

Changes to the Children's Inpatient Services at St John's Hospital



To ensure patient safety, NHS Lothian has taken the difficult decision to make changes to the children's inpatient services in St John's Hospital.

Patients will not be admitted to the children's ward at the Livingston Hospital from **Friday 7 July**.

Parents will not have to do anything differently.

The children's ward will continue to operate as an assessment and programmed investigation unit from **Monday to Friday between 8am and 8pm**.

Children will still be assessed and treated in the Emergency Department at St John's Hospital at night and weekends. A paediatric consultant will be available on-call 24/7. If a child needs to be admitted to hospital a transfer to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh will be arranged.

Most of the children who currently attend the unit will continue to be cared for as normal. They will either be referred by their GP for an urgent medical opinion or attend with a pre-arranged appointment for treatment, assessment, tests or minor day surgery.

The decision to change the opening hours has been made as a result of ongoing staffing and recruitment issues which mean there are not enough doctors available to cover overnight and weekends.

Over the past five years NHS Lothian has invested heavily in efforts to ensure safe staffing levels could be maintained on the ward. Despite national and international recruitment campaigns and a comprehensive independent review by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), it has not been possible to fill the key medical and specialist nursing posts required to provide a safe, reliable and sustainable workforce model.

NHS Lothian is committed to reinstating the full service as soon as possible after the summer, and will be working with the Chief Medical Officer, Scottish Government and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health to review the steps we have taken and to identify what else can be done to guarantee safe, sustainable staffing for this service.

Advice for parents:

If your child is ill or has an accident please contact your GP or NHS 24 on 111. Your GP or NHS 24 will make sure you are directed to the most appropriate service.

If it is an emergency call 999.

For more information please visit www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk