Letter to patients

Dear all,

Firstly we would like to thank you all for your patience and understanding during this difficult time for the community and the country as a whole. We have changed our working practice completely over the last few weeks in line with general recommendations in order to keep everyone as safe as possible.

As we move into the eighth week of lockdown we thought it would be useful to update you on the current position at the surgery. The Welsh Minister announced last week that Wales will continue in lockdown for a further three weeks and this will bring no changes for the surgery, patients or staff.

**The surgery doors remain closed**, you should only enter the building when you have been invited in by a member of staff who will be wearing protective equipment. Doctors are currently consulting by telephone, and we are in the early stages of doing some video calls where appropriate. The Doctors will discuss your symptoms over the telephone and then advise of the next step, for a few of you this may mean a visit to the surgery please don’t be alarmed by this; we have a strict cleaning protocol in place, clinical staff are wearing recommended disposable equipment and following the guidelines of changing this after each patient. We have also marked designated areas in the surgery for separation of clinical and administration staff. If you have been asked to come to the surgery for a review, an immunisation or a blood test and you are feeling unwell please seek guidance from us before you attend. Attendance with any symptoms that haven’t been discussed with a clinician before admittance could put our staff and other patients at risk. We are also aware that some patients who are currently shielding may have urgent clinical symptoms that need addressing now but have not made contact with the surgery, please make an appointment for a telephone consultation with your doctor now. We understand you may be nervous about coming to an appointment but please be reassured that strict guidelines are in place to keep patients safe.

**Minor Injury,** we are still offering this service but you **must** phone thesurgery first so you can be telephone triaged by the Doctor who will advise you of the next step.

**Prescription requests**, To clarify, any prescription requests received at the surgery need to be through the proper channels i.e. post, letterbox, fax, My Health on Line or by pharmacy order scheme you need to be clear on the medication that you want to order and also where you want to collect it from as we will be sending prescriptions direct to the pharmacy- they will not be available for collection at the practice. If you have not specified a pharmacy they will be sent to Boots, Knighton. Prescriptions need to be ordered in plenty of time, our timescale is 3 days for processing, then the pharmacies need time to dispense so you should be allowing a week. If you have not done so already please register for My Health on Line or if you use a regular pharmacy ask to register with their scheme, they will then attend to the repeat ordering for you.

**Routine reviews**, these were suspended in line with recommendations. As time goes on in line with other practices we will be offering some of these reviews by telephone, you will be contacted with an appointment slot and a nurse will ring you. For blood pressure monitoring, if you already have a machine or decide to purchase your own we can provide you with guidance on how to do the readings.

**Shielding letters,** there are very strict clinical guidelines on the eligibility for these letters which are issued to patients who are clinically extremely vulnerable. If you think you should have had one and have not please review the clinical guidelines on **https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19**, after reading this please contact the surgery and advise which category you think you qualify for and we will review and issue a letter if appropriate. There have been recent changes announced, if you consider that you belong to the new cohort of patients then you should receive your letter centrally. If you have not received one a week from now please contact the surgery.

**Useful contacts**:

Out of Hours – 111

NHS symptom checker, self help [www.nhsdirect.wales.nhsuk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhsuk/)

Check symptoms of Covid on line – https://.nhs.uk/covid-19

Community Connectors for help with forms, food parcels etc 01597 828649

Powys Covid enquiry line for any other queries 03456 027053

**Thank you for adhering to these guidelines to support not only our team, but our clinical colleagues and the many volunteers in the community that have been providing essential services**.

**Please continue to keep safe, keep your distance and keep to the rules, don’t put yourselves and others at risk**.

Yours sincerely Wylcwm Street Surgery