

Media Information

28 July 2020

LEADING CANCER GP URGES PEOPLE TO ACT ON CONCERNS

Derbyshire's leading GP for cancer prevention is urging residents to act if they have any concerns they may have symptoms.

Dr Louise Merriman, Clinical Lead for Cancer for NHS Derby and Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) joins health professionals from across the country in the call to action following a decrease in people visiting their GP with cancer concerns in the wake of Covid-19.

Latest county figures show 'two week wait' referrals – requests from GPs for an urgent hospital appointment for a patient who has symptoms that might indicate cancer – are now at around 85% of pre-Covid level.

Dr Merriman, a partner GP at Springs Medical Centre, Clowne, said it is vital everyone with cancer concerns seeks advice as soon as possible as delays in diagnosis and treatment can affect the outcomes for patients.

She said: "Do not hesitate to contact your GP if you have any worries about symptoms associated with cancer.

"The NHS website has a detailed section you can check at www.nhs.uk/conditions/cancer/symptoms/ but signs to look out for include the sudden appearance of a lump, blood in your urine, a change to your usual bowel habits or unexplained weight loss.

"If you have any of these, contact your GP immediately."

To reduce the risk of cancers not being diagnosed and treated as quickly as they would have been prior to Covid-19, the CCG is working with NHS health care providers to:

- Make sure patients are aware they should contact their GP if they have any concerns or symptoms so they can be referred and screened.
- Give patients rapid access to diagnosis by working with the county's hospitals to support them with their plans to manage cases while Covid-19 measures continue.

Dr Merriman added: "We really appreciate the support of the public in protecting the NHS while we all fight Covid-19, but the NHS is – and always has been – open for business.

"Nobody should risk their health because they feel like they don't want to take up valuable appointment time.

"And if you're worried about visiting your practice because of the risks of contracting Covid-19 you should know that stringent infection and prevention control measures are in place to keep patients and staff safe and well.

"We're continuing to work with all our frontline partners to make sure patients are seen quickly, and that those receiving a cancer diagnosis get the best course of treatment for them, to support their quality of life and lead to recovery wherever possible."

ENDS

MEDIA CONTACT: For further information or to request an interview with Dr Merriman please contact ddccg.communications@nhs.net.

Notes for editors: NHS Derby and Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group brings together the combined expertise of 112 local GP practices, split between eight different 'Places', to commission health services on behalf of 1,062,000 patients in Derbyshire. Our vision is to continuously improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Derbyshire, using all resources as fairly as possible.