

Patient Update about How Services Are Operating during the Covid19 Pandemic

1st June 2020

During the coronavirus pandemic, our staff have been working hard to ensure that all patients who need urgent care – not just those with coronavirus – have been able to get it.

To avoid unnecessary contact, some non-urgent appointments have been postponed and others delivered differently using technology such as video consultation.

We are asking all patients who need advice or a consultation to telephone us in the first instance or complete an eConsultation on our website (<https://www.staffahealth.co.uk/>) in order to get the help they need.

We will continue to ask patients to attend face-to-face only when it is really necessary, and where it can be done safely without putting our patients, the public or our staff at greater risk of catching coronavirus.

Where possible, appointments will continue to be offered using remote services such as a video or phone consultation. If this is not possible and you need to be seen face to face we will arrange this.

Clearly, coming into a surgery may be a worry for you at present; however we have taken every precaution we can to ensure everyone remains as safe as possible during their appointment. This includes the following:

- Separation of suspected Covid-19 patients from other patients. At the moment the Stonebroom site is being utilised for patients with symptoms of Coronavirus where they cannot self-care or be managed remotely
- Clinical staff wearing full protective equipment (PPE) which protects you and them
- Hand sanitiser as you enter the surgery
- Social distancing in the waiting room
- A back entrance for those who are considered more vulnerable
- The front doors to all surgeries remain closed at all times so that Reception Staff can monitor who is coming into the surgery
- Only patients who absolutely need to be seen in surgery are invited in
- Some procedures are being carried out outdoors in the car park as 'drive through' attendances to minimise any risk to patients
- We are in the process of fitting screens in waiting rooms, intercoms at surgeries and better facilities to see patients outside to support reduced transmission of disease.

Face to face appointments for non-Covid related problems or treatment are only available at our Tibshelf and Holmewood sites at the moment. Our Pilsley site is being used as a staff-only site for now, this is to allow staff who are at higher risk to social distance while they carry out their work.

The use of sites and where appointments are provided is subject to review as the pandemic develops and changes will be notified on our website.

We really appreciate how people have taken the pressure off us for conditions that can be safely managed with over-the-counter medicines, or taken care of at home over the last two months because we are still busy in the practice. Telephone consultations and video consultations can take additional time to set up. We are working on bringing patients in whom we were able to safely delay treatment for a while and catching up with this workload. We are also working proactively with all those in the 'shielding' or vulnerable cohort to ensure they know how to access care, are receiving their medications, and provide them with safe consultations wherever clinically necessary. So there is a lot happening in the practice at the moment.

Your careful thought about whether you really need to contact us over the last few months has been appreciated and if there is an alternative service you can access we ask that you still do this please. But if you are worried about anything or you have self-cared and things aren't improving you need to ring us or complete an eConsultation.

If it is a mental health issue you are concerned about you can self-refer to any of the following services anytime and there is a helpline that is available 24/7 for urgent help if you need it.

Trent PTS - 01332 265 659 - <http://www.trentpts.co.uk/>

Insight Healthcare - 0300 555 5582 - <https://www.insighthealthcare.org/>

DRCS - 0800 047 6861 or 01773 833 716 - <https://dracs.org.uk/>

Chesterfield relate - 01246 231010 - <https://relatechesterfield.org.uk/>

Derbyshire 24/7 Mental Health Support Line - 0300 790 0596

Finally, thank you all for your support and messages of thanks over this time and for your understanding about the changes we have put in place.

We will continue to keep you up to date on our website.

Staffa Health