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Dear Patients

The Glebe Surgery wishes to thank you all for the fantastic support you continue to give us during such unprecedented and difficult times.

I am sorry that this is a lengthy letter but encourage you to read it as it contains much important information about your GP surgery.

Over the last 18 months with your help, The Glebe Surgery has been able to deliver services that would have been unimaginable prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have opened a new multi-million pound purpose built general practice building. Sadly, it had to close its doors and planned usage was limited due to the first national 'lock down'. We are now opening up again in line with government guidance. We hope patients will get as much satisfaction from its use as we hoped for when designing it.

Despite national 'lock down', we managed to utilise the facilities by opening a 'hot-hub' serving a population of 80,000. This provided an environment where patients with COVID-19 symptoms were seen and treated safely.

In December 2020, we became one of 100 surgeries selected to administer COVID-19 vaccines in the first wave. Thanks to our Patient Participation Group, army of volunteers and retired doctors and nurses, as well as our truly dedicated staff, we have to date, administered 38,625 vaccines. 18,822 first doses, 17,394 second doses and 2,409 booster vaccines. I hope The Glebe Surgery being selected to administer some of the earliest COVID-19 vaccinations in the country reflects our innovative nature.

We strongly advise those who are eligible for their booster vaccines do have them. All the current evidence suggests they will improve immunity and reduce the chances of serious illness and hospital admissions. However, what will protect our local population the most is for those who are eligible have to have their first dose of vaccine but yet to have it and those that are due their booster dose but yet to have it get themselves vaccinated at the earliest opportunity. If anyone has yet to have a vaccine but unsure please do ask to speak with a member of the vaccination team who will do their best to answer any questions you may have.

We will be contacting anyone who is eligible for a third dose (not booster) due to current or previous immunocompromised. There is a national list and your hospital specialists are communicating with us about those who need it and may not be on the national database.

For those of you who will become eligible for a booster we will make contact prior to the date you are due. The timing is very strict and must be administered at least 182 days after the second dose unless there are very specific clinical reasons why it should be given sooner. If you are booking your vaccine with us via our online booking service please check you are at least 182 days after your second vaccination date otherwise we may need to turn you away. The date of your second vaccination can be seen on your vaccination card or the NHS App.

If your child is 12-15 years old and not in an at risk category then they will receive a COVID-19 vaccination in the school setting. We are not licenced to administer COVID-19 vaccine to them at this site. If your child misses their school vaccination for any reason, or is home schooled, there will be specific locations they can be vaccinated outside of the school setting. We believe these appointments will be available to be booked via the National Booking Service. They may be available as soon as October half term but I am unable to confirm this at this time.

As if dealing with the difficulties of COVID-19 is not enough, we have also had a new IT system installed in the last month. This was planned before the pandemic and as it is with so many things associated with the NHS, once the ball starts rolling it is unstoppable, pandemic or not. We apologise for any inconvenience this has caused patients but truly believe it will benefit your care by allowing us to communicate with other health and social care agencies allowing us to coordinate patient care much more effectively.

We appreciate that our phones are extremely busy at present. Our incoming call volume is far exceeding pre-pandemic levels and sometimes we physically do not have the space to put staff to answer them as quickly as we would like. The system is auditable and we are reviewing things on a week-by-week basis to try to improve things. If you need medical advice, please persevere with calling us.

As I am sure you are all aware, there is a lot of media coverage surrounding the debate about how general practice can best serve its registered patient population. As Independent Medical Practitioners Working in a Partnership, it is something we discuss every day. The Glebe Surgery Partners feel it is paramount that clinical access meets clinical need. We intend to continue to remotely triage patients and always see them when we consider it to be clinically needed. We do see patients in the surgery for urgent as well as routine matters. We do home visits and visit care homes when needed. The only services we are not able to offer currently (which we did before the COVID-19 pandemic) are minor operative procedures and spirometry (a forced breathing test creating an aerosol).

We will be maintaining social distancing in the surgery building and maintaining our policy of separating administrative staff from patients as much as possible. This is because we strongly believe this is the safest environment for both patients and our staff. We request patients continue to check their temperature and gel their hands when arriving at the surgery and wear an appropriate facemask.

We appreciate that not all of you will agree with this approach but we are trying to do the best we can with limited resources and must make decisions so those that need medical assistance most, get it in a timely way.

We review our policies on a daily basis and will keep patients informed as best we can.

I am sure you will be pleased to hear The Glebe Surgery has just won the Local Authority Building Control South East Region Non Residential Best New Build Award. This is one of the main construction industry awards. The Partners and staff wish to thank so many of you who helped us during the design, building and occupancy stages of the new surgery. The Glebe Surgery is now entered in the national awards final.

So wish us luck!

Yours sincerely



Dr Keir Newsom