

PATIENT NEWSLETTER

ST RICHARD'S ROAD SURGERY

IMPORTANT PATIENT INFORMATION

A FOND FAREWELL TO DR WILLIAMS

As many of you may already be aware, Dr Williams will be retiring from the practice at the end of March this year.

We hope you will join us in wishing Dr Williams all the very best for his retirement.

To enable patients to contribute toward his farewell we are inviting patients to send in their messages, so we can include these in a book we are preparing for him. If you have a special message you would like us to include, please send these to us via email: kmccg.strichardsroadsurgery@nhs.net or you can pick up a message card, if you are visiting us for an appointment, and pop the completed card in our post box in reception.

Infection prevention control guidelines remain in place

The highest priority for the NHS remains the safety of staff, patients and visitors.

While COVID restrictions have ended in many settings in England, everyone accessing or visiting healthcare settings must continue to wear a face covering (unless they are exempt) and follow social distancing rules.

Public Health England's infection prevention control guidelines and hospital visiting guidance are therefore set to remain in place for all staff and visitors and across all health services including hospitals, GP practices, dentists, optometrists and pharmacies to ensure patients and staff are protected.

Read the guidance provided by Kent & Medway CCG at: <https://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/your-health/coronavirus/Face-coverings-still-needed-in-healthcare-settings>

COVID Update

We still have a number of our clinicians and administration staff off with COVID.

Please help us to help you by using eConsult wherever possible, this will help us to help you and better manage the increasing demand for appointments.

A short patient guide on getting the right NHS help in Kent and Medway is now available [to download](#).

This Stop Think Choose campaign has been designed to help relieve pressure across the healthcare system by supporting patients to make the best choice about healthcare. It contains information on using a pharmacy, NHS 111, urgent treatment centres, and signposts to the dedicated web page: www.stopthinkchoose.co.uk

General Practice is Open:

If you feel unwell or have any worrying symptoms, such as potential signs of cancer, you should seek medical assistance.

GP practices are open and here to help however, because of the need to minimise the amount of face to face contact to keep you safe, most appointments in the first instance are carried out over the phone or via video. In an emergency, for example if you think you might be having a heart attack or stroke, call 999.

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If a face to face appointment is needed you will still be seen in person by a clinician.

Telephone appointments are not suitable for everyone– if you need a physical examination or blood test, for example. You and your clinician can reach a decision on what is best for you.

If you have Coronavirus symptoms you should follow the current COVID guidance and call NHS 111 if your symptoms worsen. You should arrange to take a test by visiting www.nhs.uk or by calling 119 but do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

What to do when the surgery is closed:

If you require medical advice or support, please use the following link to access care and advice: www.stopthinkchoose.co.uk. The link has been designed to help explain the healthcare options available to patients.

Unwanted mobility equipment drop-off points

People with mobility equipment they no longer need are being urged to return them to new, dedicated drop-off points at hospitals in Ashford, Canterbury and Margate.

This includes equipment loaned by the NHS or Kent County Council through NRS Healthcare, such as commodes, walking frames, raised toilet seats, shower chairs, free-standing toilet frames, perching stools, chair raisers, kitchen trolleys and wheeled walkers. Crutches can also be returned. [Drop-off point details](#) are online.

Please don't abuse our staff: It's not in a day's work

Version March 2022

Sadly, NHS staff across Kent and Medway are reporting more and more incidents of the abuse they face when they go into work.

In an open letter signed by chief executives from all NHS trusts in Kent and Medway, people are asked to be kind to NHS staff.

The letter says: "The overwhelming majority of our patients, clients and service users are respectful of the years of training and the skills healthcare professionals have developed so they can care for others.

People understand the caring and compassionate nature that makes someone want to work for the NHS; whether they are clinicians or in support roles.

It goes on to talk about the commitment to high-quality care all NHS partners have and that while it is a small minority of people who behave this way towards NHS staff, the consequences can be far reaching.

"We understand the frustration when you may have to wait a little longer at a clinic appointment, urgent treatment centre or emergency department, or when you may not be able to get through to a GP practice on the phone.

"Some people don't understand why we are still asking them to wear masks in healthcare settings when they don't wish to do so. We also know others don't wish to participate in the Covid-19 vaccination programme. The second is a personal choice; the first keeps our staff safe.

"However, what we cannot accept is abuse – verbal or physical – towards our workforce. They are there to help, not be abused."

You can find out more at: <https://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/news-and-events/news/nhs-staff-deserve-respect>

Dr S J T Williams and Partners