

Breast Surgery Department

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Dear colleagues,

Covid-19 Pandemic: Referrals to the Breast Service

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Breast Surgery and Radiology Departments have reviewed the arrangements for breast imaging at the Royal Surrey Hospital. This measure is part of a wider hospital policy to minimise the number of patients attending the hospital and support the government's measures to reduce social contact and limit the spread of the virus.

I would like to update you on the following;

- Effective immediately, we are **suspending** the Direct Access Mammography for breast pain project for 3 months or until the pandemic is over.
- You can continue to refer suspected breast cancers to the breast service via either the Two-Week-Rule or symptomatic pathway.
- **Frail older patients above the age of 70 or those with significant co-morbidities** are at highest risk of death from Covid-19. For safety of such patients, please give carefully consider **delaying referrals** if the index of suspicion for breast cancer is low.
- Following recent guidance from the Association of Breast Surgery, **very frail elderly patients, especially if in nursing homes** with suspicious breast lumps **should NOT** be seen in the hospital. If breast cancer is clinically suspected, they can be empirically started on endocrine therapy in the community (Letrozole 2.5mg once daily). Please indicate on the referral letter that endocrine treatment has been initiated. These patients will be seen once the pandemic is over.
- Referrals for assessment and management of gynaecomastia should be deferred for 3 months.
- Patients with breast pain without clinical signs **should not** be referred to secondary care in the first instance. Advice on breast pain management should be given and their symptoms reviewed in 6-8 weeks. Information on breast pain management can be found on our website (<https://www.royalsurreybreastunit.com>). I would like to remind you that breast pain **would not** fulfil the criteria for two Week Rule referral under NICE guidance

We will continue to monitor the situation closely and will update you accordingly.

We thank you for your understanding and co-operation.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely,



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BLKTOGP