

# Newsletter and Patient update June 2020

Posted on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Firstly, we at Church Avenue Medical Group would like to thank all our patients for their support and patience during the last few months. This show of support has been instrumental to all “Key workers”, employed across the multitude of environments, in maintaining morale and the delivery of key services and we thank you for it.

At the start of the pandemic, General Practice was advised to reduce all non-essential services and stop all but essential face to face appointments. We have transformed the way services are delivered; appointments will be provided by e-consultation, telephone and video consultation thereby changing the model of delivery significantly in the last few months. We have had positive feedback from many of our patients who have already used these new services.

We have also had to ensure that those patients who need a face to face appointment, but may have Covid symptoms, are seen in an environment that is safe for staff, patients and the public alike. Working with other Harrogate practices we had set up a “RED” hub at Mowbray Square so we could isolate possible cases. It is likely that this way of working may continue for the medium to long term and we therefore ask that all our patients respect the systems that we have put in place or may have to change to maintain our patients, our staff and the wider public’s safety.

It is now important that we start our “recovery phase” to services but it is unlikely that General practice will ever return to the model that we saw and used prior to this pandemic and our governmental directive is to continue to deliver as much, as can safely be delivered, remotely. Therefore, over the last few weeks, we have been working very hard to make changes across our services. These new ways of working have been put in place to ensure that our patients can continue to be able to access high quality health care in a safe manner.

How to access our services?

**PLEASE WHERE POSSIBLE DO NOT** visit our surgery sites without prior invite or arrangement.

**If you do attend the surgery for a pre-arranged appointment please arrive at your allocate time and not earlier. It is important that we limit the number of people in the building at any one time. You may be asked to wait outside.**

**Only one person in the foyer at any one time please, this is to allow access and egress from the practice.**

**Please where possible wear a face covering if attending the practice and continue to adopt the government guidelines regarding social distancing. For more guidance on this please visit <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.**

**Routine Appointments** – If you have a non-urgent health query that you would have booked a routine appointment for, please now use our e-consultation portal available through our website <https://www.churchavenuemedicalgroup.co.uk/>. This portal can, and should, be used

as the primary access point for all non-urgent medical issues, self-care help, self-referral to local services as well as administrative and general queries to the practice. We aim to respond within 2 working days to all these requests. Each query will normally take patients approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Some may think that this is time consuming however it should be considered that 70% of queries can be resolved this way without the need for travel to the surgery and thereby overall a considerable saving in time for all. Those that do not have access to this technology should continue to telephone the surgery.

1. **Urgent appointments** – If you have an urgent health problem, you have become unwell or had a sudden deterioration in your clinical condition. Please telephone the surgery to arrange to speak to a clinician.
2. **Medication Reviews** – We are adapting the way that Long Term Conditions (Asthma, Hypertension, Diabetes etc.) and medication reviews are being undertaken. Many of these will be undertaken remotely where possible and we ask that all our patients respond to invites in a timely manner to ensure that we can continue to prescribe your medication safely. If you decide to purchase a machine we will ask you to submit your readings when we require them.
3. **Routine immunisations** including childhood immunisation continue to run and we encourage all our patients who are eligible to continue to access this. Smear tests for eligible women have also now recommenced.
4. **Repeat prescription and medication requests** – Where possible these should be made via system online or through the NHS app which can be downloaded from your app store. We accept that not everyone has access to these technologies so please continue to drop off your request if you cannot access these. If an item is not on repeat, the request can be made via our e-consult platform and will be reviewed by our clinical team. For those collecting medication from dispensary we ask for your patience when collecting. We have initiated a delivery service for those patients that are shielding and do not have anyone able to collect their medication for them. We ask that you only come to the surgery to collect medication if you have received a request to collect via SMS or telephone to advise your medication is ready for collection.

Our appointment system will continue to develop over the coming months. Where possible, E-consults should be the primary access method for routine matters, thereby releasing capacity for more urgent matters for our clinical team. Pre-bookable appointments online are currently not available, however over the coming months we will be adapting and releasing certain types of appointments into this system.

Some useful web links for patients to utilise during this time are as follows:

Practice Website – <https://www.churchavenuemedicalgroup.co.uk/>.

E-Consult Link – <https://churchavenuemedicalgroup.webgp.com/treatmentCategory/showAll>

NHS App – <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app/> – not available for computers currently.

GOV.UK COVID page- <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Thank you for your understanding and support at this time.

