



Association of Breast Surgery
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ABS Statement - January 2021

The end of 2020 and the start of 2021 has unfortunately seen a large rise in Covid-19 cases. This has resulted in many regions of the UK having a similar number of Covid hospital admissions to those seen at the start of the pandemic, and this is putting huge strain on the delivery of other services including cancer care.

Unlike March 2020, we all now have experience of managing a breast service in the presence of Covid-19 and have demonstrated that we can do this safely and to a high standard. Despite this, until the vaccine becomes widely available, the next three months are going to be extremely challenging.

Staff testing positive for Covid-19, staff deployment, and theatre and bed availability are again going to put huge pressures on our ability to deliver the type of breast service we are used to.

These regional increases in infection will almost certainly affect service delivery and individual units will have to respond to this. Although we hope that breast services will continue to run as near to normal as possible throughout the UK, local peaks and the pressures on the service may result in individual units again needing to prioritise cases as was the case earlier in 2020. **[See the ABS website for previous guidance.](#)**

As this pandemic continues, we are all tired and weary. Many of us have been unable to see friends and family over the festive period. In the coming months it is even more important that we look after and support each other. At the start of this new year we should reflect on 2020 and be proud of what we have managed to achieve so far in these difficult and challenging times.

Julie Doughty
ABS President
5th January 2021