

THE ARLINGTON ROAD MEDICAL PRACTICE NEWSLETTER



July 2021



Continuing to care for our patients through the next stage of the Pandemic

We would like to start by thanking you for your understanding and co-operation over the past year as we have continued to provide care for our patients, albeit in a way that has taken a lot of adjustment for patients, clinicians and admin staff alike. It has been and continues to be a challenge. Remembering that we are all in this together has been key for everyone in coping with and tolerating the changes and obstacles that stand in the way of our everyday life.

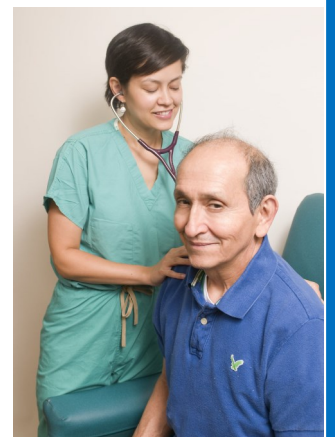
As we move into the next stage of the pandemic and we face the new challenges that come with this progression, we would appreciate your continued support. As we start to see a welcome return to normality in retail and society, it raises an expectation from all of us that every service we access should be able to return to pre-pandemic status.

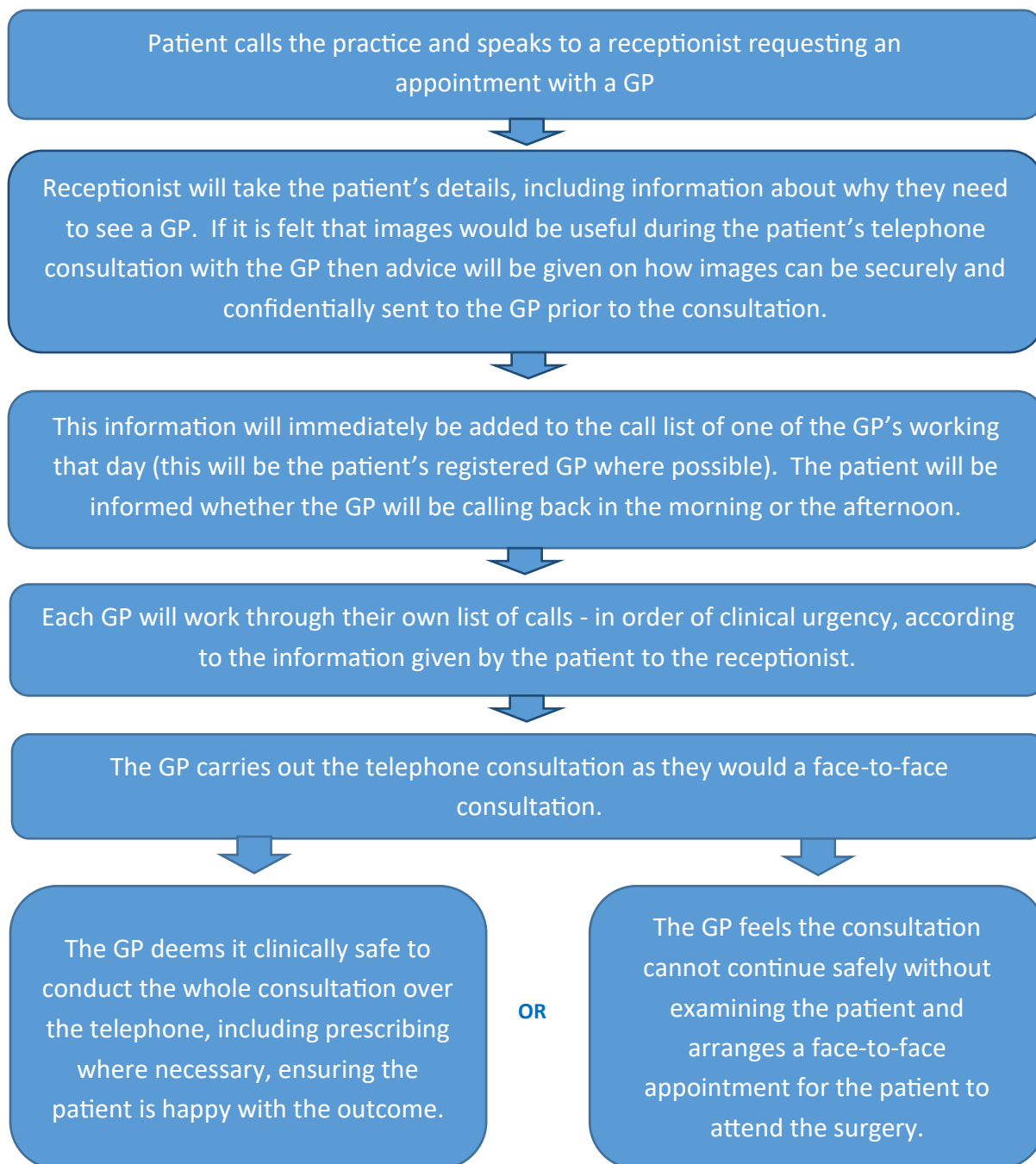
As a healthcare setting we need to approach this next stage very carefully, both to protect our vulnerable patients and to ensure that we can deliver a service that does not become overwhelmed as patient demand increases.

