

8 March 2018 – for immediate release

The accident and emergency department at NGH is experiencing unprecedented demand, with more than 400 people a day attending the department, almost 30% more than at the same time last year.

Dr Sonia Swart, chief executive, said 'Recent weeks have seen some of the most difficult days this winter, with large numbers of patients in our emergency department and large numbers of patients needing a bed. That is why we are urging people to choose the most appropriate service for their needs and only use A&E for life-threatening emergencies. We might not see non-urgent patients if they can be cared for by a GP or pharmacist.

Our priority is patient safety and seriously ill patients will be prioritised. That means that non-urgent patients will have to wait longer than usual for treatment, or be referred elsewhere. All our teams are working incredibly hard to see everyone as soon as possible and our local community can help by using the emergency service appropriately. '

'At the same time we need relatives and carers to collect loved ones as soon as they are ready to go home so that we can free up our beds to admit critically unwell patients. Patients who no longer need acute hospital care will be discharged to other care centres across the county. Sometimes this may not be the patient's or relatives' preferred choice, but we would ask patients, relatives and carers to work with us to ensure a smooth transition.

By working together we can make sure that the services provided by NGH are available to the members of our local community who need them most. Patients will receive their care in the most appropriate location, we can avoid cancelling planned admissions and, importantly, we will have the capacity we need to focus on seriously ill patients and those who require acute hospital care.'

'It is important that we recognise the commitment of everyone at TeamNGH. No-one who works here is unaffected by the high level of demand for our services. Staff are going above and beyond to provide patients with the best possible care, often working longer hours, additional shifts and supporting colleagues across the hospital and I want to publicly thank them for their efforts.'

People can help to ease the pressure by thinking about whether they really need to visit A&E. NHS 111 has a team of medically trained advisors who can provide advice, connect you to a nurse, emergency dentist or GP. They can arrange face-to-face appointments if they feel you require one and they can assess whether you need an ambulance and send one to you. The service is free and available in a range of languages, in British sign language format and in typetalk or textphone.

Other services are available within the community such as pharmacists, GPs and walk-in appointments are available at the Corby Urgent Care centre which is open from 8am-8pm.

We are treating critically unwell patients who have a lowered immune system and we all need to work to keep them safe from further illnesses.

Do not visit your relatives in hospital if you feel or have been unwell. If you have had any symptoms of flu, nausea or diarrhoea please do not visit the hospital for 48 hours after all symptoms have passed. If you are unsure on the symptoms please visit the NHS Choices website.

We urge local people to do all they can to support us – by using our services wisely and by doing all they can to help relatives to return home, or into appropriate community care, as soon as possible. This is very helpful because any delays in discharge only add greater pressure to our front line services. During the next month we will be cancelling non urgent operations and some outpatient clinics in order to prioritise care for our sickest patients. We are very aware that this is distressing for patients and families and are sorry that this has been necessary. We will try to resume normal services as soon as possible so please bear with us.