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30th September 2020

Dear Patient/Carer

Re: Practice Update – Access to Melling Surgery

I am writing to you to provide you with an update regarding Melling Surgery and our plans to safely resume reception and clinical services from the practice.

Is Melling Surgery closing?

We would like all of our patients to know and be assured that, despite recent dialogue between Melling residents on social media; we are **not** going to close Melling Surgery nor have we ever had any intention to.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had to develop new ways of working to comply with national guidance/legislation and to ensure we keep our patients and staff as safe as possible. Due to the high footfall in Melling Surgery and the lack of space to accommodate safe social distancing, the practice made a decision to reduce risk through making the building inaccessible.

When will I be able to access Melling Surgery?

During the past two weeks the practice has worked with the Patient Participation Group (PPG) and patients in assessing how we can restore services as safely as possible from Melling Surgery.

The patients unanimously agreed the following:

1. Reception should be open to respond to patients who are unable to access and/or use the internet. However, patients should be reminded that the most appropriate way of speaking to the practice is via the telephone and face-to-face should be the last resort and for patient who cannot use a telephone.

2. Access to the building should not be permitted, however the front door should be opened to provide reassurance to the local population that the practice is open. If a patient requires to speak face-to-face with a member of reception staff then they should be able to.
3. Even though the front door should be open the glass door prior to reception should remain locked and only opened when a patient indicates they require the receptionist. This could be achieved by adding a doorbell on the outside of the glass door with social distancing stickers being clearly visible on the floor to indicate where patients should stand.
4. A prescription box should be placed inside the front door to enable patients to drop off their prescriptions safely. Hand sanitiser should be placed next to the prescription box for patient use.
5. Clinical services should resume but these should be planned services only, i.e. the flu campaign, cervical screening and NHS Health Checks. If patients need to be seen by a GP for an acute need or for their ongoing condition then they should be seen in Towerhill Surgery.

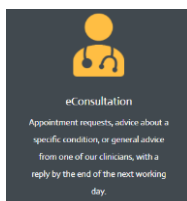
The practice will work with the PPG to implement the above recommendations by Wednesday 7th October 2020.

I do not drive so how do I get to Towerhill Surgery?

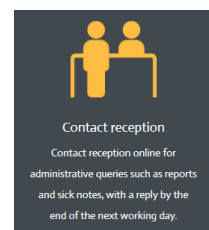
For a number of years the practice has provided a taxi service for patients who are unable to drive to Towerhill Surgery. Our taxi service is provided by Alpha taxis and to request a taxi please ask the team when booking an appointment.

How do I access an appointment?

The service we offer is the same as prior to COVID-19, however rather than waiting on a telephone, coming into reception and/or sitting in the waiting room you can send us any requests or queries you have from the comfort and safety of your own home by submitting an online consultation (eConsult service).



If you have a medical condition you require support with or you have a general medical concern visit www.mazmedical.nhs.uk and click on the eConsultation icon



If you would like to contact reception with an administrative query (e.g. sick note, reports) then please visit www.mazmedical.nhs.uk and click on the Contact reception icon

What if I do not have access to the internet?

We do appreciate not all patients either have access to the internet and/or are not confident in using the internet; therefore we have a service in place to help you. When speaking to a member of the team please let them know you are unable to access or use the internet and they will add you to a same day call back list (and call you back before 6:30pm).

When you are called back a member of the team will complete the online consultation on your behalf which means they may have to ask you some sensitive questions. All questions they ask are important to establish your health needs so please do answer them as honestly as possible. Your information is maintained in the strictest of confidence.

What happens when I submit an online consultation?

On receiving your online consultation the Doctor or Nurse will review the information you have submitted. They may call you to discuss your query/request further or action without any further contact. The Doctor or Nurse may ask you to send in some photos or offer you a video consultation.

We have found that around 70% of patient requests can be managed remotely without patients having to attend the surgery and without in any way compromising care.

What if I need to be seen?

If the Doctor or Nurse needs to see you they will invite you to Towerhill Surgery, more often than not on the same day.

If you are invited in for an appointment, on arrival you will be screened to ensure you are fit and well. We will ask you not to attend the practice if you or a member of your household currently has symptoms of COVID-19 or if you are self-isolating due to contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

What if I require a Home Visit?

If you are housebound and require a home visit you will need to contact the practice main telephone number (0151 902 0010) and provide our team with further information. You will be asked a few questions by a member of our administration team who will then pass this through to the clinician for review. The clinician will contact you via telephone and discuss your request further and if they think you require a visit they will book a suitable time with you over the telephone.

How can I order my prescriptions?

If you have access to the internet then the easiest way to order your repeat prescriptions is via the NHS App. You do not have to contact the practice to register with the NHS App you simply need to download the App by visiting <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app/>. If you do not have access to a smart phone, tablet or the internet then you can contact the practice via telephone and order your prescriptions over the telephone.

We hope this letter provides you with reassurance that we are here to support your healthcare needs. We would encourage you to make contact with us if you have a need and not to put it off for a later date.

Yours sincerely,

Lee Panter
Managing Partner
Dr Maassarani and Partners

Lynn Rigby
Patient Participation Group (PPG) Chair
Dr Maassarani and Partners

Download the NHS COVID-19 App



Protect your loved ones with the official NHS COVID-19 contact tracing app for England and Wales.

It's the fastest way of knowing when you're at risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). The quicker you know, the quicker you can alert your loved ones, and your community.

The more of us that use it, the better we can control coronavirus.

Download for free today by visiting <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/nhs-covid-19/>