

Heywood Family Practice Patient Participation Group - July 2020 Update

As we are all aware during the Covid-19 pandemic, these are challenging times for all of us but especially so for our Health Services. We are very fortunate as patients of the Heywood Practice to have a great team of Doctors, Nurses and Staff who have all been adapting to the challenges they face, and will continue to face, whilst still delivering excellent health care to their patients.

Highlighted below are some of the changes that have been made to enable patients to continue to receive the treatment and care they need whilst protecting both patient and staff.

At the Surgery a one way system has been introduced at Reception, Perspex screens have been installed and patients are collected from the car park.

All urgent patients are still triaged on the phone as previously, but now the Practice is increasingly using alternative ways of further assessment via video consultations or asking patients to text in photos, for example of skin rashes.

Routine appointments are being conducted by phone in the first instance.

The aim is to minimise the number of patients having visit the practice, however if it is necessary then Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is used for any face to face consultations.

Risk assessments have been carried out and wherever possible staff e.g. Secretaries, are working from home using secure remote access. Within the building all staff observe social distancing guidelines throughout. If our GPs have needed to self-isolate due to members of their families having possible Covid-19 symptoms, they have been able to continue working from home using secure remote access. Updates from the various bodies such as Public Health England are discussed daily to ensure the most up to date advice is being followed. Currently the Practice has sufficient PPE and is able to obtain further supplies when needed.

Blood tests are still being done when the Doctor requests it. In addition routine new baby checks and immunisations continue to be done.

GPs are still able to refer any suspected cancer urgently and are starting to reinstate some services, such as smear tests

As well as using technology to do initial consultations, some assessments and to enable remote working, e-Consult is now available on the Practice website which enables patients to access self-help and makes it easier for the GP to assess the patient's needs.

Wherever possible patients repeat medication prescriptions are sent electronically to the local pharmacy.

All the Practice staff are experiencing changes on an almost daily basis and will continue to need to anticipate and react to the changing environment, however on a positive note communications with medical colleagues in the hospitals has improved with various advice and guidance services available - such as "Ask the Medical Registrar"

No doubt there will continue to be further challenges for us all but we can be sure that all the Doctors, Nurses and Staff of the practice will continue to provide us with the best level of care they can.