There has been a false perception, from the minority, that General Practice has not been there for patients throughout the pandemic, but this could not be further from the truth. Although our physical door has been shut, our phone lines have been open throughout the entire pandemic. We have managed to keep our premises Covid secure and have therefore not had to shut down the service at any point as both clinical and admin staffing levels have been maintained. Last year, we were actually open more days than normal as we worked through the bank holidays during the early stage of the pandemic.

Yes, it is true that patients cannot directly book a face-to-face GP appointment with our receptionists but this does NOT mean that face-to-face appointments are not available. Every request for an appointment has been, and will continue to be, triaged first by a GP. This has proven to be the safest and fairest way to manage patient demand and our workload on a daily basis.

The flow chart on page 2 will hopefully help you understand how this process works.





The following Q&A's, will hopefully help to explain the need and the benefits of the stages of this process.

Q. Why do I have to tell the receptionist what I wish to consult the GP about? It's not their business.

A. The GP's work through their list of calls in order of clinical urgency. Telling the receptionist about the reason for your call, will help to ensure that all patients are dealt with in a timely fashion according to their needs. Please be assured that our receptionists work under a strict confidentiality agreement. Anything you discuss with our receptionists is only passed on, when appropriate, to those who are involved in your care.

Q. Why can't I be given a time that the GP will call back?

A. We do appreciate that many of our patients lead very busy lives and it may not always be convenient for you to take a call, where you can confidentially discuss your healthcare needs.

If there are specific times you would like the GP to avoid calling, then please inform the receptionist who will pass this information on. Likewise, if the GP calls you at a difficult time, please just let them know and they will do their best to arrange a more mutually convenient time.

As described previously, the GP's work through their calls in order of clinical urgency, therefore if the receptionist gives a time that you should expect a call, this can lead to disappointment and frustration when the GP is unable to keep to this schedule, either because your call or another patient's call is more urgent. We therefore give a morning or afternoon time guide to avoid disappointment.

Q. I know the doctor will need to examine me and this can't be done over the phone, why can't the receptionist just book me in for a face-to-face consultation?

A. We feel our clinicians are best placed to make the decision about who needs a face-to-face consultation. They can also make the best judgement on which clinician is most appropriate to deal with your needs, ensuring you see the right person first time.

Q. Are you doing anything to change/improve access for patients?

A. Yes, behind the scenes we have changed and adapted our methods throughout the pandemic to meet the changes in demand and the ever-changing picture.

We have adapted the system again in the past few weeks, to enable us to safely see more patients face-to-face where necessary and to allow some pre-booking of telephone consultations with the GP's.

