



## Patient Participation Group (PPG) Newsletter

### Contact us:

Patient Participation  
Group Kitwood Unit  
Herts and Essex Hospital  
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Please do not use the main  
reception telephone  
number to contact the PPG

### About Covid-19 Edition

This special edition is focused on the functioning of Parsonage Surgery during the current pandemic. The PPG would like to express their sincere thanks and gratitude to all the Parsonage Surgery Staff who put their personal health and their own family lives at risk by striving in these challenging times to provide frontline health care and advice to all their patients.

#### Summary statement from Dr Jagjit Takhar and Michelle Ford.

Due to the current COVID-19 Pandemic, Parsonage Surgery has embraced new ways of working by using technology such as eConsult, accuRx, Video consultations, and also telephone triage of appointments, staff working remotely and collaboration with local GP Surgeries / wider NHS Teams.

We appreciate that this is a worrying time for patients; our staff are doing all they can to offer ongoing help in following Government guidelines during this crisis. Our priority continues to be providing care for all our patients.

*Our team would like to thank patients for their understanding and support during this difficult time and for embracing the changes to the way primary care is currently delivered.*

### PPG highlights

- Information presented here is best knowledge at time of publication and is liable to change at very short notice.
- To answer general questions of Parsonage GP Practice during the Covid-19 crisis please email your question to the PPG

### Parsonage Surgery - New Ways of Working

#### eConsult

This online service enables people to check their symptoms and receive medical advice. eConsult can be accessed on the first page of our website. There is a simple online form to complete which allows you to get advice and treatment by the end of the next working day. eConsult is working well for both patients and clinicians, with good patient feedback.

Please **do not walk into any GP practice** as we are triaging all patients by telephone or eConsult before inviting the few in that need to be seen.

#### accuRx

This new software has been installed, enabling clinicians and admin staff to text patients with responses to their queries or with general advice about their condition.

It also enables the GP to set up a video consultation with a patient. A text message is sent to a patient with a link to a secure video meeting. The GP can then review patient symptoms by video link, advise and prescribe accordingly.

As all of this system operates through mobile technology, it is important to ensure that your mobile number we have on record is up to date. If not, please let us know.

#### Maternity Information – until further notice

Antenatal and postnatal care is essential to ensure the wellbeing of pregnant women and their babies. All pregnant women who are WELL should attend their care as normal. If patient is pregnant and has symptoms of possible Covid-19 infection, they should call to defer routine visits until after the isolation period is over and can contact their midwife for guidance.

## High Risk Patients

The government has already written to the VERY high-risk group via a national database, advising they shield themselves for 12 weeks. Following guidance from NHS England our Clinicians have reviewed our own searches to identify further patients who fit the VERY high-risk criteria and additional letters have now been sent.



Deserted Stortford  
(Image courtesy of BS Independent)

### Myth Busters

*Some manufacturers are selling products for the diagnosis of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. The current view of Public Health Eng is that use of these products is not advised, that there are no CE-marked tests for home use, and it is illegal to supply such products.*

### Extended Access (HUB) Clinics

These clinics are running as normal with both Nurse & GP appointments being conducted as telephone consultations.

Appointments can be booked via our reception team by phone, email or eConsult.

## Covid-19 Hot and Cold Clinics

Parsonage Surgery in collaboration with South Street, Church Street, Central and Much Hadham Surgeries have been working together to provide 'hot' (suspected Covid-19) and 'cold' (non-Covid-19) primary care sites.

**Cold clinic** is Thorley Health Centre, Villiers-Sur-Marne, Thorley Park, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 4EG.

The cold clinic is being utilised for the continuation of baby immunisation clinics, pathology testing for immunocompromised patients and the administration of necessary Zoladex and Prostag injections.

If you require any of these three services, please contact Parsonage Surgery by phone, email or eConsult and we can book you an appointment in the cold clinic.

