

Camden Surgery Newsflash June 2021

New NHS guidance for General Practice from 17th May is as follows with an explanation as to our planned implementation. Thank you for bearing with us through these further changes as the guidance evolves at rapid pace:

- **GP practices must all ensure they are offering face to face appointments**

From 17th May, government guidance allows up to 6 people or 2 households indoors. We are very aware of managing the number of people in the building due to its size and capacity, in particular we need to reduce the risk in the waiting room and corridor areas. We have offered face to face appointments throughout the pandemic and will continue to do so. For patients' safety, we will continue telephone triage as the first point of consultation and the clinicians will continue to organise face to face appointments where appropriate. We plan to increase capacity to allow for these changes whilst still ensuring patient safety and that risks are kept to a minimum. We will wait to hear further guidance for the 21st June planned changes.

- **Patients and clinicians should have a choice of consultation mode. Patients' input into this choice should be sought and practices should respect preferences for face to face care unless there are good clinical reasons to the contrary, for example the presence of COVID symptoms**

This choice will be discussed between the clinician and patient during the initial telephone triage and the consultation mode will be decided upon and arranged.

- **All practice receptions should be open to patients, adhering to social distancing and IPC guidance.**

The practice reception and dispensary has been open to patients via the front surgery entrance since 12 April 2021. Please be aware that, at busy times, you may need to wait outside so that we keep footfall in the surgery safe and adhering to guidance.

- **Patients should be treated consistently regardless of mode of access.**

By continuing with telephone triage as a first point of contact, all patients will be treated consistently.

Flooring

We are replacing the flooring in the corridors and waiting room from carpets to vinyl to assist with infection control measures and enable us to increase notices for social distancing requirements in the building.

GP's

The GP's and staff in the practice are working extremely hard to try and clear the backlog of work created by the pandemic. We are also adding additional GP and nurse surgeries where staff are available. It is, therefore, very disheartening to hear of patients thinking that GP's are not working as hard as before the pandemic, when, in fact, GP surgeries are working harder than ever for patients. A recent BMA study showed that GP surgeries delivered nearly 3 million more appointments (not including the Covid vaccine programme undertaken by practices in addition) in March than they did in the same month 2 years ago before the pandemic. The article echoes many GP practices' thoughts of how "GP's working 11 or 12 hour days, often leading heroic efforts to protect as many people as

possible in their communities against a disease that has had such a devastating impact on all of us, it is heart-breaking and completely demoralising to hear accusations that general practice is not open and that patients are not being seen. It may feel slightly different with changes put in place for the protection of staff and patients alike, but General Practice is open and staff need support, patience and understanding as they work harder than ever before”

For example, the average number of contacts per GP expected by the NHS is 25 per day. Our GP's are regularly offering approximately 15 telephone consultations and 6 face to face consultations every day. In addition to this, the GP's deal with approximately 25 “urgent/on the day” consultations per day between 2 or 3 GP's. Each day the GP's process and action approximately 60-80 consultant or other letters, 50 – 60 medication reviews and 50 results along with dictating referral letters and answering e-mail and website queries. We would like all of our patients to know that we are still here, as we have been throughout the last year working on behalf of all of our patients in a very difficult situation when demand far exceeds the capacity available. Therefore, we would be grateful if patients could ensure they are available for their arranged telephone consultations and attend for arranged face to face appointments or cancel if not needed, thank you.