

Coleridge Medical Centre

Spring Newsletter

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Whimble Service

A designated service is now available at our Whimble surgery for shielded patients only. Patients will still need to phone the Practice to access this service.

A Message From Our GPs

The last few months have been terribly tragic for Britain and the world with the Covid-19 pandemic. Luckily, Ottery and the West Country have been spared the worst and the numbers of people affected have been relatively low. The surgery has had to adapt very quickly to a new way of working to provide on going health care. The main initial focus had to be on people who were sick with the Covid virus but soon it became clear that we also had to keep planning for new ways to deliver routine care, but also be available for

emergencies and other illnesses. We moved to a system of total phone triage but invited any patients who needed assessment or treatment into the surgery. Care has been taken for staff in direct contact with patients to wear PPE. Many consultations are being done by video link using a new NHS approved app called AccuRx[®]. A lot of patients are using eConsults to which we are trying to reply the same day.

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A New Way of Working in the Practice

Our doors may be closed, but we are still open! Here are some new ways services are running:

For patient and staff safety, we cannot organise general queries at the front door, so patients will need to call the Practice to arrange a telephone

consultation. Patients will receive a call back on the same day. Phone lines are open between 08:30-13:30.

then 14:00-18:00. Out of these hours, calls will be forwarded to Devon Doctors.

Patients needing to drop off samples should ring the doorbell and await a member of staff to take the sample. Please do not put it into the post box.

If patients are trying to follow up test results with the RD&E, please be aware that

there may be a delay in receiving a response due to temporary measures within the hospital.

The Practice is unable to obtain these results on your behalf, and we kindly ask for you to be patient. The results will be sent out as soon as possible.

So that we can continue to offer the best possible service

to you, and communicate effectively, it is essential to ensure that all of your contact details held within the Practice are up to date, such as email addresses and mobile numbers. If you believe your details do need to be updated, please phone the Practice.

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New and Temporary Patient Registration

New permanent patients wishing to register with us can download new registration forms and patient questionnaires from our website.

If a patient is unsure if they are in an area we cover please use our interactive coverage map which can be found in the same area of the website as the registration forms.

The registration forms can either be posted to us, sent via email, or dropped in the post box

outside the surgery. Please ensure the form is as fully completed as possible and has signatures in the required spaces, otherwise this could hold up the process of registering.

In keeping with the new measures in place at the Practice, temporary patients can now phone the Practice reception to register as a temporary patient if the requirement is an urgent one.

If you wish to register a new born as a patient with the Practice, please fill in the new permanent patient documents. We will need the child's NHS number for the forms, and this can be found in the red book given at birth or in the discharge letters.

eConsults

These are a wonderful, helpful tool for both our clinicians and our community. These are available to patients from the age of 18 and over. eConsults cannot be done on behalf of a child.

eConsults can be accessed via our website, and patients can expect a reply within 48 working hours for help and advice.

If you are trying to upload a photo to your eConsult to better describe a skin condition, please do so by selecting the option for "I want help for my condition".

We kindly ask that you do not email the Practice with medical queries, but to rather complete an eConsult as this is more secure with regards to the information you send us.



NHS

Unsure of the help you need?
Use eConsult now for free
 and we'll make sure
 you get the right care.

• Visit our [practice website](#) or
 • Download the [NHS APP](#) or
 • Go to: <https://patients.econsult.health>

e consult

Prescriptions and Pharmacies

Repeat medications are still being processed via our online services medication request, dropping paper request slips into our post box, or using the NHS app. This slip **MUST** have the name, DOB and address of the patient on it. It should also have full information about the requested medication. For example: Furosemide 40mg tablets, 1 each morning, 28 tablets; and not just Furosemide.

This limits any wrong ordering or unnecessary calls to patient.

Please note that we do not take repeat medication requests over the phone in order to limit incorrect ordering, and subsequent wastage of medication.

If a medication is needed urgently, please bring this to the attention of a member of staff rather than posting in our

box.

We do not arrange for medication to be delivered or posted, that is between the pharmacy and the patient to organise. If patients are using postal service pharmacies, there can be a significant wait for the medication to be posted. Some are as long as a 2 week wait. The patient will need to check the terms and conditions with the provider.

Please be aware that if a patient signs up to an online postal service pharmacy, this pharmacy is NOT linked to the physical high street version - i.e. Well.co.uk is not linked with Well Pharmacy next to the Practice, and Boots.com is not linked with the local Boots, so they are unable to help with issues and concerns.

Our reception team are here to help, and signpost patients with any queries they may have.

May 2020

A Message From Our GPs (continued)

We have been amazed at the goodwill shown to us by so many of you in the community. We received messages of support, cakes and other edibles; face shields made by the DT department at Kings, spare goggles to wear as PPE, offers for help and much more. We were delighted at the generous spirit shown by so many volunteers who offered their support and time to the HELP Scheme and other local groups. So many of our more vulnerable patients have benefited from your efforts and we are proud to work in such a compassionate town. The shutdown, and need for some people to shield, may carry on for some time yet, so we appreciate your continuing help. For those of you who are self-isolating, or who are carers who need help or support, information about the ways in

which you can access the volunteer services are on our website.