**Hot clinic** is at Haymeads Health Centre, Herts & Essex Hospital, Haymeads Lane, Bishops Stortford. CM23 5JH

- Patient's will be double triaged, firstly by their own GP surgery and then by the GP who is holding that day's hot clinic (to ensure they are appropriate for a face to face appointment). At this point they will be given the time and location of their face to face appointment
- Patients will be asked to park in the designated "COVID19 – reserved for clinical emergencies only" parking bay (no parking ticket required) by the entrance
- Patients will be asked to STAY IN THEIR CAR until they receive a text or are called with instructions
- Patients will be warned that they will be seen by a GP in full PPE

## Minor Injuries Unit (MIU)

To respond to the pressure that Covid-19 is placing upon our local health system, Minor Injuries Unit will now be open **9am-4:30pm weekdays and weekends**, including bank holidays with expanded capacity for telephone and video consultations. Please **call MIU first**. They will assess you over the phone and then let you know if you need to come into Herts & Essex Hospital. Telephone MIU on 01279 827450

It is still being run by the wonderful ANPs but will have the added benefit of a Physio three days a week.

Herts & Essex Minor Injuries Unit remains an alternative to A&E attendance for patients with minor impact injuries, dressings, stitches, fractures, lacerations, penetrating foreign bodies, burns, whiplash, abscesses, bites, stings & sports injuries. Patients are seen on a first come, first served basis – you do not need an appointment, however, patients deemed to be urgent will be given higher priority.

MIU are also unable to administer x-rays to the face, chest/back, or abdomen.

There are no x-ray facilities at weekends or bank holidays (but we may request one for next normal working day and provide a temporary splint/plaster cast if required).

MIU remain **unable** to treat hip injuries, children under two years, chest, abdominal, back pain; asthma, colds/flu, dizzy spells, intoxicated patients, or mental health symptoms.

### Surviving Isolation:

MIND:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

Every Mind Matters  
<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>



### NHS111

Please access the 111 service online rather than calling them as their phone lines have been incredibly busy.  
<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

Only call 111 if you cannot get help online.

### PPE Donations:

We are extremely grateful to everyone who has offered to manufacture, supply or donate PPE to frontline workers across Hertfordshire to help bolster our supplies. Patients can continue to contact us via [parsonageadmin@nhs.net](mailto:parsonageadmin@nhs.net)

To ensure PPE meets the necessary standards, we are asking people to visit

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/health-in-herts/professionals/covid19-ppe.aspx>

### Carer's Champion Introduction

My name is Faye and I am the Carer's Champion for Parsonage Surgery. You can contact me on the surgery number or by email [parsonageadmin@nhs.net](mailto:parsonageadmin@nhs.net)

As part of my role, I can signpost patients and their carers to various resources. Through this challenging time help is still available and a main way to get support is through Carers in Herts. One such service that can lift a weight off people's minds is contingency planning, so that if anything were to happen whereby the carer cannot carry out their role, people would know who to contact and what the plan of action would be. Patients can contact Carers in Herts directly on 01992 586969 or [carersinhertfordshire@nhs.net](mailto:carersinhertfordshire@nhs.net) alternatively patients can email me at the surgery and I can refer.

Another network that has been set up is Operation CommUNITY, which consists of several local organisations working together to provide services such as food and medication deliveries for those who don't have people able to shop for them. This part of the service is being run by Herts Help who can be contacted on 0300 123 4044. A befriending telephone line, open 7 days a week 8 till 8 has also been set up. For this service, please call 01279 942025. You can also visit the Operation CommUNITY website for more details <https://www.operationcommunitybs.org/> or call on 01279 504748, 9am - 1pm, Monday to Friday.

**Age UK Herts** 5 supermarkets have joined together to deliver next day essential shopping for elderly. There are 40 basic essential items on the list, ring 0345 611 6111 Option 5 and place the order. Pay by contactless, driver will have machine.

