

FOI 2142

29th February 2024

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST**

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**Question:**

**Can you provide current procedures in place for dealing with immunosuppressed patients in Accident and Emergency examination rooms and in corridors after being admitted and also in Medical Ward 1 South. Include what measures are put in place to protect these patients and also protection from any covid cases in the ward to cover period 19 Dec 2023 to 5 Jan 2024**

**Please include prevention of infection and control measures to prevent the spread of covid as well as system for overseeing and ensuring best practice to protect immunosuppressed patients**

**Response:**Patients in Medical Ward 1 South

Patients who are identified as immunosuppressed on 1 south are placed into a side room as soon as one is available. Side room occupancy is continually risk assessed to ensure those most in need are placed in one.

Patients who are identified as immunosuppressed may require protective isolation following clinical/ risk assessment.

The SHSCT continues to follow regional guidance in relation to COVID-19, available at:

[PHA IPC guidance for Respiratory Illnesses 03.03.23.pdf \(hscni.net\)](#)  
[doh-hss-md-18-2023.pdf \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Strategies include monitoring patients for symptoms of COVID-19, testing those who meet specific criteria, isolation of symptomatic patients and contacts of COVID-19 cases, and wearing personal protective equipment where required. All immunosuppressed patients are tested on admission regardless if symptomatic or not.

The Trust is responsive to periods of increased community transmission of COVID-19. During an apparent increase in respiratory illnesses regionally, the Trust advised all staff, patients and visitors to wear face masks when attending Emergency Departments from 29.12.23 until 23.2.24.

The IPC team continue to provide advice on a case by case basis.

### Patients in Accident & Emergency Department

All patients who attend ED and are immunosuppressed are allocated to a cubicle space. It is difficult at times to place patients in a cubicle due to the overcrowding in ED but staff will do everything they can to prioritise those patients that are immunosuppressed. Immunosuppressed patients are admitted to a sideward at ward level and if available they will be given a sideward with an en-suite. Staff will wear appropriate PPE.

At ward level patients with covid are nursed in a sideward or cohorted in an open bay with other covid patients. Staff will wear appropriate PPE. Virtual visiting is available however all visitors to the ward will be advised that this there is an outbreak of covid on the ward. In addition visitors will be requested to wear masks.

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