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**CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC – WORKPLACE POLICY**
(updated 1 July 2020)

Alexandra Surgery aims to enable patients to continue to receive essential health care as safely as possible during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

We are committed to putting safety of patients and staff as the priority in everything we do. However, we realise that there is increased risk of catching the coronavirus, including on the journey to and from the surgery.

**Public health protection (including staff and patients)**

* During the pandemic, patients will not have free access to the surgery premises.
* Patients are encouraged to avoid coming to the surgery if possible. They may make their requests by telephone, email, fax, eConsult, or Patient Access. This includes applications from unregistered new patients.
* All requests for consultation with a doctor or nurse should follow the ‘Telephone First’ guidance from NHS. The patient or carer will be booked for a telephone or video consultation in the first instance.
* Paperwork should be reduced to a minimum. Prescriptions will be electronically sent to any pharmacy chosen by the patient. Medical certificates, blood test forms and letters will also be sent electronically, by email or via AccuRx.
* When patients need to collect from the surgery, for example sample containers, we will arrange a date and time for them to call. They should wait outside the entrance and the packet will be handed to them through the doorway.
* If the doctor or nurse deems it necessary to see the patient face to face (for physical examination, injection), we will arrange it so that only one patient comes to the surgery at a time. There will be no waiting room.
* The clinician should listen to the patient’s problems and ask questions over the phone before the appointment, so that the patient stays inside the surgery for as little time as possible.
* Prior to the appointment, we will screen the patient for Coronavirus symptoms. We can use the AccuRx Florey questionnaire, or simply ask over the phone – about fever, cough, loss of taste or smell – this has to be recorded in the notes.
* Patients or escorts who have symptoms of coronavirus should not present to the surgery. Instead, we should refer them to the Haringey GP Hot Hub. A doctor should telephone 07776 495884 to make a clinical request. #1
* As far as possible the patient should come alone and bring minimum belongings, any escort should wait outside. We will ask the patient to wear a face covering, and wash hands after he/she enters the surgery.
* Self-service machines including the check-in panel and blood pressure monitor will be closed, to reduce the risk of cross infection.
* The patient will be asked to leave the surgery after any procedure is completed. Staff may direct the patient to use a different door if appropriate.
* Any equipment and surfaces that the patient has had contact with should be properly cleaned after the patient leaves, before further work.

**Staff health protection**

The policy published on 16.04.2020 remains valid, and has been expanded to include Coronavirus testing and risk assessment:

* As employer Alexandra Surgery will listen to any concerns staff may have and do our best to take steps to protect everyone.
* Every member of the team should make sure everyone is social distancing if they come into the workplace – the usual guidance is to keep 2 metres (6 feet) apart. #2
* Team members should avoid crowding in one work space. They should occupy separate offices with telephone and computers when possible. In smaller spaces such as the kitchen, only one person should be present at any time.
* Team members should hold meetings as telephone or video calls and avoid travel as much as possible.
* Everyone to make sure when coming into the surgery to wash hands with hot water and soap, and encourage everyone else to wash their hands regularly
* When dealing with patients face to face, staff are advised to wear a face covering (mask and/or face shield) plus other appropriate protection
* If anyone becomes unwell in the workplace with possible coronavirus symptoms, they should inform the employer immediately and discuss whether to stay at work or go home.
* At this point in time, it is not compulsory for GP staff to undergo regular testing if they are well. They are required to have a test if they have symptoms.
* Those with coronavirus symptoms should go for a test (deep throat and nasal swab, PCR test for virus antigen). This can be arranged online via NHS 111 web site, or by telephone on 119. They will have priority as NHS primary care staff.
* If the swab test is positive staff should self isolate at home for at least 7 days, or longer until symptoms settle.
* If staff have been in contact with someone with proven coronavirus infection, they should self isolate at home for 14 days.
* Primary care staff can now have coronavirus antibody testing on the NHS. This can be arranged from this practice, or by their own GP elsewhere if they prefer. It should be made clear that having antibodies is proof that you had been infected by coronavirus previously (more than 3 weeks before), but it does not guarantee you are immune to more infection.
* There is concern that people from certain ethnic groups may be more at risk of becoming seriously ill if they contracted coronavirus. Alexandra Surgery is ready to carry out additional risk assessment of each team member’s risk, based on his/her personal characteristics, health condition and job roles. As this involves confidential information, we can only do the assessment with individual consent. The management will approach each team member to offer this.
* If any team member has noticed a significant incident (such as a patient contact that did not follow the rules), or has other additional worries, he/she should report to one of the GP Partners as soon as possible.

Note

#1: As of 1 July 2020, the Hot Hub clinic at Bounds Green Health Centre will be closed. The home visiting service will continue – GPs may refer in the same way as before, and patients will receive different directions. The clinic may reopen if the number of cases increases.

#2: As of 4 July 2020, government advice for England for social distancing will be reduced to “1 metre plus”

This new policy takes effect immediately after display to the staff.



Dr N Sivananthan

01.07.2020