
Patient Participation Group

Newsletter April 2020



Grosvenor
St James
MEDICAL PRACTICE

Practice News

Two new GPs started in March 2020

We have two new part time salaried GPs who started last month - Dr Alex Williams & Dr Anna McGloin. I'm sure you'll all join us in welcoming them both.

Electronic Prescribing

The Practice is now only using the electronic prescribing (EPS), this means prescriptions will be sent electronically straight to your named pharmacy, if you do not have a named pharmacy a "Token Prescription" will be issued that you can take to a pharmacy and they will then draw down your prescription electronically. **During this time of Coronavirus and social distancing, please ensure you know your NHS number as you can use this at the pharmacy rather than picking up a Token Prescription from the surgery.**

CORONAVIRUS: PUBLIC INFORMATION

KENT TOGETHER - HELPLINE LAUNCHED BY KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

A 24 hour helpline has been set up to support vulnerable people in Kent who need urgent help, supplies or medication.

The helpline – called **Kent Together** - provides a single, convenient point of contact for anyone in the county who is in urgent need of help during the Coronavirus outbreak. It is a collaboration between KCC, central Government, District, Borough and local councils, the voluntary and community sector, the NHS, emergency services and other partners to ensure help is at hand for vulnerable people.

If you are vulnerable and have an urgent need that cannot be met through existing support networks, you can contact the Kent Together helpline at www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether or by calling on 03000 41 92 92. It is a 24 hour service.

Kent County Council also has a page on its website answering frequently-asked questions and the very latest Coronavirus information on its service updates page. Visit www.kent.gov.uk to find out more.

Changes to GP surgeries during Coronavirus outbreak

Changes in the way GP surgeries are run are now being rolled out across Kent and Medway to ensure the safety of staff and patients during the Coronavirus outbreak.

Each **Primary Care Network** – which are groups of GP surgeries in the same area working together – will be splitting patient care across different sites, meaning the normal primary care needs of patients who have Coronavirus symptoms can be met in a **Primary Care Treatment Centre**, while other premises will aim to remain virus free.

Patients will be referred to a Primary Care Treatment Centre, sometimes known as a ‘hot site’, by their GP or via NHS 111; they are **NOT** testing centres or a walk-in service.

Although as many patients as possible will be assessed via video and telephone appointments, which will avoid unnecessary risk and travel, there will be occasions when people with COVID19 symptoms need to see a clinician face-to-face and the aim of these centres are to assess this cohort of patients.

Full details of the locations of each of the Primary Care Treatment Centre, as well as opening times will be available via the GP practices’ websites and www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk once they are operational.

CORONAVIRUS

It is impossible to write any Newsletter at present without Coronavirus/Covid19 dominating discussions but as they are having such devastating consequences we make no apologies that this letter will cover the same area. However, we hope to highlight some key aspects. Following the PM’s announcement on March 23rd the whole population, whether they feel fit or unwell must stay at home to help stop the spread of coronavirus. This includes people of all ages – even if you do not have any symptoms or other health conditions.

You must only leave your home:

to shop for basic essentials – only when you really need to

to do one form of exercise a day – such as a run, walk or cycle, alone or with other people you live with

for any medical need – for example, to visit a pharmacy or deliver essential supplies to a vulnerable person

to travel to and from work – but only where this is absolutely necessary

The reasons for this are to prevent or to severely restrict the spread of coronavirus as much as possible.

These 4 reasons are exceptions - even with these activities, please minimise time spent outside of the home and ensure you are **“safe-distancing”** by keeping at least two metres distant from anyone outside of your household.

There have been people who still seem to be unconvinced of the need for safe-distancing. However, the evidence produced on BBC News recently was so utterly compelling that anyone who saw it must surely have been convinced. A person who is infected with the virus is thought likely to infect on average 2.5 people in a 5-day cycle which at the end of a 30 day period would result in 406 people being infected with the virus. However, if this rate of infection could be halved to 1.25 infections per 5-day cycle the results after 30 days would come down to only 15 infections – a reduction of 95%! If we can reduce the rate of infection further, to less than one then the disease begins to decline and fade away. It is not about you – whether you are a fit and healthy 72-year old or a teenager who thinks they are invincible – it is about being a link in a chain of infection that could lead to hundreds, if not thousands, of extra cases. Some of whom will die. **Please heed the advice and follow it.**

At the end of March it was clear that the number of people using any form of public transport had decreased markedly since the end of February and the data were beginning to show a slowing down in the rate of spread of the virus. However, it is still very early days and should become more apparent through April. In early April there was a small upturn in the number of people using some transport. We must not let that continue, there is no room for complacency and relaxing the guidelines.

In addition to staying at home you should also:

Wash your hands with soap and water often – for at least 20 seconds

Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze

Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands

Do not touch your face if your hands are not clean

If you think you might have coronavirus symptoms to protect others, do not go to places like a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Stay at home.

Use the 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do.

Use the 111 coronavirus service

Only call 111 if you cannot get help online.

Get an isolation note

<https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/>

Information is also available at: gov.uk/coronavirus and <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19>

Advice for people at high risk: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/advice-for-people-at-high-risk/>

Covid-19: other sources of advice

The online resources immediately below should provide everything you need to know to help you to help yourself — and the NHS. If you don't have online access, please ask family, friends or neighbours to print off the relevant advice for you before contacting 111 or your GP with any concerns. It should contain the answer to your query.

Social distancing — what it means and why we should all follow the rules

Guidance on the new shielding initiative for individuals and their families

British Society of Gastroenterology advice for people with inflammatory bowel disease

British Society for Rheumatology advice for people taking immunosuppressants

Asthma UK guidance on shielding for adults and children with asthma

Not sure whether or not you have Covid-19?

Stay-at-home advice if you do have symptoms

The psychological toll of the coronavirus crisis will be high — but there are steps we can take to lessen the strain, says Professor Tanya Byron (Times 24/3/20)

So what sort of strategies can we adopt to protect our mental health as we navigate the next few months? Everybody needs to think about having a structure to their week. Try to keep the week as the week and the weekend as the weekend. Don't start hanging out in your pyjamas seven days out of seven. Get up, have a purpose and find things that you are going to do every day. Have structure, routine and a schedule. Depression creeps up when we lose meaning and purpose.

People are already using video calls in innovative ways, whether it is mental-health practitioners talking to their clients or families chatting to grandparents and loved ones.

It is important to keep on top of the news, but try not to overexpose yourself and only go to trusted sources. There's a lot of misinformation out there. For people who are anxious and paranoid, conspiracy theories can have a significant impact.

The PPG offer support to the Practice and its patients giving constructive advice on matters relating to the surgery and local NHS issues. If you would like to be more involved with your PPG please email them on: grosvenor.ppg@nhs.net.