

Cleckheaton Group Practice – Update – August 2021

During the past 18 months everyone at the Practice has worked extremely hard to adapt to the current COVID restrictions and implement new ways of working to keep our patients and staff safe and well. This has seen the introduction of new ways of accessing healthcare, which we have had to implement and learn quickly.

At the end of March 2020, we moved very swiftly to a total triage model; replacing the majority of face to face appointments with telephone consultations, video consultations and e-consultations. As a Practice we will be keeping the triage model for our GPs in order that we can limit the number of people in the Practice at any one time, and hope to make the appointment more convenient to patients. Our GPs have been seeing face to face appointments all along, and will continue to arrange these face to face appointments where the GP feels that it is clinically appropriate.

Every staff member at the Practice has worked throughout the pandemic, and is continuing to do so. In terms of opening up, as many of you know, we have never been shut, and have in fact consulted with much higher numbers of patients than we did pre-covid (face to face, by telephone, by video and by e-consult). We have followed guidance issued by the Government, Kirklees CCG and NHS England. We have sacrificed time with our families and worked unsociable hours to ensure the changes were made to allow our patients to continue to receive healthcare.

Throughout the covid pandemic we have strived to make the surgery as safe as possible for all of our patients and staff, and we will continue to do so going forwards.

In addition to this we have carried out an unprecedented vaccination programme, whereby we vaccinated tens of thousands of patients (twice!) with covid vaccinations, whilst carrying out our “routine” work, and our flu vaccination programme!

We have also been supporting the hospitals that were unable to accept routine referrals due to the way that they work needing to change, and caring for the patients whose referrals could not be accepted or had been delayed. A huge amount of work has gone on behind the scenes over the past 18 months, with practice meetings, vaccination meetings, and many more, with lots of policies and protocols needing to be written or re-written due to the changing circumstances and stages of the covid restrictions.

We understand that it can be frustrating to still be asked to wear a face mask and to socially distance when attending the Practice; however we feel that this is very important in order to keep the Practice safe. We know that when patients come to us they are sick and vulnerable (and some have been unable to receive covid vaccinations for medical reasons) so we feel that it would be wrong to not take these small precautions to offer protection to people.

Many of our staff and GPs took reduced annual leave last year so that they could continue to provide a service to our patients. Everyone is entitled to take their annual leave and all of our staff deserve some time off from work. We have put in additional capacity over the summer holidays, at personal costs to the partners, so that patients are not impacted by this.

We appreciate that the majority of our patients are polite and appreciative of the work that we do. Unfortunately however, our Reception staff have recently been subject to an increase of verbal abuse and derogatory comments daily, from an increasing minority of patients. Our Practice team is faced each day with patients shouting, criticising and being unpleasant.

The Practice follows our Zero Tolerance policy. Anyone deemed to have breached this will receive a warning letter from the Practice. A repeated warning may lead to your removal from the Practice.

Please be kind as we emerge from the pandemic.