**Citizens Advice Bureau** 01920 459944 <https://citizensadviceeastherts.org.uk/>

**The Silver Line - helpline for older people** Call Silver Line ANYTIME on: 0800 4 70 80 90 Web: <https://www.thesilverline.org.uk> The Silver Line is the only free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people, open 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

### Cervical Screening:

We will still be offering cervical screening for patients with previous high-risk changes. Routine cervical screening can also be carried out for patients considered to be low risk from a coronavirus perspective so, if your routine test is due, contact us to book an appointment. The reception team have already been contacting eligible patients and we would encourage this offer of screening to be taken up.

### PAH/HEH Blood testing (phlebotomy)

If your blood test is not urgently required and could wait at least 4 weeks, we would be grateful if you could delay presenting to phlebotomy services. This will not only minimize your exposure but will also allow the phlebotomy team to concentrate their resources towards those in urgent clinical need at this difficult and worrying time. Our Clinicians are monitoring patients with Long Term Conditions and may request you attend for your blood test from May 2020 onwards.

## Outpatient appointments at local hospitals

At Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH), all outpatient appointments are changed to telephone consultations and if a patient needs to be reviewed by a consultant in a face to face situation then the hospital will contact those patients directly with clear instructions about where to go at the hospital.

### **Patients requiring Fast Track Referral on 2 weeks wait (2ww) suspected cancer pathways**

2 weeks wait referrals will be seen as normal; these have not been suspended. The consultants are triaging patients. After a telephone consult, they will decide if the patient needs to be seen urgently or if they can be deferred for 3 months. Parsonage Clinicians are continuing to refer as normal.

### **Rivers Hospital**

All face to face outpatient appointments since Monday 30th March have been cancelled, and **no new outpatient bookings will be accepted, for NHS or for privately funded patients over the next 3 months.** The only exceptions include follow-ups and/or, standard wound dressing appointments which should continue as part of the post-operative service. Treatments for patients who are already on an urgent treatment pathway will also continue as to stop that treatment would be detrimental to the patient outcome. These appointments will continue for as long as is practicably possible for both NHS and privately funded patients; specific examples being cancer/oncology treatment, long term ophthalmology treatments where patients having regular injections for age-related Macular Degeneration may otherwise lose their sight.

**Follow Ups.** As an alternative to face to face appointments, where possible the Rivers teams are offering telephone and FaceTime follow ups with patients including Physiotherapy. This applies to NHS and privately funded patients.

## Immunisations and Vaccines FAQs - Public Health England - Updated April16th

### **Why aren't you stopping routine immunisations?**

Whilst preventing the spread of COVID-19 and caring for those infected is a public health priority, it is very important to maintain good coverage of immunisations, particularly children. Protecting the individual will avoid outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases that could increase further the numbers of patients requiring health services.

### **Should people/babies really still go and be immunised at their GP surgery even though there is a risk that by doing this they may be infected with COVID-19?**

GP Surgeries will take all possible precautions to protect you and your baby from COVID-19. People should still attend for routine vaccinations unless they are unwell (check with your GP whether you should still attend) or self-isolating because they have been in contact with someone with COVID-19. In these circumstances please rearrange your appointment. Babies, toddlers and pre-school children in particular need vaccinations to protect them from measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), rotavirus, diphtheria, whooping cough, meningitis, polio, tetanus, hepatitis B, TB and more.

### **What are "routine" childhood immunisations?**

Different vaccines are given at different ages to protect you and your child. They form part of the national immunisation programme and are offered free of charge by the NHS. The national immunisation programme is highly successful in reducing the incidence of serious and sometimes life-threatening diseases such as pneumococcal and meningococcal infections, whooping cough, diphtheria and measles. It remains important to maintain the best possible vaccine uptake to prevent a resurgence of these infections. Some children will also need protection with neonatal BCG and hepatitis B vaccination. Both BCG and all doses of targeted hepatitis B vaccines should also be offered in a timely manner.

