

Surgery News Update

In recent weeks we've had some feedback from patients who have understandably been frustrated or disappointed with the way the practice has been operating through what has been a difficult time for everyone. I'd like to thank all our patients who have taken the time to express their views, and I would also like to explain how and why we have changed how we provide our services the last few months"

Getting through to reception is taking longer, getting an appointment is taking longer and there seems to be far too many new rules to follow. I would ask you all not to allow this frustration to lead to being upset with the receptionist. They are the first in line to speak to you all and working within a system of rules that is not of their making but is a procedure they have been asked to follow by the GP's and Practice Manager. They will ask you the nature of your illness as this informs and assists with a better booking system which may be with a nurse, a routine appointment or indeed a same day appointment. It may even mean they suggest you call an ambulance.

In March when lockdown began we were advised to switch to telephone triage and to curtail certain services to reduce the spread of Covid 19. Here at Victoria Surgery this meant we had to make rapid changes in all departments.

Our appointments were no longer able to be held face to face unless a GP had spoken to the patient on the telephone first. During this conversation the patient may have been offered a video consultation or if this was not possible then asked to attend the surgery. Sometimes this face to face was conducted in the Car Park in the patient's car. All of our appointments were bookable on the day to allow for a rapidly changing situation and reduce cancellations.

The vast majority of nursing services continued face to face with infection control measures in place. I am very pleased to say during this period our nursing team undertook home visits for those patients who were shielding and still required patient care.

In Dispensary as we could no longer accommodate patients in the building, we created a collection service at our back door. Our telephone prescription order line remained open 24 hours a day 7 days a week. For our shielded and elderly patient's we increased our home delivery service to twice a week.

The surgery remained open during the bank holidays' this year to assist our patients who needed to be assessed by their GP and receive timely care and advice.

As lockdown eased we increased our nursing services reintroduced cervical smears and annual health checks. Appointments with your GP continued to be via telephone triage. Appointment booking returned to previous options of routine and urgent availability. I understand this frustrated some of our patient community, **however there remains the need to continue to reduce the spread of infection.**

With the arrival of September the surgery started to deliver flu vaccinations to eligible patients. This year we adapted to provide the service in a whole new way, always considering the health and wellbeing of our patients and staff.

In early September we were pleased to offer a car park “drive thru” clinic for those patients who had been shielding members of the community. We increased our range of flu clinics to include early morning’s late evenings and additional Saturday’s. We hope this has worked well for all our patient’s but we always welcome feedback.

In the last few months we have also introduced new ways and promoted existing facilities to assist with your query or help you get what you need fast.

- Online Services – this is available to all patients who have access to the internet. It can assist with medication ordering, general information about your health or assist with questions you may have. These online service’s include econsult , NHS App, Systm Online,
- Practice Website – This provides all relevant information to the practice and in addition links to other health organisations
- Video Consultation: May be offered by the GP after an initial telephone triage where suitable.

We would like feedback when you feel something has gone wrong. Complaint’s concerns, (and even a compliment!) can be addressed with myself, the Practice Manager. We are changing our ways of working at pace and on first attempt we may not always get it right but with your support we can continue to make it better.

Whatever arises in the coming months we wish to continue with our good reputation for patient care that is inclusive of all our patients and delivered in a safe and effective manner.

Jo Shaw

Practice Manager