

23 October 2020

Dear Wirral Resident,

There has been a lot of media coverage recently in relation to people being able to see a GP face to face during the Coronavirus pandemic.

We want to reassure all Wirral residents that General Practice has been open and seeing patients throughout the pandemic. The way GP's work had to change very quickly in March to ensure that patients with COVID-19 and those without, could be helped according to their need. As with all parts of the NHS, the Coronavirus pandemic has been a significant challenge and, as you will be aware, there were significant issues with the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The purpose of this update is to assure our patients that they can access their GP, and that their GP is able to discuss and decide with them, the most appropriate way for them to be assessed.

For many patients a telephone or video consultation is sufficient to meet their needs. Face to Face appointments have been discouraged unless clinically necessary, in order to comply with national guidance about social distancing and to reduce footfall through practices, none of which were designed or built with a coronavirus pandemic in mind.

Following the easing of restrictions in the summer, practices have been actively working to recommence routine work such as health screening and immunisations, and the annual Flu vaccination programme is currently being rolled out across Wirral.

As we enter the winter period it is evident that the challenges presented by the Coronavirus pandemic will not go away and we will continue to operate in the way we have worked since March throughout the winter months. It is absolutely vital that all parts of our local NHS work together to manage not only the rise in COVID-19 infections but also the usual challenges that winter presents.

We all have a role to play in getting through this difficult time and we would ask all residents to ensure that they follow the guidance from the Government and Wirral Council. This will help your local NHS manage through the winter.

We would like to thank all Wirral Practices and that is including ***all clinical and non-clinical staff*** for the hard work that they have undertaken during the pandemic.

We hope that this update reassures you of the continued commitment of NHS Wirral CCG and the 51 Wirral GP Practices to deliver Health and Care to Wirral residents.

Please keep safe and well during these difficult times.

Dr Paula Cowan, Chair and Dr Simon Delaney, Medical Director
NHS Wirral CCG