

We look forward to welcoming you to Phoenix Hospital Group. It is vital we keep you safe during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. This document will explain the steps we are taking and what we will ask of you.

Is it safe to attend my outpatient appointment or procedure?

By following our policy, it is extremely unlikely that anyone who is infected will be able to attend an appointment whilst they are infectious. There is some retrospective research (an audit done after the operation) which shows that an operation may increase the risk of serious Covid-19 symptoms and death but only if in the case of major operations and emergencies. In addition, the risk is concentrated on the elderly and those with other illnesses. Importantly, a paper from Birmingham showed cancer patients did not have more severe illness or increased mortality if they contracted the virus.

There is no evidence that a consultation, examination, imaging or blood test can make someone who already has Covid-19 more likely to become unwell.

How do you stop infected patients putting me at risk?

We check all patients to ensure they are not infected. We use a questionnaire to risk assess every patient in advance and we check their temperature on arrival. You will find the questionnaire below. Please complete it as soon as possible. You will not be allowed into our buildings unless you have completed it, and equally no other at risk patient will be allowed to enter.

If I answer YES to one of the questions. What does that mean?

Please complete the questionnaire as soon as possible. Our Pre-assessment nurses will review your answers and contact you. A positive answer may not increase the risk to others. If there is a risk we may ask you to have a diagnostic swab test or we may ask you to delay your attendance. We will not merely cancel your appointment.

Can I bring a friend or relative?

During this time we cannot allow any accompanying adults or children. Minimising risk means minimising the number of people in the building at any time. If you are travelling with somebody we would ask that they wait outside for you.

How can I get to my appointment?

We ask you to avoid travel by public transport, if this is unavoidable our team can give you guidance on reducing risk. Potential overcrowding not only puts you at risk but makes it possible that your clothes and bag might become contaminated. Walking, cycling, black cab or car are our preferred methods of transport. If you are concerned that you may have contaminated yourself or your clothes, please inform reception on arrival and we will provide cleaning materials.

How do I know the doctors and nurses are not infected?

All our staff and all our consultants undergo even more rigorous screening with their own questionnaire plus PCR swabs or antibody tests. This is repeated regularly. Nobody is allowed into our buildings unless these are up to date and demonstrate minimal risk.

All our staff and doctors have to abide by our policies on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and social distancing. We have put clear screens in our reception areas and will ask you to wear a mask at all times. We will provide you with a mask on arrival but you may use your own mask. We ask you to prepay any charges to avoid using credit card machines. We limit the number of people in our waiting areas so it is vital you try to arrive on time. Before you start your treatment we will ask you to wash your hands. And we will ask again before you leave.

Are your precautions as stringent as in the NHS?

We have met and exceeded the measures in place in the NHS. Our policies have been derived by a group including doctors and nurses, based on scientific and epidemiological research. We are happy to provide more information at any time. We are completely open about policies and risk. We welcome and act on comments.

Is it safe to have my appointment if I could be infected?

By following our policy, it is extremely unlikely that anyone who is infected will be able to attend an appointment whilst they are infectious. There is some retrospective research (an audit done after the operation) which shows that an operation may increase the risk of serious Covid-19 symptoms and death but only if you have a general anaesthetic. However, there is no evidence that a consultation, examination, imaging or blood test can make someone who already has Covid-19 more likely to become unwell.

Charlotte Ponsaing: Charlotte.ponsaing@phoenixhospitalgroup.com