

## February 2021 Newsletter

### COVID Vaccination Programme

As many will know we have been working flat out at the Totally Wicked Stadium in addition to the 'day job' since 16<sup>th</sup> December. The vaccination programme is now running 7 days a week from 8am to 8pm. It has been a delight to see so many of you at the stadium and to be part of the group of St. Helens practices and the CCG working together to achieve this immense task. The staff at Saints has been tremendous – even the cheeky traffic marshals asking me on arrival at an over 90 vaccination session whether I was there for my first or second vaccine!

The vaccination programme will inevitably have a knock on impact on the routine work of the practice and this is where we need your help. Due to the sheer volume of e-consults submitted daily, in addition to the full telephone and face to face appointments, it has become impossible to answer all within 24 hours. Please do NOT use e-consult or footfall for urgent matters. If it is urgent, please phone and speak to a receptionist. If you know you need to speak to a doctor, please book a telephone appointment rather than email and ask to be given a telephone appointment. Do NOT contact GPs directly but use formal channels. We will not be responding to any requests made through social media such as 'messenger' and all email correspondence should be through the practice email address and not to individual doctors. There are just too many ways we can be contacted and unless through official means, we are at increased risk of missing things. Your cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

Please, where possible, use other services if appropriate so we are only dealing with patients who actually need GP or practice nurse assistance. Please make use of the pharmacy services, the urgent treatment centre and self-care when clinically indicated. Do NOT ignore any symptoms which demand prompt assessment or two week referral for suspected cancer. You must continue to attend cancer screening services. Make use of the NHS website to see if you should be seen (after telephone assessment first to reduce the time spent in the surgery building). Visit the practice website for useful links to help and services. Please request prescriptions on-line if able.

This third wave has put immense pressure on the NHS and this has had a huge impact on secondary care services – particularly out-patient appointments and elective admissions and routine care. We have no influence on secondary care or their appointment system so please do not create additional work for primary care by asking us to expedite appointments as you 'have been waiting a long time'. If there is a clinical deterioration in your condition warranting an expedition of your appointment, this we need to know and act on.

### Contact Details

It is essential that we have up to date contact details for every patient as we will be inviting each cohort for vaccination via SMS to the mobile number we have for you or to your landline. On inviting the first four groups we have run repeatedly into problems due to out of date contact data.

Be aware there are two mass vaccination sites at Totally Wicked. The Trust one is upstairs – invitation by letter from government/NHSE. The GP service is on the ground floor. Hope to see more of you there soon. Please continue to follow national guidance regarding social distance etc after vaccination as it will take several weeks to work and two doses are needed for lasting protection. Please accept whatever vaccine is offered unless medical reasons warranting one over the other. Sometimes the planned vaccine changes depending on delivery – Pfizer must be used within 5 days.

Please keep safe – together we can get through this.

