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Dear colleagues

### **Changes to SLaM services in response to the Coronavirus outbreak**

I am writing to you to let you know about some important changes to services that the Trust is making in direct response to Covid-19 pandemic.

As a Trust, our top priority remains the safety of our patients and staff. As part of our response to Covid-19, we are working with NHS England and our staff to ensure that we are in line with Government guidance.

In response to the situation, we are looking at how we can be innovative and support our patients effectively and safely during this time. We will continue to see people face-to-face where this is clinically essential, but in order to reduce face-to-face contact where it is not essential we are reviewing our service provision and have made a number of changes to how we deliver services during this pandemic.

#### **Closing public access to hospital sites**

Please be aware that where possible we are closing off our hospital sites to the public. Bethlem Royal Hospital (BRH) is now completely closed to the public, including dog walkers. Wickham Park Gate is also closed.

Since April 1, a security guard has been situated at the BRH main gate and will be checking staff passes. Staff and patients back from leave only will be allowed in. This is to keep people out rather than in – all unnecessary footfall and traffic needs to be prevented in line with PHE and government's national social distancing campaign.

#### **Mental Health Emergency Department**

Since Monday 30 March, the Trust has been running a new emergency service to support patients who need urgent mental health care.

The Mental Health Emergency Department is a dedicated crisis centre, based at Maudsley Outpatients and the Ladywell Unit, Lewisham, which serve as an alternative to acute hospital Emergency Departments. The centres enable patients to attend a dedicated Mental Health Emergency Service set up specifically for this purpose and reduces the need to attend acute hospitals. Children and young

people as well as older adults will access the service through the 24 hour specialist crisis and response services.

People who need mental health support should call SLaM's mental health support line on 0800 731 2864

Organisations who can refer patients to these services include Acute Trust Emergency Departments, Police, London Ambulance Service and NHS 111.

A screening process must take place before patients are referred to the service, to ensure any physical health problems do not require urgent medical attention. Therefore, these services do not operate on a 'walk-in' basis but take referrals through the mental health support line and through the organisations listed above. More information about this screening process will follow this week, on updated Crisis information pages on SLaM's website.

### **Other service changes**

Because of the Coronavirus outbreak, in addition to the establishment of the Mental Health Emergency Department, we are having to make some urgent changes to our services. This will help us to make sure that we have enough staff to deal with the peak of the pandemic, as well as protect both colleagues and patients.

The following service changes are all temporary measures until the end of pandemic:

- Anxiety Disorders Residential Unit – temporarily closed
- Eating Disorders Until (Tyson West 2) - temporarily closed and merged with Avalon Ward at Springfield University Hospital
- Jim Burley Unit - temporarily closed
- Fitz Mary One (BRH) temporarily closes this evening - 30 March
- Eileen Skellern 2 - temporarily closes this evening - 30 March
- Ruskin Ward (AL2) will temporarily move to ES2 ward - 30 March
- Snowfields Adolescent Unit is temporarily closing and merging with the Bethlem Adolescent Unit on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April
- Aubrey Lewis 3 - temporarily closes Friday 3 April
- Aubrey Lewis 1 has been temporarily merged with Chelsham House and supporting Kings by letting them use this space to care for people on a discharge pathway. This enables Kings to use their bed capacity for people who are physically unwell and need an acute hospital bed.

We are continuing to plan for the coming weeks, when there will likely be increasing pressure on our services. We anticipate that it is likely that there will be further changes to a number of areas, and will keep you informed of any developments. We have communicated these changes to our patients and carers and will be posting regular updates on our website [www.slam.nhs.uk](http://www.slam.nhs.uk)

We are grateful for your support at this difficult time. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

**Beverley Murphy**  
**Chief Operating Officer**