

Drs Lowcock & Veltkamp



Covid-19 update

Over the last year you are likely to have noticed a difference in the way things are being done in general practice as we manage the COVID 19 pandemic.

While we continue to ask that patients do not visit the GP practice unless specifically asked to do so the NHS App allows patients to request repeat prescriptions, know when they are ready for collection from a pharmacy of their choice and access the online econsult service more easily. We would recommend patients do this where possible.

Since the start of the pandemic our GPs and wider clinical team have been working tirelessly to master new ways of working. We have become experts in consulting our patients remotely: triaging each person's unique situation and managing it appropriately. This means that patients who need face-to-face assessments can easily receive it- whereas those who can effectively be treated by phone, video consultation or email are able to access high quality clinical care conveniently and safely. Patient and staff safety is our top priority, and we have a responsibility to make sure that the crowded waiting rooms of the past (which were a breeding ground for infections of all sorts) remain a thing of the past. We hope the pandemic is nearing its end but, the coronavirus is with us for the foreseeable future – we have had to adapt to this fact by reserving face-to-face appointments for patients who need (or really want) them, and using technology to deliver care to those who don't. Please be aware, incidentally, that the Health Centre has always been 'open' to patients - we have been seeing patients who do not have covid-19 symptoms in person from the very beginning of the crisis, and continue to do so. Patients with respiratory symptoms have been seen by our partner services St Helens Rota at the "Hot Hub" based in Albion Street Clinic. We have found that many of our patients prefer the remote model of consulting doctors and nurses, whereas some prefer the more traditional in person meeting with the clinician. As we begin to move out of the pandemic, we are offering a hybrid arrangement of appointments which honours the variety of wants and needs of the population we serve. Please rest assured –if you need to be seen face-to-face, then you will be seen face-to-face. Please work with our highly-trained care navigators, who take pride in signposting you to the very best available healthcare solution for your needs.

A home visiting service is still available to patients who are unable to leave their home.

As well as the usual doctors and nurses the practice has a range of other clinicians who may be better placed to help you depending on your medical or social need.

Mental Health Practitioner_ - can help patients with mental health issues.

Social Prescriber – He is able to help connect patients with community based sources of support which can work a long side clinical treatment to improve health and wellbeing.

Physiotherapy- We have a physiotherapist working in practice 1 full day a week offering face-to-face consultations to patients with new back and joint pain problems. Our physiotherapist can offer assessment, management plans, follow up and onward referral if necessary.

Thank you once again for your support and understanding as we all adapt to a new way of working while being true to our practice vision “Working together to provide a brighter future through better healthcare”.

Changes to X-ray services

If you have NO Covid-19 symptoms and your GP has requested that you have an x-ray (ie hands, feet, chest x-ray) during the coronavirus pandemic, you can still have your x-ray done.

Please attend one of the following sites ONLY - no appointment is necessary:

St Helens Hospital X-ray Department

9am - 7.30pm Monday and Tuesday

9am - 4.30pm Wednesday – Friday

Millennium Centre X-ray Department

9am - 6.30pm Monday – Friday

9am - 4.30pm Sat & Sunday

If you do have Covid-19 symptoms (high temperature, new, continuous cough) please do not attend for an x-ray. You should follow national guidance and isolate for 14 days before attending. If you are concerned or have any questions please ring 0151 676 5756.

If you are on the UK government's shielding list then please ring the X-ray Department on 0151 676 5756 before attending.

If your GP has requested an US scan, MR scan or CT scan, the department will be in touch to discuss a suitable appointment time.