



The James Cochrane Practice

Partners: Dr Richard Russell | Dr John Wood | Dr Paul Atkinson | Dr Ed Clarke

Salaried GPs: Dr Simon Jones | Dr Joanne Richardson | Dr Kathryn Boniface | Dr Ariadna Domingo | Dr Paula Cherry | Dr Emily Bayne

14th July 2020

Dear patient,

I hope this letter finds you as well as possible at this time.

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and encouragement. It certainly makes all the difference to us, to have the support and kindness of our patients behind us.

COVID 19 has had an overwhelming and devastating effect on us all. Many of us in the Practice, and I'm sure many of you at home, have caught the virus and thankfully recovered. Sadly however, we all know of friends, family and colleagues who have not. This virus is not picky and can infect any of us, so it is important that we remain alert.

Some of you will have 'shielded', protecting yourself, loved ones and greater society. Many of you have spent time away from work and from loved ones, and some of you have been required to work harder than ever. Together, our sacrifices have enabled the NHS to respond to those who have needed its care the most.

As we move forwards, I wanted to give you an update on what has happened at The Practice since March 2020, and what the future holds.

How did we adapt?

Prior to Public Health guidance being released, we re-organised ourselves within a matter of days to protect our staff, so that we could provide care to those who needed it. All of our patients played their part by supporting us in this. Within two weeks we were COVID 19 ready, and at around the time that national guidance was published, we found that we had already fulfilled the criteria.

- We were prepared for staff sickness, and this did happen.
- We worked from home, providing telephone and online consultations when we were isolating.
- A telecom entrance to the practice helped limit patients being put at risk from others
- Our staff started to wear full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), protecting patients from respiratory exposure.
- We created our 'Kendal Hub' to see patients with possible COVID 19 symptoms in the community and who did not need hospital treatment. We helped the patients of six different practices provide care for their population.
- The government mandated that we clinically triage all patients before offering any appointments in the surgery. This caused staff and patients to adapt to a different way of working, but it has allowed us to speak to more patients than before.

What does the future hold?

At the moment, we are working extremely hard to give you the care you need, but life is not back to normal for healthcare.

- We have measures in place to make sure that if you do need to come to the Practice, you feel safe in doing so. Our waiting areas allow for social distancing, we have perspex screens at the front desk, all of our clinicians wear full PPE, and we ask that you wear a face covering.
- It takes us twice as long to see you in the surgery due to ‘donning’ and ‘doffing’ our PPE, and de-contaminating our rooms between each patient.
- We continue to clinically triage all patients before offering any appointments in the surgery. We have been able to slightly increase the number of patients we are able to see face to face, however we are continuing to use telephone and video consultations for the majority.
- Normally, we would see you for routine care such as your asthma or diabetic review, but this is not currently recommended. We are trying to mitigate this by adopting more telephone reviews and video consultations.

Please bear with us

We are noticing that the demand for our services is starting to increase back to pre-Covid 19 levels. As the number of appointments we can offer remains reduced, we are getting full on some days and recognise that we are not always able to offer you the appointment you want. Our appointment book tries to balance your needs as a patient, with the need for a clinician to work safely.

We work with local teams that offer primary care appointments in the evening and weekends such as Cumbria Health on Call (CHOC) who offer Phlebotomy, Nurse and GP appointments. We also work with Kendal Urgent Treatment Centre (KUTC) who provide a primary care service, supporting patients needing urgent care that cannot wait. They are there for primary care problems and support for when general practice is full, however they are not an A&E department.

Finally, we will continue to work in this reduced but safe way for the foreseeable future. These are difficult times and we thank you for your patience and understanding. Please continue to be kind to our team as we work in this new way.

Stay safe, Stay well.

Dr Richard Russell
Partnership Chair
For and on behalf of The James Cochrane Practice Partnership.

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