

## **JULY 2021 NEWSLETTER FROM NEW LYMINGE SURGERY AND THE PPG**

### **UPDATE ON THE VACCINATION PROGRAMME FOR NLS**

As you are aware, the majority of NLS patients received their Covid Vaccinations at either the Oaklands Surgery or a vaccination hub. Now that the initial cohorts have all been vaccinated, Oaklands are reducing their clinics and remaining patients are using local vaccination hubs. All patients yet to receive their vaccine are advised to book as soon as possible.

### **TELEPHONE ACCESS**

The Practice is very aware that patients experience difficulty in getting through on the telephone. This is the situation with every GP Practice at these very pressured times and NLS are using all available members of the reception team to answer the phone lines at peak times in order to overcome this as far as is possible.

### **E CONSULT**

For all patients with internet access, using this facility for medical issues will take pressure from the telephone lines, all econsults are triaged by clinicians and patients will be sent either a text message or will be phoned with a telephone consultation time slot. These consultations are prioritised according to the urgency of the medical need. If you are unsure how you can access the E CONSULT facility, please ask at the reception desk or look on the NLS WEBSITE. If, as a result of your telephone consultation with a GP, it is decided that you need to be seen, the GP will make an appointment for you to attend the surgery.

### **FACE TO FACE CONSULTATIONS**

GPs will continue to triage patients through telephone consultations but at the present time, it is not possible to request, or book a face to face appointment on line. This situation is under national and local discussion and the Practice will keep patients informed of any changes.

### **2021 FLU VACCINATIONS AND COVID 19 BOOSTERS**

There are currently clinical trials underway concerning the optimum way to deliver both the seasonal flu vaccine and the Covid 19 booster jabs to the relevant groups of patients. It is hoped/envisaged that these vaccinations can be delivered at the same time but, until the results of the clinical trials are available, no firm plans can be made.

### **INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS FROM THE NHS**

- GP practices are open and have been open throughout the pandemic but they are very busy.
- Please treat practice teams with respect, they are trying to help.
- There are other ways of getting in touch than phoning, please use them if you're able to as this keeps phone lines clearer for those who can't.

- GP teams have a range of trained clinicians that can help you be seen more quickly.
- GP practice teams have been instrumental in the rollout of the vaccination programme.

We are aware there are significant problems getting through to us on the phone. We are sorry this is the case and would like to explain a little about why that is.

Many GP surgeries across the country are in a similar position. We understand how frustrating it can be for it to take longer than normal.

We would like to reassure you we are working hard to resolve the situation.

There are three things that are challenging us:

1. There has been an unprecedented post-lockdown increase in demand. Part of this is because many of our patients have been managing health issues themselves rather than contacting their doctor over the last year and some hospital procedures and appointments have been necessarily delayed. As confidence in general is returning, patients are now quite rightly contacting us.
2. We have been heavily involved in delivering the country's largest ever vaccination campaign.
3. We have had to change the way we work to keep things safe for our patients and our staff.

What can you do to help?

- Choose well – can the pharmacy help your symptoms? Call 111 if you are unsure which sort of treatment you need. You can also go online [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk)
- Download the NHS app. You can use this to book and cancel appointments and order repeat prescriptions.
- Use our online consultation system, if you are able to.
- Cancel appointments you no longer need.

It's useful to remember our teams are on the front line and see both the best and the worst of us all. They work incredibly hard to help patients navigate the system, but may not be able to offer you exactly what you want at all times.

Please be patient and courteous, they want to find the best solution as much as you do.

We are grateful for your understanding.

New Lyminge Surgery GP partners and Practice Manager.”