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Covid in Scotland: NHS Lanarkshire moves to 'highest risk level'

🕒 22 October 2021

Coronavirus



GETTY IMAGES

A member of staff at University Hospital Monklands attends to a Covid patient on the ICU ward earlier this year

NHS Lanarkshire has moved to the "highest risk level" as its three hospitals are at maximum capacity.

The military is already providing additional support at University hospitals Hairmyres, Monklands and Wishaw.

But the health board described occupancy levels as "critical" and said the "sustained pressure" shows no signs of easing.

It also confirmed some elective cancer procedures have been cancelled.

Earlier this week, **NHS Grampian** became the latest Scottish health board to ask for military help amid the pandemic after NHS Lanarkshire and NHS Borders.

'Relentless pressures'

NHS Lanarkshire deputy chief executive Laura Ace said: "We are facing relentless pressures, bed shortages and staff shortages due to sickness, stress and self-isolation and University hospitals Hairmyres, Monklands and Wishaw are all at maximum capacity

"The safety of our patients and staff is our top priority and we are working through short and medium term actions to increase staffing and also improve the flow of patients out of hospital.

"The military are providing additional support within our hospitals."

The health board **temporarily postponed** the majority of non-urgent planned care procedures at the end of August.

But it has now confirmed the current pressures mean it is having to further stand down elective planned procedures, including some cancer services.

It added these will be rescheduled "as soon as possible".

'Unprecedented'

Ms Ace added: "The current situation is unprecedented and marks a different level of risk for NHS Lanarkshire as a whole and moves our current status to the highest level of risk."

Earlier this week the board warned patients on social media to expect long waits at A&E as its hospitals were being overwhelmed by the numbers attending and requiring admission.

Ms Ace said: "To help free up hospital beds, we have also asked for any assistance from family members to allow us to discharge people home or to interim care placements as soon as possible.

"We know the impact of the current pressures are being felt right across the health and social care system, including GP practices which remain extremely busy.

"We recognise that our staff are doing everything they can and showing the highest levels of professionalism, commitment and resilience."

She added that it is hoped the move to the highest risk level will help reduce the pressures on our staff and services.

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