

Dear Patient,

During the pandemic life has been difficult for all of us, we have had to change our lives, manage pain, illness, suffering and in some cases the death of people close to us. If people you care about have died during the pandemic, please accept my deepest condolences.

I want to reassure you that the team at your GP practice continues to be here for you and your family. As you will be aware, we have had to make changes to the way we work to be able to support you and keep you safe to ensure we can continue to provide services for you and your family.

I would like to take the opportunity to clarify how you can contact us and how we can help and support you.

How You Can Contact Us

There are several ways you can contact the practice; these are listed in a table accompanying this letter so that you can keep it handy for reference. There's also useful information on how you can access wider support and contact details for other healthcare organisations and services, including telephone numbers for local NHS organisations in case you need to follow up a referral – the practice doesn't have any access to the appointments of other organisations.

At the practice we (as well as all other GP practices) are experiencing a high demand for our services, and we are taking all the actions we can to provide you with the support that you need. In order to do that we need to work together with you.

I appreciate that the phone lines are very busy and not being able to get through to us can be very frustrating. We are reviewing our phone services to see what we can do to improve them so that you don't have these problems. These improvements may take some time to implement, so thank you for your patience as they take place.

How We Are Seeing Patients

Despite the Government's Plan B restrictions lifting on 27 January 2022, COVID-19 still remains a significant concern and taking appropriate steps to reduce the risk of infection within the practice still governs how we can use the building. We need to ensure waiting rooms do not become crowded and carry out cleaning between patient consultations. For these reasons, it is not possible for practices to see as many people in person as before the pandemic. We ask anyone visiting the surgery to please wear a face-mask.

The arrangements that we do have in place for consultations with you are:

- telephone consultation
- video consultation
- In person, face to face consultation

We are working hard to make sure that you get the same high standard of care whatever type of consultation you have with us. Telephone and video consultations could be safer, quicker and more convenient for you. If during a telephone or video consultation, there is a decision that it is necessary to see you in person then an appointment will be made for you to come to the practice.

Your consultation will be made with the professional who can best deal with your query. We rely on the expertise of our colleagues who are: nurses, paramedics, pharmacists, healthcare assistants, physiotherapists and doctors. This enables us to have a large volume of appointments available for people each day and ensures that you get the right care from the right professional.

Our reception staff are trained to sign post you to the right health care professional for your need as efficiently as possible and will ask for the reason you are contacting the surgery. We understand you may feel reluctant to share personal medical information, but please be assured our reception staff are there to help and your information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Routine services

The successful roll out of the booster programme means that our practice can now resume routine appointments after some of these were paused in mid-December to divert resources to delivering more vaccinations during the Omicron wave. We are now urging patients who have held off contacting their practice with more routine issues over recent weeks, and those who are due to have health checks, to come forward.

Support for patients with urgent health concerns and for clinically vulnerable patients or for people with an ongoing health condition has continued throughout. We continue to be here for you. Please don't hesitate in contacting us.

How To Get Involved

If you would like to become more involved in how the practice works, I would like to invite you to become part of our Patient Participation Group (PPG). This is a group of patients, carers and practice staff who meet to discuss practice issues and patient experience in order to help improve the service. If you would like to become part of the group or have a discussion with one of the members the contact details are on the list below.

If you do have any comments or feedback you would like to share you can also do this by contacting surgery via email loughtonsurgery@nhs.net or alternatively by calling the surgery on 0208 418 1340 after 11am and speaking with the reception supervisor or practice managers. We're always looking for ways to improve our services, and if something has not met your expectations or you'd like to share a positive experience, we would like hear about it.

Thank you very much for your time. I am confident that as a team of patients and professionals we can continue to look after one another and ensure that the services you need are available for you.

