

## **Statement from the NHS in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight**

### **COVID-19: The way that general practice is changing**

Over the last couple of weeks, you are likely to have noticed a marked difference in the way things are being done in general practice as we manage Covid-19. Thank you for adapting so quickly to these new ways of working.

To limit the spread of Covid-19, we have worked to reduce footfall through practices by using online consultation systems like e-consult, telephone appointments and video consultations to ensure we continue providing you with the care you need.

**Our top priority is to keep our patients and staff safe whilst ensuring patients get the care they need.** Keeping our staff healthy is crucial so that they can continue to care for everybody, therefore GPs and their staff have been working together with other local surgeries to develop a system which will be able to meet these changing needs.

From now on, when you contact your surgery for an appointment you will receive an initial assessment through e-consult (on the practice website) OR by telephone, by a suitably trained clinician. It is essential that you give an accurate and detailed description of your symptoms when asked. This will allow us to provide you with the most appropriate treatment.

**If you have suspected Covid-19 symptoms** and, following a telephone assessment, need to have a further face-to-face appointment, this may not take place at your usual GP surgery. Instead you may be directed to another local site that has been specifically set up to better deal with your needs.

**If you need to have a non-Covid-19 related face to face appointment** and do not have any Covid-19 symptoms, you may still be able to access your usual surgery. However, please be aware that this may change. Services may need to be provided from a smaller number of practices if staff become unwell.

If, over the course of the next few weeks, you do have to go to a different surgery to the one you are used to, you might also see a doctor or nurse who you are not familiar with. Whilst we realise this could be inconvenient, we think it is important to keep people safe, reduce the spread of Covid-19 and get the maximum benefit from the healthcare resources which will be available. Your records will still be accessible securely to you and to them, ensuring they are able to provide you with the best possible care. A home visiting service, for patients who are housebound, will be provided but increasingly through practices working together.

Our clinical colleagues and support staff will be **working flexibly** in order make these new arrangements work and, when circumstances change to make it possible, GP surgeries across the area will resume a normal service.

## COVID-19: Our surgery plans and how this will affect you

If you have had any contact with the surgery over the last week or two, you are likely to have noticed a marked difference in the way things are being done. We have done this to minimise face to face contact between patients and staff, limit the spread of the Covid-19 virus and keep our practice team and patients as well as possible. The information below shows you how we plan to operate over the coming weeks:

### Making an appointment

- Our GP practice has now moved to a total triage system. This means that all requests for appointments must be made via the phone 023 92 242960 or online through our website [www.thecowplainvillagepractice.net](http://www.thecowplainvillagepractice.net)
- Each request will be passed to a doctor for assessment. You may find that we treat you by phone or we may ask you to come to the surgery;
- Access to the surgery premises will only be if you have been asked to do so and there will be clear arrangements discussed with you as to how we can safely do this. Please do not come to the surgery unless you have been specifically asked to do so.

### Attending your appointment

- If you need to have a face to face appointment, you may be asked to attend a different surgery and instruction will be provided to you about where to go and specifics around access and parking etc.
- Whilst you may have to go to a different surgery building to the one you are used to and you might see a doctor or nurse who you are not familiar with, your records will still be accessible securely to you and to them.

### Repeat prescriptions

- We may have already contacted you to collect paperwork and prescriptions
- If you are able to, please continue to use our website [www.thecowplainvillagepractice.net](http://www.thecowplainvillagepractice.net) to order your repeat prescription. You do not need to come to the surgery to register to do this;
- If you cannot order your repeat prescription any other way, then you may deliver this through the outside surgery letter box – this can be done without accessing the reception.

### How can you help?

- Please be patient – our phone lines are very busy;
- Do you have a condition that you can treat at home? If you do then please try to do this with advice from [NHS online](https://www.nhs.uk) or your local pharmacist;
- Do you simply need general advice? If you do, can you call 111 for this or visit our website to access E-consult [www.thecowplainvillagepractice.net](http://www.thecowplainvillagepractice.net)?
- If you think you may have Covid-19 **DO NOT** go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Use the NHS111 Online service to find out what to do next: [111.nhs.uk/covid-19](https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19);
- If you feel you need to see a doctor for non-Covid-19 symptoms then please call 023 92 242960 and we will discuss your needs;
- Please help the receptionist by giving them as much information as possible and answer any questions they may have. This will help us prioritise calls and have the right clinician call you back.

- Have you nominated a pharmacy for the transmission of electronic prescriptions? This will prevent the need for either you or pharmacy staff from coming to the surgery. The nomination of a pharmacy can be done via speaking to your pharmacist or GP surgery directly.
- Please check our website for updates [www.thecowplainvillagepractice.net](http://www.thecowplainvillagepractice.net)

We do anticipate some staff shortages due to isolation and sickness and aim to continue to give you the best possible care at this difficult time. We appreciate your continued support.