

August 2020 Update on what's happening at Heywood with regard to Covid

Patients are still being asked not to enter the building until invited to do so, and not to come to the building without prior agreement. All patients are asked to wear a face covering. Doctors are still triaging patients on the phone but will see someone if a face to face appointment is needed, including if they do not have access to technology for remote consultations, eg smart phone or computer, which has been done all along.

A small marquee has been erected in the back car park and some patients are seen in there rather than bringing them into the building, as there is evidence that the new coronavirus is not so readily transmitted in the open air

Updates from bodies such as Public Health England are now received three times a week, so lunchtime Covid meetings have reduced from daily to three times a week to reflect this. The rate of change has slowed, but there are still frequent changes required for the GPs and the other staff

Patients can now be referred for routine outpatient appointments in the hospitals again in most specialisms, and routine operations are starting to be done again, though currently patients have to isolate for two weeks prior. There are good systems between GPs and hospital consultants for 'Advice and Guidance' enabling GPs to get advice electronically directly from consultants which may avoid a referral and be much faster for the patients

Cervical smears continued to be done, but women are now being invited in for their routine smears and encouraged to have these done. The fitting of contraceptive coils has also restarted.

The dispensary has remained open throughout the pandemic for patients who live over a mile from their nearest pharmacy. Almost all prescriptions are now sent electronically to the pharmacy, and the new system, EPS4, means that although the prescription is sent to a designated pharmacy, it can be picked up from a different pharmacy if needed

In August, Improved Access and Extended Hours appointments, mainly by telephone, will restart. These will enable patients to have an appointment at 7.30 or 7.45am on Tuesdays and Fridays, between 6.30-7pm some evenings, and on Saturday mornings on the third Saturday of the month.

Please continue to contact the surgery for appointments by phone or via the website as this enables the practice to continue to offer appointments to those who need them whilst maintaining the safety of all staff and patients.