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October 2020

Dear Patient,

I am writing to further update you on the situation regarding the Group Practice in the present COVID pandemic situation. Below I have laid out the situation so far this year and included the very latest changes.

In March we were required to close our doors to the general public. Staff were still working at all but the Boots site. In discussion with ourselves and the Boots management it was agreed that to keep patients and staff safe this site should be temporarily closed. It is worth noting here that some of our own staff were asked to shield and they were then asked to work from home.

The Group Practice continued to offer telephone consultations to patients and if a face to face appointment was deemed necessary then such an appointment was made for them at Horne Street which was adopted as a ‘Hub’ for face to face appointments. This Hub was subject to strict infection control procedures to ensure safety to patients and staff.

Throughout this time we had an unprecedented volume of calls to the practice and we did struggle with this and have put measures in place to alleviate this. This is a situation felt by all practices in Calderdale if not nationally. We did and continue to encourage our patients to use digital means to contact the practice rather than use the telephone.

The Hub was also used to deliver essential services to our patients. For example we ensured that urgent blood tests were done, Childhood Immunisations, smear tests and other essential services were done.

From July the decision was made to take these services back to our own sites and the Queens Road site and latterly the Southowram site have been used for these purposes.

Throughout this period any patient that required a home visit after consultation with a GP was provided with one. Most practices in Calderdale have engaged a Visiting Service manned by health professionals to carry out the visits with strict infection control procedures and full PPE equipment. Spring Hall Group Practice have joined this process. This process is set to continue for the foreseeable future but will be reviewed when circumstances change.

In September and October we have successfully run 8 Saturday morning flu clinics at our Spring Hall and Southowram sites. These clinics were run under strict infection control procedures.

We are now planning the next stage of providing flu clinics which could be at different times during the week to ensure we reach all the eligible population.

We intend to continue to review the provision of services to patients and the best place to do this from on an ongoing basis. The use of the Boots site will be reviewed again at the end of December.

If you have any queries or comments to make on this please email our Practice Managers on liz.coulson@nhs.net or tracyworrall@nhs.net.

Thank you for your ongoing support in this difficult period.

Yours sincerely

*Liz Coulson*

On behalf of Spring Hall Group Practice

