outbreak but the likelihood, based on what we know today, is that a person who was affected may have passed the infection to a number of others.

### 03 - How many people have been infected?

It is vital that we have a complete picture of the outbreak, and part of our work includes broadening the timescale and introducing a new criteria for cases, which allows for thorough investigation to take place. We currently have 82 positive cases. These ongoing efforts mean the outbreak remains a moving picture, and therefore the numbers might change, however the situation is being closely monitored and assessed by our teams, who are working at pace, so we can take all necessary action.

### 04 - What actions are being taken to manage this outbreak?

We have taken a range of swift and decisive actions to try to manage this outbreak. We recognise the concern that the decision to restrict services at RGH will cause but it is vital we take such significant action based on the information we now have from the outbreak and the advice given to us by Public Health Wales and which is in the interests of safety.

Temporary Service restrictions which come into place at 2pm on Wednesday September 30th include:

- Elective surgery at Royal Glamorgan Hospital has been suspended temporarily except for a very small number of urgent cancer cases which have been clinically prioritised.
- Any adult patient requiring an emergency admission who would normally be admitted after admission at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital will be taken to either Princess of Wales Hospital Bridgend, Prince Charles Hospital Merthyr Tydfil and University Hospital of Wales Cardiff;
- The Emergency Department at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital will remain open for walk-in patients and patients who can be treated in ambulatory care (i.e. an area in the Emergency Department at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital);
- Welsh Ambulance Service (999) patients (excluding children) will be diverted temporarily to alternative sites, namely Princess of Wales Hospital Bridgend, Prince Charles Hospital Merthyr Tydfil and University Hospital of Wales Cardiff;
- There will be no change to the self-contained paediatric wards at Royal Glamorgan Hospital, they will remain open;
- The Tirion Birthing Centre, which has been temporarily closed during the pandemic, is due to re-open on October 5th. We are currently working with the clinical teams to review that this can go ahead in light of the current situation at Royal Glamorgan Hospital;

**Other actions we have taken include:**

- The immediate closure of affected wards
- An immediate risk assessment of affected and at-risk wards
- Reviews of infection prevention and control measures and their implementation
- Increased testing of healthcare staff
- Testing of all hospital admissions

**05 - Are there any signs that the outbreak is contained? Is the outbreak likely to get worse?**

We have taken a range of actions already but we believe that the decision to restrict services at RGH, while difficult to make, is the right one to contain the outbreak and in the interests of safety of our patients and staff.

It is vital that we have a complete picture of the outbreak, and part of our work includes broadening the timescale and introducing a new criteria for defining cases, which allows for thorough investigation to take place. These ongoing efforts mean the outbreak remains a moving picture, and therefore the numbers might change, however the situation is being closely monitored and assessed by our teams, who are working at pace, so we can assure ourselves, our communities and partners that we have taken all necessary action. We recognise the concern that this will cause and would like to assure our patients and communities that controlling this outbreak is our key priority.

## 06 - How safe is it to attend RGH?

The safety of our staff and patients is of the utmost importance. Visiting across all CTM sites has already been restricted following the increase in COVID cases in our communities. The measures announced today to restrict services across RGH have not been taken lightly, but we need to take swift and decisive action based on the advice provided to us.

For those patients who will still attend RGH, we have put in place a range of measures as a result of the outbreak including:

- The immediate closure of affected wards
- An immediate risk assessment of affected and at-risk wards
- Reviews of infection prevention and control measures and their implementation
- Increased testing of healthcare staff
- Testing of all hospital admissions

## 07 - I was an inpatient at RGH recently – how does this affect me and how do I know if I am at risk of being infected with Covid-19?

We understand this is concerning time if you have been an inpatient in RGH. We would ask anyone who has recently been a patient in RGH to be vigilant for any symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature, loss of or change to sense of smell or taste) and to arrange a test if you do develop these symptoms.

## 08 - What should I do if I have symptoms?

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature, loss of or change to sense of smell or taste) you should arrange to have a test. This can be done [here](#). If you develop one of these symptoms follow the [self-isolation guidance](#). Please do not visit your GP surgery or hospital to request a test, as you may infect others.

## 09 - If I should not go to RGH, where else can I access health care services for my needs?

If you're unwell, you can access the NHS symptom checker here - <https://111.wales.nhs.uk/SelfAssessments/>

Our minor injuries unit in Ysbyty Cwm Rhondda is also open between 9.30am-4pm, please ring first on 01443 444075.

If you need out of hours care that can be treated by our out of hours GP service, please ring your normal GP practice where you will be directed to the out of hours service. In normal daytime hours, please contact your GP practice.

If you need urgent emergency care, you should call 999.

## 10 - How can I be reassured that it is safe to attend any hospital in CTMUHB area?

We take the health and wellbeing of our staff and patients extremely seriously. We are ensuring that teams across all our sites are regularly reviewing their infection prevention and control practices and arrangements and that any required changes are made with immediate effect. As the work to understand and contain the outbreak continues in RGH we are sharing this information with teams across CTM so they can understand any lessons learnt and implement them in their sites.

### 11 - How long will this situation go on for?

We are all working in unprecedented times, and so it is impossible to confirm how long the changes will be in place. The safety of our patients and our staff is of the utmost importance and is why we had to make these difficult decisions. We understand the impact these changes will have and the anxiety they will cause, and managing the outbreak is our key priority. Our teams will continue to carry out their urgent work to address the outbreak so we can restore services as soon as possible.

### 12 - How will I know when RGH is reopened?

We will ensure that we provide regular updates on RGH across our communications channels, including our website and social media.

### 13 - I have a relative in hospital who I am worried about. How can I stay connected to them during this time?

We understand this is a worrying time for everyone, especially if you have a relative in hospital. Unfortunately, because of the increase in positive cases, visiting restrictions are in place. To help maintain contact with loved ones during this time, we encourage families to use the free Wi-Fi across our sites using online technology and our teams and dedicated staff will be available to support families with this.