



24/11/20

Dear Patient,

We hope you are keeping well during this difficult time.

Everyone here at Lancaster Medical Practice would like to say a huge thank you for your continued patience and compliance during the changes to our services. However, the threat of COVID-19 is certainly not over and it's more important than ever that we all remain vigilant and follow the government guidelines to ensure we keep everyone in Lancaster safe as we head towards winter. This also means that our services are not likely to revert to how they were before the pandemic for the foreseeable future – so we are asking you to please continue to be patient and know that we are here to help you. However, be aware it that it may take a little longer to get through on our phone line and you may be treated via a video or telephone consultation rather than coming into the practice (although we are still seeing patients face-to-face if it is necessary).

We know the pandemic has been very hard on many of our patients; those who have shielded, spent long periods of time away from loved ones or been unable to say goodbye in person during their last moments. These sacrifices have meant that NHS services have been able to continue, and thousands who have been most desperate for its care have been saved.

During the last 8+ months, our entire staff have been working incredibly hard to make sure that you continue to receive the care that you need from your GP practice. Since March, we have made a number of changes to our services to ensure the safety of our patients and staff:

- We created Green, Amber and Red sites to separate suspected COVID and non-COVID patients, as well as protect our vulnerable staff members. The success of this system meant that it was adopted and introduced to healthcare services across the Morecambe Bay area.
- We introduced outdoor facilities at our Red site so that suspected COVID patients come into contact with as few people as possible and social distancing could be maintained at all times.
- We have dramatically increased the number of video and telephone consultations in order to reduce the number of people coming into the practice. However, we have still been seeing all patients who need a face-to-face appointment.
- Telecoms, hand sanitiser and temperature checks for staff and patients have been present at site entrances and compulsory face coverings and social distancing have come into force across all of our sites to reduce the spread of the virus.
- All of our clinical staff have been wearing full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when seeing patients – protecting patients from respiratory exposure.
- During the first national lockdown all of our staff who could work from home did so, and this has been repeated during the second lockdown during November.
- Our flu clinics have run very differently this year, with drive-through and walk-in clinics being held in outdoor spaces.



During the summer and autumn, we have seen that the number of people accessing our services has been steadily increasing – this is great news and we want all of our patients to know that we are open and will remain open throughout the pandemic. However, this increase in demand has inevitably increased the number of calls we are receiving and whilst we are consistently adding to our patient services team to cope with this demand, these roles require a significant amount of training in order to deal with our patients’ queries effectively. We want to be as transparent and open as possible with our patients and so we wanted to share a few of the practice’s statistics from the month of October:

- Number of incoming phone calls: **29,686**
- Number of telephone and video consultations: **6,733**
- Number of face-to-face appointments: **6,067**
- Number of blood tests completed: **7,238**
- Number of chronic disease reviews completed: **319**
- Number of prescriptions issued: **16,846**
- Number of home visits: **507**
- Total number of flu vaccinations given across September and October: **8,344**

As we’re sure you will agree, we have been working incredibly hard to ensure that all of our patients get the best care possible during these difficult times – and we will continue to do so. We also want to say a final thank you for the continued support from our patients and staff, we couldn’t do this without you!

Yours faithfully,

Amy Williams
LMP Executive Director