

Communication from Oxfordshire County Council

## Doctors in Oxfordshire are urging people to get medical advice if they are worried about symptoms of cancer.

A recent national survey suggests getting coronavirus or giving it to their family were among the top reasons that people would not come forward when they have cancer symptoms, along with fears that they could be a burden to the health service.

But NHS staff have worked hard to make sure people can get cancer checks and treatment safely, so there is no need to delay.

Dr Kiren Collison, GP and Clinical Chair of Oxfordshire CCG, said: “We strongly encourage anyone with concerns or worries about their health to contact their GP for advice. If you are worried about any new symptoms, then please get in touch with your surgery.

“We will be able to reassure you or if necessary get you to see a specialist quickly and safely. It is important to remember that the sooner cancer symptoms are picked up and treated, the better.”

Initial telephone consultations or via video mean people do not necessarily need to go to GP surgeries for check-ups, and if they do need to be seen in person then there will be measures in place to keep patients safe. Waiting to get help could have serious consequences for patients and put a greater burden on the NHS in the future.

Dr Shelley Hayles, GP and Planned Care and Cancer Clinical Lead at OCCG, said: “NHS staff here in Oxfordshire have made huge efforts to deal with coronavirus but we are also working hard to ensure patients can get essential services such as cancer checks and urgent surgery safely.

“The wishes of patients and their families will always come first, and we have to make sure that people feel safe coming to GP practices and hospitals, but our message is clear: people should seek help as they always would.

“We know that finding cancer early gives us the best chance to cure it, and ignoring potential problems can have serious consequences now or in the future.”

A major public information campaign launched last week to persuade people to contact their GP or 111 if they have urgent care needs and to attend hospital if they are told they should.