

Questions and answers: Re-opening of Weston General Hospital on Thursday 18 June (following the temporary changes implemented on Monday 25 May 2020)

Updated 22.06.20

Visiting – can I visit?

New national guidance on visiting patients in hospital was published on Friday 5 June 2020. We have updated our visiting policies from Monday 22 June 2020 in line with these new guidelines while ensuring we continue to maintain the safety of our patients, visitors and staff.

We will continue to keep this guidance under careful review. Thank you for your help and support in complying with this guidance to minimise the risk of infection to yourself, your loved one and our staff.

Important information for all visitors

- All visitors must wear masks or face coverings at all times
- If you are in attendance to support the needs of a patient as a familiar carer/supporter/personal assistant you will not be counted as an additional visitor
- You must not visit under any circumstances if you have a new persistent cough, high temperature or have a loss/change in your normal sense of smell or taste
- For more information and guidance on coronavirus, please visit www.nhs.uk/coronavirus

Full visiting guidance is available on Weston General Hospital's website at www.waht.nhs.uk/en-GB/Coronavirus-COVID-19/.

Is the A&E department at Weston General Hospital open?

Yes, Weston General Hospital A&E department has now re-opened. The A&E department is open from 8am until 10pm.

If it is a life-threatening emergency please call 999.

Patients attending our A&E department are asked to not come accompanied, with the exception of under 18s, vulnerable patients and those requiring support due to their illness or injury. Where an escort has been permitted, it is limited to one person to accompany the patient, and they must be well and have no coronavirus symptoms.

Your safety is our primary concern and everyone coming to the hospital is politely asked to adhere to face coverings, hand-hygiene and social distancing guidance.

Please remember for non-emergency conditions, you can visit the minor injuries units in Clevedon or Bridgwater or contact NHS 111 for advice.

I have an appointment at Weston General Hospital, should I still come to the hospital?

Patients who have an appointment scheduled from Thursday 18 June 2020 onwards do not need to contact the hospital to confirm their appointment; they should attend their appointment as planned. We are continuing to contact patients whose appointment was cancelled during the temporary closure to reschedule their appointment.

If you have any questions, please call the number on your appointment letter. Patients who are concerned about a recent change in their health, or who have developed symptoms of a cold or fever are asked to please refer to the NHS.UK website or call NHS 111 where they can get more information.

Patients are asked to not come accompanied to their appointments, with the exception of under 18s and vulnerable patients. Where an escort has been permitted, it is limited to one person to accompany the patient, and they must be well and have no coronavirus symptoms.

Your safety is our primary concern and everyone coming to the hospital is politely asked to adhere to face coverings, hand-hygiene and social distancing guidance.

What is the provision for maternity care for women who have appointments booked at Weston?

Maternity services, including scans, day assessments and consultant appointments, are available again at Weston General Hospital. If you have an appointment planned, please attend as normal.

If you have any questions please speak to your midwife.

Will I need to wear a face mask if I come to the hospital?

From Monday 15 June, anyone coming to hospital will need to wear a face covering at all times. This national guidance has been introduced by the Department of Health and Social Care to help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and keep patients, visitors, and staff at all hospitals safe.

Face coverings can be cloth and/or homemade, and advice on how to wear and make one can be found on the [government website](#). Face coverings worn as part of religious beliefs or cultural practice are also acceptable, providing they are not loose and cover the mouth and nose.

We are asking that you plan in advance and bring a face covering with you whenever possible, but if you do not have one available when you come to hospital, please see a member of staff on arrival and we will provide you with one.

Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser before putting your face covering on and after taking it off. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth at all times. If using a reusable face covering, store used ones in a plastic bag until you have an opportunity to wash them.

Will I need to be tested for COVID-19 if I have an appointment at the hospital?

If you require a test as part of your appointment or treatment you will be advised, either in your appointment letter or by telephone. If you have symptoms of coronavirus – a recent onset of a new continuous cough or a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia) – please do not attend your appointment; you can let us know you will not be attending by calling the telephone number on your appointment letter.

Will I need to be tested for COVID-19 if I'm admitted to the hospital?

All patients being admitted to the hospital will be tested for coronavirus. Patients are currently being routinely tested on a weekly basis while they are in hospital as a precautionary measure.

Are staff still being tested for coronavirus?

We have a robust coronavirus testing programme in place for patients and staff to identify cases quickly, with appropriate measures taken by clinical teams as required.