From the beginning of June our receptionists have had a number of pre-bookable telephone consultations at their disposal to offer patients who do not require an urgent on-the-day consultation. These telephone consultations are carried out during the afternoon by the GP's and are pre-bookable up to two weeks in advance. We hope that this will help to ease telephone access, in that patients needing non-urgent appointments will not need to phone first thing in the morning on the day they wish to consult the GP. We also hope it will give patients greater accessibility and flexibility for booking their consultation at a time more convenient to them.

Q. Why all this fuss, the Pandemic has almost gone away and the shops and restaurants are all open as normal, can't we just book to see our GP face-to-face now? If we can go out for dinner and hug our friends, surely we can look after our healthcare needs face-to-face?!

A. Firstly, although a lot of people have felt confident going about in public for some time now, we must remember that others, particularly those with chronic health conditions, will only now be starting to emerge from isolation and will still be feeling very nervous about the potential risks to their health. Obviously being a healthcare provider, it is those clinically vulnerable individuals that will inevitably need to use our services and we need to continue to keep our premises as safe as possible for all patients. The triage system that we continue to run ensures that only those whose care cannot be safely carried out through a remote consultation are visiting the surgery, keeping footfall to a minimum to avoid overcrowded reception and waiting areas.

It is in everyone's interest that unnecessary interaction is kept to a minimum and where telephone consultations suffice, this ultimately saves patients an unnecessary visit to the surgery.

We do, of course, want our patients to feel happy with their care and treatment. If you feel at

the end of a telephone consultation your concerns have not been fully addressed and the consultation would have been dealt with more appropriately face-to-face then please do discuss this with the clinician at the time.

Secondly, and may be more importantly, we need to ensure we can prioritise the most urgent cases. If we were to simply open up a receptionist/patient led face-to-face booking system, it goes without saying that we would quickly become overwhelmed. Although we have been here for patients throughout the pandemic, it is inevitable that some people will have either been too nervous to contact the GP - as they didn't want to risk attending the surgery, or they have simply felt that their health concern was not urgent enough to request being seen during the pandemic. As life returns to a degree of normality these patients will begin requesting appointments and only a triage system can ensure that all patients have a consultation in a timescale appropriate to their needs.

Thirdly, we also need to remain cautious about lockdown restrictions continuing to be lifted, due to the concerns surrounding the Indian variant. The last thing we want to do is move too quickly into the next stage, only to, once again, have to turn around our way of working at very short notice.

We hope the above helps to give you an understanding of where we are at as a Practice and gives you confidence that we are continuing to provide treatment and advice to all of our patients in the safest possible way.

We do understand your frustrations and we are constantly striving to offer the best and safest service we can. Please do treat our staff with respect, they have all done an amazing job over the past year supporting you, your family and friends in incredibly difficult circumstances. We operate a Zero Tolerance policy here at the Practice and incidences of rude, disrespectful and abusive behaviour towards our staff are taken seriously. Remember, we are all in this together.

The Covid-19 Vaccination Programme Update

All adults can now book a life-saving Covid-19 vaccination.

From 18th June, everyone aged 18 and over is being urged to arrange a jab if they have not had one. This is as the NHS Covid Vaccination Programme, the biggest in health service history, begins the final push to protect the country.

You can book via the national booking system - either online at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination> or by calling 119.

People aged 39 and under who are eligible and pregnant women will be offered the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine in line with updated JCVI guidance.

This opening up of the final cohort of people comes fewer than 200 days since the NHS made history by delivering the first Covid vaccine.

Already, around eight in 10 adults have had their first dose while more than half have had their vital second dose, meaning they have maximum protection from Covid-19.



Remember to get your second dose

As the largest every NHS vaccination programme enters its final stages, the local NHS is urging local residents to remember to get their second dose.

People aged 40 and over are now able to have their second jab from eight weeks after their first—moving it forward from the original 12 week period. This extends the group after people aged 50 and over were able to do this last month.

