

## Coronavirus – COVID 19 Update – 23 March 2020

The past few weeks have been challenging, and people are uncertain about what the future holds. I'd like to start by sending my best wishes to you and your family. As a valued supporter and friend of Great Oaks Hospice, or someone who is accessing our services, I want to give you an update on our response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) in line with Government and Public Health England advice.

Our main priority will always be supporting and caring for patients and their relatives and friends, and I want to reassure you that we will continue to do this with the dedication and passion that we always have. However, we have a duty to keep our employees, volunteers and the wider community safe and to achieve that we have had to make some difficult decisions.

We are keeping in regular contact with everyone who uses our services and we continue to take referrals for bereavement support and Day Hospice offering support by telephone.

Hospice at Home continues as normal and these families are likely to need our nurses more than ever. The clinical team works closely with our NHS partners to access the latest guidance to assess each individual person's needs. Telephone support rather than visits will take place wherever possible for both Outreach and Hospice at Home.

Our seven Hospice shops are now sadly closed and we have had to postpone or cancel our fundraising events for the next three months.

These are unprecedented times that have demanded extreme measures and I am so proud of the team at Great Oaks who continue to go above and beyond to keep supporting patients and families. Some are learning new skills and stepping out of their comfort zone to support their colleagues and all are embracing new ways of working. We will really miss our team of loyal volunteers, many of whom are unable to be physically present but we know they will always be there to support us and we really look forward to welcoming them back when we can.

We need our community to be here for us now more than ever and would like to thank you in advance for your continued kindness and generosity. If you are able to help in any way, please see the front page of our website for the Just Giving page. Great Oaks is very much part of the Forest community and please be reassured that we will continue to support you.



**Ruth Keeble**  
**Chief Executive**