

Worcestershire and Herefordshire Local Medical Committees Ltd

Our Ref: SP/LJC/6162

3rd April 2020

All Practices
BY EMAIL

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to begin with a huge vote of thanks for all your efforts over the past few weeks responding to the call of NHSE and the CCG to put Worcestershire General Practice in a state of readiness for the surge in Covid 19 infection we are now beginning to experience. Moving an entire county to a new operating model has been, and continues to be, a challenge, but as a profession your response has been calm, measured and entirely in keeping with the high standard of General Practice throughout the county.

Looking ahead we now have to assume every patient is a potential source of infection, since we understand peak infectivity is in the period from two days before to two days following the onset of symptoms. In line with the recommendations in the latest NHS England Preparedness letter, this means it is time for us all to think very hard before initiating any face to face patient contact. We are already practicing in a way none of us would have imagined ever needing to just four weeks ago, but now, for the safety of our patients, every bit as much as that of our teams, we need to avoid all non-essential patient contact.

This means we need to defer all non-essential procedures. It will undoubtedly be an inconvenience to our patients to have to wait a little longer for procedures such as coil fits or joint injections. It may also feel alien to treat patients without ear, chest, or abdominal examination, but with better access to telephone and now video consulting we need to consider just how likely these things are to change our plan of management. It will be safer in most cases to offer empirical management and err of the side of protecting our patients by keeping them isolated and managed remotely. We also need to limit the number of tests we do for monitoring long term conditions by deferring routine bloods, wherever possible, and postpone B12 injections until the advice on self isolation changes. To induce an unnecessary infection by asking patients to break isolation may now be the greater risk.

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We are very close to having Red and Amber sites for necessary patient contact, but we must use these wisely, and as little as possible if we are to play our part in limiting the impact of the pandemic. Only by doing this can we protect the integrity of the GP service for all our patients whatever their needs.

Thank you all again for your unstinting efforts to date, and for everything we are all about to do to face up to the challenge of the coming weeks and months.

Stay safe and take the time to relax and recover this weekend if you are able.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely



Dr Shaun Pike
Worcestershire LMC Chairman