**Draft letter to healthcare providers**

(text in red: adapt to your own circumstances)

**To**: The Manager PALS Service ABC Hospital

PASS in Scotland, and PCC in Northern Ireland

**Copy to**: Chief Executive ABC Hospital

**Re: Protection from SARS-CoV-2 infection during my hospital visit**

Dear PALS Manager,

I am a patient under the care of the ……… service at ……….. Hospital; I am writing to you ahead of my appointment [next week/month]. I am very concerned about the risk of contracting Covid-19 during my visit. I would like you to pass on my letter to the relevant people in the hospital to ensure that my visit is safe.

[ Explain personal circumstances here, and consider making some of the following points.

* Covid-19 can cause a range of serious health problems.
* Clinical risk factors for yourself and other household members.
* Write a brief paragraph on your previous experiences in the clinic. Point to things like lack of masks, poor ventilation and any specific measurements of CO2 (if you have collected data), crowded waiting areas, consulting rooms without windows etc.
* Mention if you or your family have already developed Long Covid and if you have previously been infected in healthcare.
* Point out that people who have underlying health conditions have much higher risks of dying and of getting Long Covid than the majority of the population
* Evidence also suggests that repeat infections can cause cumulative damage.
* NB Try to be brief, include the essential points.]

Current SARS-CoV-2 infection rates in the UK community remain very high, leading to large numbers of Covid hospital admissions. Asymptomatic infection is common so it is likely some out-patients and visitors will have the infection. Spread of Covid-19 within hospitals is a risk, especially for clinically vulnerable people: on average 30% of those in hospital who have Covid were infected in hospital. It is therefore likely that there will be a lot of SARS-CoV-2 around when I visit the hospital, putting me at significant risk of infection.

Further essential information is referenced in the attached Factsheet, supplied and supported by the following organisations: Covid Safety Pledge Campaign, Doctors in Unite, Clinically Vulnerable Families, Hazards Campaign, and Independent SAGE. The factsheet can be found [here](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/627ceb426c6b961170bb23af/t/643ecaefc17f7627a91f69d8/1681836783761/COVID-19+FACTSHEET+for+patients+relatives+and+carers.pdf).

I am writing to seek assurance that appropriate measures will be in place to protect me from the risks of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (particularly airborne transmission) during my hospital visits from staff or fellow patients. I would like assurance that you are, and will continue to take the following actions to prevent this:

* Ensuring all staff in the clinic area will wear masks, minimum FFP2. Surgical masks do not protect adequately from airborne spread of pathogens.
* All staff on duty (including ancillary staff) will be asymptomatic, tested regularly, and supported to stay at home while infectious
* The CO2 in the clinic area is monitored and is kept below 600ppm
* The ventilation in the clinic area has been assessed and has air-changes as specified by the relevant HTM
* If the ventilation specifications above cannot be met, is air quality ensured by equivalent HEPA air filtration to an equivalent or higher level. NHS England has recently issued detailed guidance on the use of HEPA air cleaning devices in healthcare spaces; see [here](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/application-of-hepa-filter-devices-for-air-cleaning-in-healthcare-spaces-guidance-and-standards/).
* The same arrangements apply to staff and clean air standards in other areas I may need to go to during my visit, e.g. radiology or phlebotomy.
* Air quality is addressed in all communal areas including reception areas, lifts and corridors.

Given the greater levels of risk for vulnerable groups, mask wearing is clearly an equality issue; so, I would be grateful if you would provide me with a copy of your current Equality Impact Assessment on mask wearing.

I would also like to ask that the [Trust/clinic/surgery] signs up to the Covid Safety Pledge. This is an initiative aimed at employers, trade unions and other organisations, asking them to commit to protecting their staff and service users from Covid-19. These measures will have a beneficial effect on the current high rates of staff sickness, some of whom will be absent for Covid-19 related reasons. Further details on the Covid Pledge can be found [here](https://covidpledge.uk/).

I am very aware that all NHS staff have been working under huge pressure and staff go above and beyond their duties and provide an excellent service despite this.

Thank you for your help and support in addressing my needs and concerns and those of others.

Kind regards,

Name….

Copy to Clinical Staff

You may wish to send a copy of this letter to your consultant or lead nurse, if you are comfortable doing so