

“Assessment first” from GP practices open and providing services

The threat of infection from Covid-19 still exists within our communities, and locally, patients are being asked to continue to follow the guidance, stick to any restrictions in place and take the necessary precautions such as wearing face coverings and practicing good hygiene. GP practices are open and continue to provide services as they have done throughout the pandemic. This means that for patients, their GP practice is open and providing GP services. GP practice buildings are public buildings and as such must be kept Covid-secure. Your GP practice will already have a process in place for managing entry into the premises to help minimise the risk of anybody spreading the virus. Please continue to follow this.

New ways of providing GP services have been introduced in order to maintain access to your GP practice team whilst protecting you, others and staff. Triage (making an assessment of your condition and prioritising care accordingly) is an important part of how GP practices work. This has always been in place but has been vitally important during the pandemic.

GP practices are open and have been providing GP services throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. They have learned during the pandemic, that they can conduct consultations very well with the vast majority of patients using digital technology. The majority of common conditions can be assessed and diagnosed by your Doctor by telephone or video consultation. They are experienced and skilled in doing this. Using technology like this will help to protect you, your family and loved ones - and GP practice staff from the potential risk of the virus.

If your Doctor judges that your condition needs a consultation in a face-to-face appointment then this will be arranged, however this will be a clinical decision by the Doctor based on their judgement of the absolute need to do so.

These new ways of working provide mutual benefits to patients and your GP practice which is why before the pandemic we had a plan to start introducing these more frequently. The use of these digital technologies has been shown to improve patient experiences thanks to the convenience and increased access that they provide. GPs want to make sure that these new ways of working and the benefits they bring are not lost. Covid-19 has changed many aspects of our daily lives, with lots of positive changes. These new ways of accessing your GP and receiving care or treatment are just one of those.