If you have booked your appointments through the national booking system, you can use the website or call 119 to move your second dose forward.

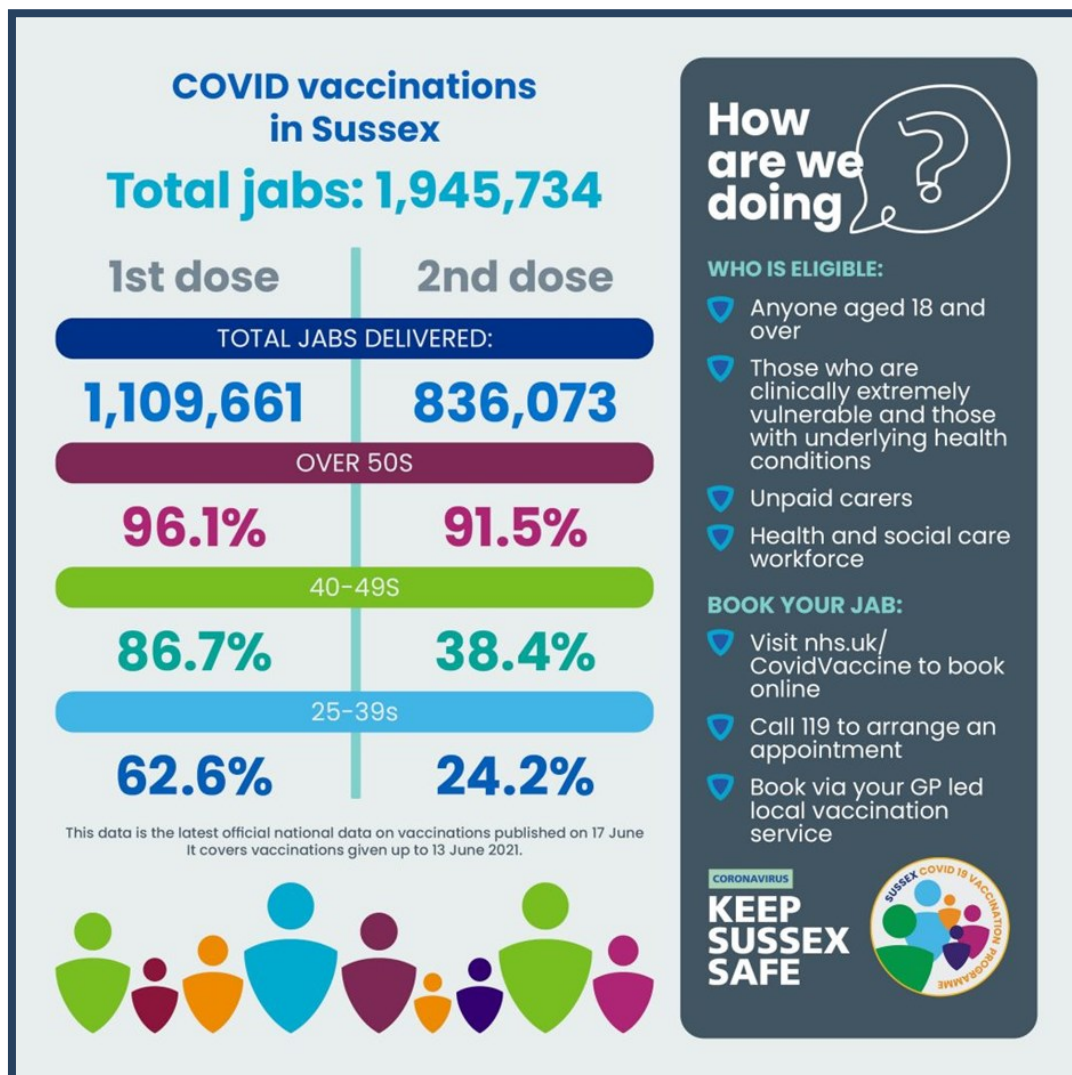
If you had your first vaccination from a GP led team, you will be contacted as quickly as possible to rearrange your second dose.

