**Junior Doctors' industrial action
*Cheltenham A&E to become a Minor Injury and Illness Unit from Saturday 8 April (8am) to Monday 17 April (8am)***Ahead of Easter, we are urging local people to only access A&E or 999 if their condition is life threatening or very serious and to use 111 and ASAP Glos NHS to get advice on the right care for them. It will be critical that everyone continues to follow this essential advice as we head into a 4-day bank holiday followed by 96-hour industrial action. Health services, in particular hospitals, will be under considerable strain due to rising levels of illness, Easter, the Junior Doctor’s strike and related staffing pressures. We are clear that the impact will be felt for at least 10 days.
**We are also alerting people to temporary changes to A&E that will come into effect from Saturday 8 April.**Cheltenham General Hospital’s Emergency Department will become a nurse-led Minor Injury and Illness Unit for most of the Easter period and for the duration of the industrial action. It will enable available emergency care staff, including consultants and other senior clinical staff, to come together at Gloucester to keep services safe. This change will come into effect from Saturday 8 April (8am) until Monday 17 April (8am). From the hours of 8am to 8pm the department at Cheltenham will be a nurse-led MIIU. It will be closed overnight during this period. From Saturday, it will be critical to keep Gloucester A&E clear for life threatening conditions and serious injuries.
Whilst we are making plans to keep essential services available, the Easter period, and the period of industrial action that follows will pose substantial challenges. The highest priority will be to care for those in most immediate and urgent need and safeguard patient care. Patients can also expect cancellations to planned outpatient appointments, procedures and operations. Patients who have a planned hospital operation, outpatient clinic or procedure between Tuesday 11 April and Saturday 15 April should attend as usual unless they hear from their NHS Trust to advise otherwise. However, given the need to ensure safe staffing arrangements in emergency care and other critical services, many appointments will need to be rearranged.
There will be no disruption to patient visiting arrangements on these days. However, we are asking relatives and carers to do everything they can to work with our staff to get their loved ones home from hospital as quickly and as safely as possible, with additional support, if necessary, from local NHS community services or adult social care teams.
**Getting healthcare advice**If people have an urgent care need, but are not sure which service to use, they are asked to visit 111.nhs.uk in the first instance or call 111 for advice. The 111 phone service can book people into local NHS services if required, but is likely to see an increase in calls.
111 online and the local ASAP Glos NHS website and App can provide information on the services provided by community pharmacies, GP surgeries, including the GP led Gloucester Health Access Centre, Community Minor Injury and Illness Units and A&E.
A number of Community Hospital Minor Injury and Illness Units across the county will be open every day (8am to 8pm) and from Saturday 8 April to Monday 17 April, Cheltenham MIIU will be open from 8am to 8pm. It will be closed overnight during this period.
People are likely to be seen more quickly on arrival if they book an appointment by calling the local MIIU line: 0300 421 7777 or 111.
People can get the latest on the day service updates and advice through local NHS social media channels and websites.
Further public information about the industrial action, including FAQs, has been published by NHS England and can be found here.
Thank you for your support and we are also taking the opportunity to thank the great majority of local people who continue to access services responsibly and are following the advice offered by the local NHS.
Yours sincerely
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