

Coronavirus update

We hope all our patients are in the best of health. We wanted to update you on some of the many changes that have taken place since the beginning of the pandemic, as we begin to start the process of returning to the “new normal”. Some of these changes are here to stay as we try to make the surgery as safe as possible for patients who require our care.

All urgent on the day problems are triaged by a senior GP

This ensures that they are dealt with promptly and safely

If your problem is urgent and needs a response on the day you should call the surgery at 8am to be booked on to the triage list.

There are no longer face to face clinics

Patients who are struggling with symptoms which could be caused by COVID-19 are being asked to attend for a face-face assessment at a “hot site” where they can be examined wearing the appropriate PPE.

If the problem requires an examination, and is not thought to be due to COVID-19, the clinician may try to assess via video consultation if possible. However, if a face-face is deemed necessary they will be asked to attend the surgery either on the day or booked into a future slot.

When attending please enter via the front entrance, ideally alone with the exception of when a child needs examining (one parent may attend).

You should try to wear your own mask around your nose and mouth, but we will provide you with gloves and an apron.

You will be escorted to the clinic room and asked to sit on the couch – please keep all your belongings on the couch to avoid the risk of contaminating the room.

The clinician will enter wearing PPE to examine. The face-face appointment is purely for examination, therefore all the history should be taken on the phone to minimise the time the patient and clinician spend face-face.

Once examination is complete the patient will be asked to leave via the back door. There is a bin located next to this to dispose of your PPE and a hand gel dispenser to use before you leave.

Routine advice calls

You may have a problem that does not require an on-the-day phone call, but is still important. Perhaps you have been holding off presenting due to all that has been going on. We would strongly recommend you to get in touch if you have had any worrying symptoms.

Routine problems are booked in to a phone slot with a clinician, and they may call you at any time during the day from a withheld number, so please answer as unfortunately a lot of time is wasted trying to get through to patients! Again if an examination is needed you will be asked to attend face to face as above. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire on the day of your appointment to ensure you have not developed any COVID-19 symptoms.

E-consult

This is a simple and effective way to inform us of a non-urgent medical problem which can be accessed via the surgery’s website. Please complete the questions as accurately as possible as it enables us to make the best assessment of how to deal with the issue. We will then contact you either by phone call, text message or ask you to attend the surgery if needed.

The role of telecommunication

The use of the new AccuRx text messaging service has been fantastic in allowing us to ask quick questions to patients or deliver instructions/advice. In order to be able to take part in

this service please ensure your contact details with us are up to date.

Patients are no longer able to collect sick notes from the surgery in person, but instead we have been sending them to patient’s mobiles electronically which has been very effective at reducing our carbon footprint and minimising contact between staff and patients too!

The use of images has been invaluable in assessing rashes/eye problems etc. These can be attached via e-consult or sent as a text message attachment. It also allows us to monitor the effect of a treatment by looking at before and after photos so please keep sending these!

Additional services

Physio extra – long term muscle/bone problems can be assessed and managed by physiotherapists. Patients can be booked directly into these slots without having to speak to a clinician first!

Green sites – aspects of healthcare which need to continue but are for “well” patients can be carried out at safe sites e.g. baby clinics. In addition to this we are re-introducing cervical screening clinics at the surgery which you can be booked in to if your smear is due.

Support

This has been an extremely challenging time and we thank you for your understanding and patience. Many of you may have lost a loved one through COVID-19 or other reasons. If you are struggling or need to talk to someone please don’t hesitate to get in touch.

With every best wish,

From all at the Strand Medical Centre.