

Admitting to Wards with Active COVID-19 / Influenza Outbreaks

Guidance for admitting new patients to Wards with active COVID-19/Influenza cases/outbreaks.

Before considering admission or transfer to a Ward with infections please clarify (via the DSN) if there are any available beds on Wards without COVID-19/Influenza cases in an ELFT borough.

Criteria to consider when admitting patients to these areas:

- 1) The clinical risk is such that delaying admission would be likely to cause avoidable harm whether the patient is in the community, ED or acute hospital bed.
- 2) This is a clinical decision and must be made by the admitting consultant/Doctor, balancing the risks and benefits for the patient, and if the balance of risks needs further discussion, in consultation with the service's Clinical Director and Borough Lead Nurse or nominated deputies as required (Out-of-hours on-call consultant and DSN). IPC advice is available 9am to 5pm Monday-Friday, outside of these times the Director on-call should be utilised as required through the on-call system. Each Borough Lead Nurse will need to keep record of each patient admitted using the SOP which is on the daily DSN report.

Please e-mail elft.infectioncontrol@nhs.net for all patients admitted using the SOP. This email should be sent by the Borough Lead Nurse, Duty Senior Nurse and/or Ward Manager.

Prior to admission the following requirements must be met and clearly recorded in the patient's RiO notes:

- **Open and transparent discussion about the risks with the patient and family**
- The patient and relatives/carer must be informed of the ward status regarding the positive case or outbreak prior to admission, and must agree to the admission.
- This discussion must take place at the point of assessment/decision to admit, and must be recorded in the patient's RiO notes.
- If not possible to achieve this discussion and agreement with the patient and family, then best interest principles must be applied by the clinical decision maker (out-of-hours this is the on-call consultant) and the outcome recorded in the patient's RiO notes.

Risk assessment

- 1) Patient must be assessed on an individual case-by-case basis.
- 2) The vaccination status of the patient being admitted should also be taken into consideration. Whilst this may be considered in the risk assessment, it is important to note that under the current NHS advice, there is a chance people might still get or spread COVID-19/Influenza even if they have had different doses of the vaccine due

to the different variants rising/individual immune responses to vaccines. All IPC precautions must still be followed regardless. **Patient with no COVID-19/Influenza vaccination (or no previous infection) must not be admitted to a Ward with an on-going outbreak.**

- 3) Risk assessment must consider any underlying health conditions and comorbidities (chronic and acute) of the patient being admitted to ensure they are not clinically extremely vulnerable (Refer to UKSHA definition)
- 4) The health status of patients on admitting Wards i.e. acuity, number of confirmed cases, and their cooperation with care in isolation (if needed)
- 5) Environmental limitations (e.g. availability of en-suite facilities, equipment etc.)
- 6) Risks of delaying the admission
- 7) If risk assessment determines that admission to the outbreak Ward is not recommended and not in the patient's best interest, but they still require a bed then use the formal escalation procedure via the on-call manager.

Admission agreed

If the outcome of the risk assessment determines that admission to the outbreak/affected Ward is in the patient's best interest and outweighs the risk of exposure to infection, the following must be considered to help minimise the risk:

- 1) The new patient should be admitted to en-suite bedrooms where possible (please note Hackney do not have en-suite rooms but may have beds – please discuss this with the DSN and local Senior Nurses).
- 2a) Admission LFD swabs should only be taken if the patient is symptomatic for COVID-19
- 2b) PCR swabs should only be taken for patient/s who are suspected to have Influenza
- 2) If symptomatic, should the patient need to leave their room, encourage them to wear surgical face masks and perform hand hygiene before leaving and returning to their rooms.

Once a decision to admit has occurred then a message confirming the decision needs to go to the IPC email address elft.infectioncontrol@nhs.net with the patient's name, RiO number and the admission ward.