Whether you are moving it forward, or have an appointment booked, everyone is urged to attend the second dose appointment.

Recent research this week showed how important the second jab is at protecting people against the Delta/Indian variant.

Studies have found the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to be 96% effective against hospitalisation after two doses, while the Oxford-AstraZeneca is 92% effective.

To date more than 1.1 million people in Sussex have received their vaccination, and more than 800,000 have had both doses.





General Practice - General Data Protection Regulation (GP GDPR) Type 1 Opt Out

As you will, no doubt be aware from the media, the deadline for the first GDPR extraction by NHS Digital has been put back to 1st September 2021.

Whilst data sharing and extraction is understandably a concern for many people, the NHS needs data about the patients it treats in order to plan and deliver its services and to ensure that care and treatment provided is safe and effective. It helps the NHS to improve health and care services for everyone. For example, patient data can help the NHS to:

- ♦ Monitor the long-term safety and effectiveness of care
- ♦ Plan how to deliver better health and care services
- ♦ Prevent the spread of infectious diseases
- ♦ Identify new treatments and medicines through health research
- ♦ Inform and develop health and social care policy
- ♦ Plan and commission health and care services
- ♦ Take steps to protect public health (including managing and monitoring the coronavirus pandemic)
- ♦ Enable healthcare and scientific research

We would encourage patients to visit <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-collections-and-data-sets/data-collections/general-practice-data-for-planning-and-research> for detailed information on how your data will be used before making a decision on whether they wish to opt out. Please note that all patients are automatically 'opted in' unless they opt out.

How to do a Type 1 Opt Out?

You need to contact the practice if you wish to opt out of your data being extracted. You can contact us by telephone or by downloading and completing the opt out form that is available on our website [Type 1 Opt Out Form](#) and returning it to us in the post.

Please be aware there are two types of Opt Out for NHS Digital:

Type 1 Opt Out – this means that when NHS Digital extracts de-personalised data from the Practice, your data will not be extracted. This opt out has to be done through the Practice – the National Data Opt Out option in the NHS app **DOES NOT** apply to Type 1 Opt Outs.

National Opt Out – this means your de-personalised data will be extracted by NHS Digital but then excluded from being shared with organisations that NHS Digital work with. This opt out can be done [online](#) or on the NHS app.

For patients who want to ensure that none of their de-personalised data will be shared, we recommend doing both a National Opt Out and a Type 1 Opt Out.

You can change your opt in or out preferences at any time, but please be aware that if you chose to opt out after the 25th August deadline, your data will be included in any extractions that occur before you opt out. Whilst no further data will be shared after you have opted out – NHS Digital will keep any data that was extracted before you chose to opt out.

Continued overleaf...

Myth Busters

- Patients can opt out at any time. The time limit only refers to the first data extraction.
- Data is only used to improve health and care provision
- The data is stored, shared and used securely
- NHS Digital never sells data and only shares it when it will help health and care and it is safe, ethical and legal to do so
- NHS Digital will not share data with anyone who wants it, there are strict rules about how the NHS can use its patients' data
- NHS Digital will always uphold patients' choice to opt out.

Your choice will always be respected, but remember the NHS needs data to continue to research and fund services effectively.

Forthcoming Afternoon Closure of Practice

The Practice will be closed for staff training and development for the afternoon of
Thursday 8th July between 12:30-18:30

For medical attention during this time, please call

03301 742 856

For non-urgent assistance with medication or minor illness, please contact your local pharmacist.

We will resume our normal opening hours on Friday 9th July at 08:30

Thank you for your co-operation and understanding.



**Join the millions
already vaccinated**

We'll let you know when your Covid-19 vaccine is ready for you.

EVERY VACCINATION
GIVES US

HOPE

Remember to get your second dose