

Attendees:

Patients	Staff
Michael Johnston (MJ)	Melinda Creme
Barbara Ewing (BE)	Alison Dalal
Maria De Bonis (MdB)	
Maria Diez (MD)	
Mohammed Alessa (MA)	

Questions and responses

1. What can we add? (BE)

We'd like to hear how things are going from your point of view. The new consultation system is not one of first-come, first-served. A GP triages each patient's request and assesses whether to consult virtually or face to face. This is based on clinical need, and safety.

We still see many patients face-to-face for example babies, new mothers, those on warfarin, and those needing vitamin B12 injections.

MJ said he received an excellent service, from a locum doctor, who took the trouble to call three times in one week.

2. Will consultations continue in this way, or will they go back to the old way? (via pre-meeting questionnaire)

The practice can't imagine returning to crowded waiting rooms, it just would be right from a public health point of view. The feeling is that it is better to continue to triage and see patients on the basis of need, not want. The aim is to do today's work today.

3. Is the reception trained and able to assess patients' needs? (MJ)

We don't ask the reception team to make any clinical decisions. They take a few notes about the patient's issue or, if the patient prefers not to say, they note that the issue is 'private'. The doctors feel they do this very well, from their point of view.

4. Is the appointment/consultation system clear and transparent? (AD)

It would be helpful to write a few lines to make it clear and concise, remembering that some patients have barriers to understanding, for example sight and language. There are multiple channels where this information could be placed, including the message on the telephone system (eg press 1 to hear how the appointment system works), the practice website and a newsletter. It was felt to be a wonderful system so worth sharing clearly.

Action: Alison and Melinda will write up the system and check it with those present. It will go at least on the website and in the surgery as a physical copy. Agreed it would be useful to communicate.

5. How can we see our own doctor? (MD)

Just ask at reception when you call for a telephone triage. If the doctor is not in that day then ask reception when your preferred doctor will be in; you'll be asked to call again on that day.

6. Can you still make appointments online? (MJ)

No, not while we are triaging all requests. It may return in some form in the future.

7. Will we be able to get a covid vaccination at the practice? (via the pre-meeting questionnaire).

The supply chains of Pfizer and Astra Zeneca are to hubs of GP practice. Sometimes a hub may actually be a large GP Practice. In our area we are using Lords, South Westminster Centre and the Royal Horticultural Society. Lords is accessible to everyone as it has a lift and also a vaccination centre on the ground floor. We don't have the facility to vaccinate here.

However, it may be that in future there is an annual vaccination, like flu; we may do the vaccination at the surgery then.

The housebound are being vaccinated by a roving team of District Nurses, community matrons and pharmacists.

8. What must the gap be between flu and covid vaccinations? (via the pre-meeting questionnaire).

One week.

9. My perception is that the practice is doing well; what do we think other patients think? ? (via the pre-meeting questionnaire).

Those present agreed that the surgery is doing well. The surgery has received positive feedback and no complaints. In fact complaints as a whole are down.

10. Can you do video consultations too, and how? (MD)

Yes, when the doctor is triaging you over the phone he/she can choose to send you two sorts of link if necessary. One link allows you to send the doctor up to five images (for example, of a skin rash) and one link allows the doctor to invite you to a video consultation.

11. How do the doctors and staff feel? (BE)

We feel lucky to be part of a great team, in the practice as well as the wider team locally. It has felt overwhelming at times with lots of information, short notice to do things and various requirements. It's the first time we've had to take more care of our own health too.

However, we've responded well and are proud of that. We've tested our staff early, vaccinated them early, made physical changes in the practice, and taken up the challenges of remote consultations and meetings well. Thank you for asking.

Comments

- I didn't know you had a website, or about eConsults
- MJ was written to by the NHS and invited to attend Guys or St Thomas's for a covid vaccination. He has no other contact with either hospital. The practice was unaware that people were being invited to these locations.
- The telephone message is a little unclear and so additional ways of giving patients messages, eg via the website or literature would be useful.
- On behalf of patients, please convey thanks for the good job everyone at the practice is doing; we're lucky to be in this practice. (MJ, BE)