

NOTES FROM ST MARGARETS PPG – 23 June 2020

Present: Nigel Edwards, Barbara Benedek, John Hunt, Hilary Shenken, Linda Green, Harvey Woolfe Heather Flint

Apologies: Richard Eason

Summary of report from Lisa Anderson, Practice manager) and Zoë Smith (Practice Administrator)

The practice has had new full screens fitted on the front desk and all the carpets have been removed and vinyl flooring laid

Since the beginning of the Covid19 pandemic, the doctors have been working remotely with new secure computers connected to the servers at the practice. Currently all GP appointments are initially on the phone.

There are a number of ways of getting advice or an appointment:

- 1) Phoning the practice and asking for an appointment. The receptionist will take some details about what you need and will make an appointment at a specific time in the next day or two when you will receive a phone call from the GP. If the doctor thinks a video consultation would be useful, they are able to send a link to the patient's smartphone (using a programme called **AccuRx**) which, when clicked on by the patient, permits the video connection to start.

Lisa and Zoë think the phone consultations are working well and that was echoed by the PPG patients who had had one

- 2) There is a new service on the practice website – **eConsult**. You fill in an online form with your symptoms and the information you are seeking – both clinical and admin. Your eConsult submission will be looked at before the end of the next working day and the duty doctor or another appropriate person will be in touch. eConsult offers a wide range of services – the GP can send a secure email back to the patient; the patient can upload a picture or send an email. All patients registered with the practice can use eConsult – they do not need to be registered for online access to use it.
- 3) If the GP feels you need to be seen, you will be given a face to face appointment at the practice. The front door will remain locked at the moment, and only patients with an appointment will be allowed into the practice. We have strict infection control measures in place to keep our patients and staff safe. The face to face appointments are spaced out during afternoons. These are the instructions for attending a face to face appointment:
 - Please do not arrive until the time of your appointment as you will not be able to wait inside the practice.
 - Please ring the doorbell and wait outside. A member of staff will let you in.
 - All patients entering the practice **MUST** wear a face covering.

- Please do not bring any extra items with you and do not bring anyone else with you (except for children / carers / interpreters)
- The toilet facilities will not be available to patients unless it is an emergency.

Personal Protective Equipment is kept in reception. Patients are seen in rooms on the ground floor and the doctors put on PPE before seeing the patient.

Information is now posted on the practice website:

<https://stmargaretsmedical.com/practice-information/covid-19-practice-update/>

The request for appointments with GPs dipped quite a bit during the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic but now all the appointment slots get booked – the number of appointments is almost back to normal. However, because of the need to clean thoroughly between patients, the cleaning time impinges on the number of appointments but not on the amount of time a clinician can spend with the patient.

Hounslow Clinical Commissioning Group advises us daily on any changes and on services we can start providing again – e.g. urgent blood tests, cervical screening.

Regular updates are posted on the website and will also be sent out via text messages (with a link to the website).

Communicating effectively with patients has become even more important since Covid-19. St Margarets has approximately 13,000 patients.

Text messages: the practice has mobile phone number for 90.9% of patients which makes texts an excellent tool for communication.

In addition, the practice is encouraging all patients to register for online services which allow patients to book appointments, renew prescriptions, see test results and a number of other services from their computer, tablet or phone from home. Currently only 33.8% of patients are registered to use online services – however, those who are registered seem to like it as 97% of them use the online services.

The practice is sending out 200 texts per day to patients who are not registered to encourage them to do so. It only takes a phone call to the receptionists to register.

New patients are asked to register for online services when they register with the practice – nearly all new patients agree to this.

We're hoping to set up another Zoom meeting in a few weeks' time.