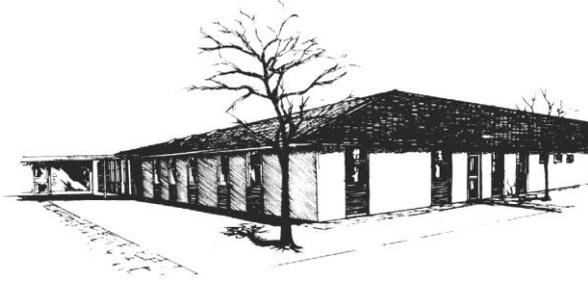


# THE NEW HALL LANE PRACTICE

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## Patient Briefing on Coronavirus 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

### **If you think you have Coronavirus symptoms**

Firstly, please do not come to the practice, your local pharmacy or A&E.

Your first port of call if you have symptoms should be the NHS111 online self-assessment portal (<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>).

If you do not have access to the internet, you can call us to request a call back for telephone advice.

For information on how to self-isolate, please visit

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

### **Holiday cancellation letters**

We would politely ask patients not to request their GP to write letters in order for people to cancel holidays due to COVID -19

The Royal College of General Practice supports this request

"Insurers and travel companies should be basing their decisions to offer refunds on advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Public Health England, not letters from GPs"

"Patients will undoubtedly have good and sensible reasons for not wanting to travel to certain places because of Covid-19, but this is not the same as being unable to travel due to existing illness, and it should not become the GP's responsibility to give patients advice about where not to travel."

Unfortunately writing such letters takes the GP away from caring for our patients at what will undoubtedly be a very busy time. We thank you for your understanding in this matter.

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### **Fit notes**

7 days off sick or less: If you're off work sick for 7 days or less, your employer should not ask for medical evidence that you've been ill. Instead they can ask you to confirm that you've been ill. You can do this by filling in a form yourself when you return to work. This is called self-certification.

More than 7 days off sick: If you're off work sick for more than 7 days, your employer will usually ask for a fit note (or Statement of Fitness for Work) from a GP or hospital doctor. Fit notes are sometimes referred to as medical statements or a doctor's note.

If you are self-isolating and require a fit note for after your 7<sup>th</sup> day of absence from work, you can create a self-isolation note online via <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note>

### **Hospital appointments & scans**

Hospitals are bearing the brunt of managing the Coronavirus, so they have had to make some difficult decisions and have paused some services which are non-essential.

The practice does not have any control over this situation and we are not able to predict when these services will become operational again.

### **Requests for reports (DVLA, solicitors etc.)**

As you can imagine we are under significant pressures due to Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. In line with BMA advice we are unable to respond to non-essential paperwork at the current time.

We will keep your request and aim to deal with it once the situation normalises. We suggest you check with us in the future if you have not had a response.

However If you feel you need urgent medical information please contact us as we may be able to provide you with online access to your medical record.

### **Early prescriptions**

Just as we are all finding in the shops, so the pharmacies are also reporting a large increase in the number of prescriptions they are being asked for, which is leading to shortages.

It is therefore important that we do not issue prescriptions early in order to ensure that supplies are not exhausted.

### **Inhalers**

If you have not been prescribed an inhaler in the past 12 months, we will not be able to provide you with a prescription until you have had a review with a practice nurse.

### **Paracetamol px**

We understand that there may be a shortage of over-the-counter paracetamol at present, but we are still not able to issue prescriptions for paracetamol unless there is an ongoing medical reason for us to do so.

### **High-risk patients**

These are patients that would usually be invited for a flu vaccination. The advice to these patients is to try and avoid unnecessary contact. However, if you are a key worker the guidance states that you should still attend your place of work unless you have agreed otherwise with your employer.

### **Very High risk patients**

The government, with the help of hospital consultants and other agencies, has identified 1.5m members of the public who would be at very high risk if they were to contract Coronavirus. Because of this, these patients have been written to and expressly told to self-isolate for a period of 12 weeks – this is known as ‘shielding’

Currently, the only people in this category are those who;

People falling into this extremely vulnerable group include:

- Solid organ transplant recipients.
  
- People with specific cancers:
  - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
  - people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
  - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
  - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
  - people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
  - people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
- People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
- Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

If you have received a letter you can find out further information at

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>

Please do not call the surgery to see if you are on this list. Letters and texts will be sent out directly to vulnerable patients by Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

The practice is due to receive further information from NHS Digital that we will use to identify a further cohort of patients who may be required to be added to this group,

but as yet (31<sup>st</sup> March 2020) we have not received this information or details about whom we need to inform once these patients are identified.

Any patient that is subsequently added to the list will be contacted directly, either by the practice or by the Coronavirus co-ordination team.