Is the hospital safe?

Please be assured that following the temporary closure, the hospital has re-opened in a carefully planned way and we have taken steps to ensure the safety of all patients and staff at the hospital.

COVID-19 testing of all inpatients has shown no new cases in our non-COVID wards identified since the temporary measures were introduced. This indicates no in-hospital transmission of the infection and demonstrates that the actions taken to ensure patients and staff remain as safe as possible have worked.

Staff have all been tested, at least twice, or completed recommended isolation periods, to confirm that they do not have coronavirus infection.

Deep cleaning has been carried out at the hospital and appropriate zoning and social distancing measures are in place in line with national guidance.

Who should I contact if I have any questions or need to discuss something?

If you are a patient receiving care from one of our departments, you will have been provided with appropriate contact numbers. If you haven't got a contact name and telephone number for the person or department you need to speak to, please call the hospital switchboard on 01934 636363.

If you have any general concerns or queries, please speak to our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) which is available between 9am and 4pm Monday-Friday. Please call the voicemail service on 01934 647216 or email wnt-tr.pals@nhs.net. More information about the team can be found on the [Patient Advice and Liaison Service \(PALS\) page](#).

I've just been discharged and want to be tested. How can I arrange this?

Please be reassured that you do not need to be tested unless you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). If you do have symptoms, then you can ask for a test to check if you have the virus. This is called an antigen test.

More information about this test and how to request one can be found on the national NHS website.

If you have any other concerns relating to your discharge, please contact the ward or department where you received your care or treatment to speak to one of the clinical team who looked after you.

My relative is in the hospital and I am worried about them.

Please be assured that we are continuing to provide high-quality care to your loved one and all our patients who are being treated in our hospital.

If you would like to contact your loved ones, please consider calling their personal mobile phones and devices to stay in touch, rather than call our wards directly. Free WiFi is available to everyone in our hospitals so that patients can make phone or video calls to their family and friends using apps including FaceTime, WhatsApp or Skype and mobile reception is available across our site. If you do need to call the ward for an update, please co-ordinate as a family so that only one person calls to avoid long wait times on ward phones.

My relative is due to be transferred to Weston from another hospital, and I am worried about them.

Please be assured that the introduction of new patients into the hospital is being done in a carefully planned way and we have taken steps to ensure the safety of all patients and staff at the hospital.

Please be reassured that we have taken all the necessary steps to make sure that our hospital is a safe place for your relative to be, and if there were any concerns about the safety of patients we would not be reopening. There are strict criteria in place that must

be met before patients can be admitted in a carefully planned and phased way, and these criteria have been achieved.

Where do I go if I feel very unwell at this time?

If it is a life-threatening emergency please call 999. The A&E department at Weston General is open from 8am until 10pm. If you need urgent medical help or advice, please either call 111 or visit 111.nhs.uk. Other services available include:

Urgent care services

The Minor Injuries Units in Clevedon and Yate, and Urgent Treatment Centre in South Bristol will be open throughout the long weekend offering fast, walk-in treatment for minor injuries such as cuts, sprains and broken bones. Units are available from 8am to 8pm on each day. For further information, see the Sirona care & health website at www.sirona-cic.org.uk.

The Minor Injuries Unit at Bridgwater Community Hospital is open seven days a week 8am-9pm (last patient admitted 8.30pm). People can call 01278 436 555 or walk-in. For further information visit <https://somerseft.nhs.uk/minor-injury-units/>.

Pharmacies

Full pharmacy opening hours are available on the NHS website or the find a pharmacy tool.

Dental Services

If you think you need urgent dental treatment, call your dental practice. If you cannot contact your dentist, or you do not have one, use the NHS 111 online service at 111.nhs.uk. If a clinical appointment is necessary, this will be arranged at an urgent dental care centre.

NHS111

NHS111 is available 24 hours a day at 111.nhs.uk.

Government coronavirus advice

If you, or someone you live with, has coronavirus symptoms such as a high temperature, new continuous cough or a lost or changed sense of smell or taste:

- Stay at home.
- If your symptoms worsen or you feel that you cannot manage at home, please refer to the NHS111 online coronavirus service 111.nhs.uk/covid-19/.

- Please do not go to your GP practice or community pharmacy.

The Government website has FAQs about coronavirus, including updated information on which activities you are allowed to take part in and the guidelines around these.