



Since the coronavirus (COVID19) crisis started you may have seen some of the changes we have had to make to the Waterfield Practice. All of these changes have been thought through carefully, and have been made to ensure we have sufficient staff to provide a safe service and minimise the risk to both patients and staff. We also wish to reassure our elderly and more vulnerable patients that everything is still being done to ensure you will continue to be supported as always by the practice.

It is highly likely that many of the changes we have had to make will become permanent, and be the new way of working for The Waterfield Practice, as they will for many others.

We hope this newsletter will explain these changes to you.



Appointments will initially all be on the telephone and in some cases a video consultation following this. You may also be asked to send in photos of your health complaint if it is appropriate. These should only be sent to the practice secure NHS email account [enquiries.waterfield@nhs.net](mailto:enquiries.waterfield@nhs.net).

You will only be invited into the surgery if the GP, Nurse or Practice Paramedic feel they need to see you; if it possible to help you without a visit to the surgery then that is what will happen. If you are asked to come in to see the GP, Nurse or Practice Paramedic then you may find appointment durations are shorter than they have been in the past. This is because they will have already spoken to you on the telephone and have collected important information. It is also important for safety reasons to minimise the length of time you are in the surgery.



If you are visiting the surgery you will now need to wear a face covering or mask before entering the surgery. If you are attending for an appointment the clinician you will see will be wearing a mask too.

A face covering helps protect you and us. Information on how to make one can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>



## Visiting the surgery

You should only visit the surgery if you have been invited in for an appointment. For all other reasons you should use the telephone, email or online services.

When visiting you will find the doors locked but the practice remains open between 8:00am and 6:30pm, Monday to Friday.

You should wear a face covering, and upon arrival should use the intercom at the front door to speak to the receptionist. You should expect to wait outside until the GP, Nurse or Practice Paramedic is ready to see you, at which time you will be called in to the waiting room. When you enter you must use the hand gel available to disinfect your hands.



## Blood tests

We have made temporary changes to our phlebotomy (blood taking) service as a result of the effects of coronavirus (Covid-19).

Blood tests will still be provided where there is an essential need and by appointment only. 'Essential' is defined as those blood tests which are essential to guide management decisions for certain ongoing conditions, and which cannot be postponed without causing, or potentially causing, significant harm to the patient. This includes essential blood monitoring for medicines such as Warfarin (INR) or DMARDs. Appointments for blood tests that we consider essential, and that are done at the surgery, will only be available up to 3:30pm.

Well patients who are not showing Covid-19 symptoms, and would normally access blood tests at the practice, will need to attend either:

- Berkshire Primary Care Extended Hours Service (appointment only service)
- Heatherwood Hospital (walk-in clinic)
- Wexham Park Hospital (walk-in clinic)



## Repeat prescriptions

Repeat prescription services have not been disrupted but all repeat prescriptions are now sent electronically to your chosen pharmacy. If you haven't already done so, please let us know which this is. We would ask that you do not bring paper repeat requests to the surgery but instead, if you can, please make any request for a repeat prescription via our website [www.waterfieldpractice.co.uk](http://www.waterfieldpractice.co.uk).



## Online services

We would like you to avoid visiting the surgery unless you are invited in for an appointment. Instead please contact us by:

Telephone 01344 454626 Ralphps ride  
01344 869771 Warfield

Website [www.waterfieldpractice.co.uk](http://www.waterfieldpractice.co.uk)

Email [enquiries.waterfield@nhs.net](mailto:enquiries.waterfield@nhs.net)

These options allow us to help you with most things that you would need to contact the practice for.



## Travel services

We are no longer providing travel advice or travel vaccinations while our services are impacted by the coronavirus (COVID19) crisis.

Travel services are not an essential service and are considered an additional service under the NHS. As it is not compulsory that they are provided we have taken the decision to suspend these in order to continue to safely provide as many essential services as we can. It may be some time before our travel services are restarted and we would advise our patients to seek another provider for their travel needs.



## Personal Protective Equipment

If you are asked to see a GP, Nurse or Practice Paramedic for an appointment, you should expect to see them wearing a visor or goggles, mask, apron or gown and gloves. This can be unnerving, especially for small children. Please be prepared for this and be assured this is done for your and our safety.



## Referrals

The surgery is now able to refer patients to secondary care for further investigation and opinion. While we will make your referral without delay we are unable to manage the waiting time once the referral has been made. You may need to allow longer than normal for your appointment with a specialist.



## Cancer screening

NHS cancer screening services are still being provided and if you are invited to take part in bowel, breast or cervical screening it is important you attend for your appointment.



## Medical reviews

If you have a long term condition, for example diabetes or COPD, it is important that we still see you for your review. Our nurses will contact you for this, and as much as possible will do the review by telephone. Where it is not possible to carry out the review over the telephone, we will ask you to attend for an appointment for your long term condition review. Please attend for your appointment review.



## Don't put off contacting us

While our doors may be locked, the Waterfield Practice remains very much open. If you are worried about any changes in your health, notice any changes in an existing condition or new symptoms, please contact us without delay. Although many services have been impacted, referrals to investigate suspected cancer are still being dealt with as a priority.



## Patient's responsibility

Throughout this crisis, that we are all finding challenging, difficult to understand and that is increasing our anxieties, we have been delighted by the support we have received from our patients.

The biggest demonstration of this is how you have accepted all the changes that have been made and how you have only contacted the surgery when you have needed to. We cannot thank you enough for this.

These changes are likely to be with us for a lot longer yet, and we may never see the Waterfield Practice as it was. Some of that may be good and some of that we may find difficult.

It is so important our patients continue to help us. You can do this by:

- Accepting these changes, and the requests we make, in order to keep everyone staff and patients safe
- Following the important social distancing and hand washing guidance.
- Contacting the surgery when you need to, but not unless you do.