

Brief

26th January 2010

Whipps Cross Hospital has closed its doors

Whipps Cross Hospital has closed its doors to most patients until further notice in an effort to contain the norovirus outbreak at the hospital.

The winter vomiting bug has seriously impacted on the work of the hospital for the past two weeks and a ban on all visitors was imposed 10 days ago.

Following advice from the Health Protection Agency, the hospital has now closed to all emergency and non-urgent admissions except maternity, children's A&E and day surgery. The hospital will also continue to carry out diagnostics and outpatient clinics.

The decision to close the hospital (as of 6pm yesterday Monday, January 25) was made following discussions with the HPA, NHS London, the ambulance services, local PCTs and neighbouring hospitals.

The Trust Chief Executive Dr Lucy Moore said: "The hospital may be closed for up to 72-hours on HPA advice to allow the virus to clear from the cohort of patients currently infected with the virus. We currently have 19 wards closed to admission, leaving only four wards available for admission. The Trust has cancelled nearly all routine surgery and has sought to outsource this where possible.

"We apologise to any patients whose treatment is cancelled during this period but it is vital that we gain some time and breathing space to ensure the norovirus bug is clear from our wards before reopening to patients and visitors."

The hospital's Urgent Care Centre will continue to see 'walk-in' patients and ambulances will only take patients suitable to be seen in the Urgent Care Centre to Whipps Cross; other cases including 'blue light' cases are being diverted to other hospitals until further notice.