There has been much focus in the media asking people who are ill not to delay seeking medical attention. Anyone with symptoms of a heart attack or possible stroke should seek urgent help. We are still referring anyone who may have a cancer urgently to the Royal Devon and Exeter for investigation. A lot of work like immunisations, injections and bloods needed for on going treatments are still going ahead. Routine work like annual bloods and health checks are being deferred for the moment, but those who have had appointments postponed will be called in later in the year. You may be surprised how many queries and problems can be sorted out by a phone or eConsult, so please contact the surgery if you are worried about a medical problem. We are aware

that this has been an extremely stressful period for so many of you with worries about work, family, friends and the future.

Our mental health is extremely important during this period. Luckily we live in such a beautiful part of the world and we are not completely locked down. Please try and get out into the beautiful spring countryside once daily if you can. Look after each other and anyone near to you who you know is vulnerable. We can offer help if anyone is struggling either with their mental health or with their safety at home. We will get through this difficult period. It is amazing to see such good community spirit and cohesion come out of this adversity.

Stay safe.

Dr Nigel de Sousa

Covid-19 Research Study

The Practice is pleased to be supporting a new research study which is being organised by the University of Oxford. The study is looking at the effect of different treatments which could reduce the need for hospital admission and improve symptoms in older people with possible Covid-19 infection.

The PRINCIPLE trial will be open to patients who:

- are aged 50-64 with certain types of health conditions OR aged 65 or over (with or without health conditions);

AND

- are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (a new or worsening cough and/or a high temperature) and have had their symptoms for less than 14 days.

We will be sending a short text message to any patients who match the target age/health groups. This will include a link to the PRINCIPLE trial website which provides more detailed

information, should you develop symptoms of COVID-19 and wish to consider taking part in the research.

In addition, our GPs or Nurse Practitioners may discuss the trial with you if you have a telephone consultation with them because you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and are eligible to take part.

SMS and Email Consent

Please let us know if you would like to consent to receive SMS or Email from the Practice. This feature helps all Coleridge staff to send out useful information and general updates, appointment reminders and test results. Call us on 01404 814447 to update your record.

Local pharmacy opening hours during Covid-19:

Well Pharmacy

10:00—12:30 then
14:00—18:30

Woolbrook Pharmacy

09:30—12:30 then
13:30—16:30

Boots Ottery St Mary

09:30—13:00 then
14:00—17:00

Fore Street Boots

9.30-17.00

Dr Skene's Patient List

Dr Mike Skene will sadly be leaving the Practice towards the end of May. Dr Skene has been our Covid-19 lead GP, and he has done a fantastic job informing and preparing the surgery for the pandemic.

We would like to assure all of his patients that they will continue to receive the very best of care from the other GPs in the Practice.

If any patient of Dr Skene's wishes to discuss an ongoing treatment or care plan, please phone the Practice and you will be contacted by a GP.

Blood Pressure Machines

In order to safeguard our community, we are limiting contact with patients by inhibiting the use of practice owned materials, such as blood pressure machines. We encourage households who need them to purchase their own BP machines. These can be purchased online, or direct from your pharmacy.

Help Schemes and Volunteers

Useful information to help those in need:

The Ottery HELP Scheme - 01404 813041

Whimble Volunteers - 01404 822104

Ottery Volunteers - 01404 600013

West Hill Volunteers - 01404 232100

Rockbeare Responders - 07926 158965

A Message for Carers

If you are caring for a friend or relative who needs help with day to day living because of illness or disability, we would like to reassure you that support services are still available!

You can contact Devon Carers for help and advice on 03456 434 435 and at www.devoncarers.org.uk

Devon carers support carers to maintain their own health, wellbeing and independence; and to care safely, confidently and effectively.

If you need help with practical matters like collection of prescriptions or shopping, then please contact the Ottery HELP Scheme (number above). They have an army of registered volunteers who may be able to help you.

If you or the person you care for has a medical need, or a telephone discussion with your GP would be beneficial, please do not hesitate to contact us to arrange this.

Farewell Philly Evans

Philly has retired after serving 40 years as a nurse, nurse practitioner and nurse manager. She has spent the last seven years with us at Coleridge Medical Centre, and we are sure you will join us in wishing her a very long and happy retirement!

To put it into Philly's own words, she will be "found at home, head down, and bottom up in my compost heap, where I am content."

Thank you for your work and dedication, Philly.

Video Consultations

Some GPs may determine that they can best examine a patient's condition through a video consultation. At this stage, this will only be suitable for patients with a smartphone.

Patients will receive a link, via text message, from our online video service AccuRx®, which (when clicked) will enable the smartphone to activate the consultation, and may require the patient to alter some phone settings. We kindly ask for this to be done as soon as the link is received to avoid delay. Instructions can be found [here](#).



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