

Letter from Dr Clark Swanage Medical Practice

Dear Patient,

Over the last few months you are likely to have noticed a difference in the way things are being done in our Practice as we manage coronavirus (Covid-19).

We want to start by saying thank you.

Thank you for adapting so quickly to these new ways of working – it has been the drastic, yet fundamental, change needed to ensure the safety of you and our staff.

To slow down the spread of coronavirus we have worked to reduce the number of people coming into the Practice by using online consultation systems like eConsult (via our website), telephone appointments and video consultations.

We continue to work hard providing services, and our priority is to keep you and our staff safe while ensuring you get the care you need. We are finding there is a significant increase in demand as we start to come out of lock down and we find that all our routine and on the day capacity is being over booked already.

During the week of the 27th July (five working days), these are just some of the things the team have dealt with for you:

- 600 tasks – internal messages that are queries from patients/prescription changes etc
- 1102 direct patient contacts such as telephone calls, home visits, face to face appointments, eConsults.
- 1952 Prescriptions were issued
- 1431 Pathology results were received/checked and actioned by our GPs
- 1076 Letters, reports, general clinical correspondence were processed and actioned

We are still advising patients not to attend the surgery without an appointment. Instead call the practice, go to our website or use NHS Choices <https://www.nhs.uk/>

You can speak to a clinician over the phone, eConsult or video consultation. This will often mean you get to see the right person to help you, much quicker.

If a doctor or nurse does need to see you in person then you will be given an appointment to attend the Practice. All of our appointments are taking longer due to ensuring the premises are clean between patients and the clinicals have to “don and doff” of Personal Protective Equipment.

Only coming to the surgery with an appointment means:

- You will be seen promptly
- You are reducing your risk of catching/spreading coronavirus by avoiding a waiting room.
- You are helping to keep staff healthy and safe
- The practice is able to maintain a clean environment and protect you from the virus.

Please remember that if you are offered an appointment then you might see a clinician you are not familiar with such as our Advanced Nurse Practitioners or our Primary Care Paramedic.

A home visiting service for patients who are unable to leave their home will be provided if the clinician feels it is clinically appropriate. Our GPs are already doing fewer home visits but work with our

Paramedic and Advanced Nurses that are now available and skilled at this role. We would like to apologise to those that feel doctors have been shirking the risk of doing home visits, doctors are still visiting when that is the most appropriate response.

Dr Munday has now retired, and another three partners will be retiring / leaving in the next 12 months. The National recruitment crisis is having a big impact on us and despite our best efforts advertising locally, nationally, attending recruitment events far and wide, we have been unable to recruit. This all means the way we provide care will need to continue to change, with our doctors only being available for the most skilled work and supervision of our new clinical support team.

At the surgery we will also direct you to the care of our Clinical Pharmacists, Health Coaches, routine appointments will be offered with an advanced Nurse at Swanage MIU and routine GP appointments at Wareham and Poole Hospital. You can now also self-refer to Physiotherapy at Swanage Hospital – please see: <https://www.msksdorset.nhs.uk/patient-self-referral-form/>

Please also make use of all the following suggestions before phoning for an appointment. If this effectively saves an appointment there will be more available for you and others if needed later on:

- Ones own family and friends for support and guidance
- NHS 111
- NHS Choices
- eConsult which includes links to self help and guidance.
- Online access to your medical records for ordering your prescriptions and looking up results
- Electronic batch prescribing via chemists so up to a year's prescriptions are pre prepared and don't need requesting
- Local Pharmacists support
- Phoning Swanage MIU to be seen there if a minor injury problem

By all of us engaging these new ways of working we aim to continue to provide the high level of care that we always endeavour to do and attract new staff and patients to Swanage Medical Practice which is essential for the future.

Thanks again for your support and understanding as we all adapt to a new way of working.

Dr Jason Clark – Senior Partner