### **If you are not doing school age immunisations, isn't there a risk that we will see big increases in the diseases those children are normally vaccinated against?**

School aged immunisations will be rescheduled. UK government has provided clear public health advice on specific measures to take to prevent further Coronavirus cases which includes social distancing.

### **Do GP surgeries really still have the time to do immunisations?**

Practices will be busy responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the routine childhood immunisation programme will continue to play an important role in preventing ill-health through causes other than coronavirus infection.

### **How important is it that you get your immunisation at the time you are called? Is there a risk in delaying for a few months and if there isn't then why don't we stop and reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 through a visit to the general practice?**

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that routine childhood immunisations are started and completed on time. Infections such as invasive pneumococcal and meningococcal disease are now much reduced in incidence. To prevent resurgence, infants still need protecting through vaccination. Pertussis continues to circulate at elevated levels, and it remains important that pregnant women are offered the pertussis vaccine, and that their babies start receiving protection against this, and other infections, from 8 weeks of age.

## Electronic repeat dispensing (eRD) service

To support our staff during COVID-19 the In-Practice Pharmaceutical Advisor for NHS East & North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group is currently providing active support in identifying suitable patients / setting up / changing patients onto eRD.

This service could help you if you regularly get a prescription for the same medication. Your doctor will give your pharmacy permission to dispense a series of prescriptions for you. This means you do not need to arrange repeat prescriptions, you can just go to your pharmacy to collect your medication when you need it.

### How to sign up.

Our In-Practice Pharmaceutical Advisor will continue to contact suitable patients, alternatively speak to your pharmacist or your GP surgery to see if you are eligible.

### Benefits of using EPS and eRD

The benefits of these services include:

- saving the NHS millions of pounds each year
- being free, easy and saving you time
- being reliable, secure and confidential
- saving the environment by going paper free

### If you are on eRD, you:

- do not need to ring your GP or order a repeat prescription – your medication will already be waiting at the pharmacy for you when you need it
- will not get a paper prescription



**NHS**

## electronic Repeat Dispensing

In response to coronavirus (COVID-19), GPs and pharmacies are moving suitable patients to electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD).

You might be suitable for eRD if you receive regular or repeat medicines that do not change regularly.

**How eRD can help you:**

- Your GP can authorise your medicines to be collected monthly or two monthly from your pharmacist
- There's no need to contact your GP every time you need to order a repeat prescription - you can go straight to your pharmacy
- Your pharmacist will check it's still safe for you to receive the medicine every time you collect
- Your pharmacist will let you know when you need to contact your GP to review your medicines

eRD can also save time and money for your GP practice, pharmacy and the NHS. Ask your GP or pharmacist about switching to eRD today.

For more information visit:  
[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/eRD](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/eRD)

TheAHSNNetwork

## Parsonage Surgery- Clinical and Administration Summary Update

Below is an overview of some of the work our team have been concentrating on recently:

- 'Comfort calls' from the clinical team to patients with long-term conditions and facilitating their on-going monitoring where possible.
- Contacted patients who do not currently have online access so that we can get them signed up to SystemOnline and make the process of ordering repeat medications easier for them.
- All admin and clinical staff have completed an e-learning module on coronavirus
- Issued personalised guidance to all patients who we believe fit into 'at risk' groups following the government shielding strategy
- Offered support to the local teams looking to set up new response hubs in Hertfordshire
- Helped source and distribute PPE to key workers in the local community
- Continued with all routine and urgent prescription requests
- Changed our waiting room structure to support social distancing
- Supported isolating team members and enabled remote working
- Re-designed our services to free up nurses and GPs to phone patients with routine and urgent queries
- Introduced the technology to support video consultations
- Supported national work to ensure patients records are appropriately shared to other healthcare organizations
- Adapted to the many changes in legislation around the way we will work with other organization in the future