Kind regards

Jas Larh & Viv Ward
Practice Managers

You can contact The Loughton Surgery in the following ways



Method	Details
Telephone	Our number is: 0208 418 1340 Phone lines are open from 8am – 18.30PM
E-mail	The email address is loughtonsurgery@nhs.net
The NHS app (download for Android or Apple to your smart phone if you have one)	You can use the NHS app to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book appointments • Order repeat prescriptions • Review your medical record • See our COVID pass www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/
In person	You are welcome to come to reception to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • book appointments • drop off letters
In writing	Please post letters to: The Loughton surgery 25 traps Hill Loughton IG10 1SZ Or drop them off at the practice
For prescriptions There are several ways you can order prescriptions, including repeat prescriptions. Please talk to us about this.	Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drop off a request in the box in the waiting area at the practice • order on the NHS app • Order via your chosen Pharmacy
Patient Participation Group	Contact details Email loughtonsurgery@nhs.net (this will be forwarded to the PPG chair personal email)
To follow up a referral that the practice has made for you to either the community services or a Hospital, please contact the community service or hospital	The most common organisations we refer to are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essex partnership NHS Foundation Trust <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Community and Mental Health please call: 0300 123 0808 • The Princess Alexandra Hospital please call: 01279 444 455 • To change an Outpatients appointment please call: 01279 827 391 • To contact the maternity team if you are in labour please call: 01279 444 455 and enter extension 2144 • Addenbrookes Hospital please call: 01223 245151 • Mid Essex (Broomfield) please call: 01245 362000

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barts Health please call: 0207 3777 000 <p>Postponed outpatient appointments and numbers for patients to contact for urgent queries</p> <p>The numbers below are direct contact numbers for specific services. If the service you need is not detailed below or you are unable to get through, please contact the hospital's switchboard:</p> <p>For Mile End, St Bartholomew's or The Royal London please call: 020 7377 7000 For Newham please call: 020 7476 4000 For Whipps Cross please call: 020 8539 5522</p> <p>Whipps Cross Hospital Appointment call centre please call: 020 8537 6768</p>
Sharing feedback with the practice	<p>Please contact The Loughton Surgery at loughtonsurgery@nhs.net in the first instance</p> <p>The practice complaints policy can be found here obtained from reception.</p> <p>If you would rather speak to someone not directly involved in your care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints advocacy services in Essex are run by https://www.pohwer.net/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 0300 456 2370 • NHS England https://www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/complaint/complaining-to-nhse/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ england.contactus@nhs.net ○ 0300 311 22 33

Other ways to get medical support and advice

Method	Details
<p>NHS 111 online</p> <p>If you have an urgent health need that can't wait, please visit NHS 111 online, or if unable to use the internet, call 111, who will advise the best place or treatment to suit their needs.</p> <p>Please contact 111 before going to A&E. They can book an appointment for you at A&E.</p> <p>Dial 999 for life-threatening emergencies</p>	<p>To get help from NHS 111, you can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • go to 111.nhs.uk (for people aged 5 and over only) • call 111 <p>NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week</p> <p>If you're Deaf and want to use the phone service, you can use the NHS 111 British Sign Language service available in your country. You can also call 18001 111 on a textphone.</p> <p>England – <u>NHS 111 (BSL) interpreter service:</u> https://signvideo.co.uk/nhs111/</p>

<p>Pharmacies</p> <p>For minor health conditions contact the community pharmacists for help. As qualified health professional they can offer clinical advice and over the counter medicines for a range of minor illnesses such as coughs, colds, sore throats, tummy trouble and aches and pains. If symptoms suggest something more serious, pharmacists have the right training to get you the right help.</p>	<p>To find your local pharmacy visit:</p> <p>https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy</p>
<p>Mental health support</p> <p>Adults</p> <p>If you, a family member or friend are in crisis and need help, please dial NHS 111 and select the option for mental health crisis. You will be connected to our contact centre where trained staff will provide appropriate support and advice 24 hours a day.</p> <p>Under 18s</p> <p>If you are under the age of 18 or are the family member of someone under the age of 18 who is in crisis there are various ways you can get help.</p>	<p>Adults</p> <p>To get mental health help from NHS 111, please call 111 and select option 2</p> <p>NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week</p> <p>Under 18s</p> <p>For North East London NHS Foundation Trust's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service please call: 0300 300 1600 or email nelft-ewmhs.referrals@nhs.net</p> <p>If you need urgent help or out of hours help, call please call: 0300 555 1201</p>
<p>Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service</p> <p>Information, advice and support for children, young people and families, including advice around family health, minor illness, caring for your baby, parenting support and special educational needs, as well as a number of other specialist community healthcare services such as therapies.</p>	<p>Healthy Family Teams:</p> <p>Please call: 0300 247 0122 (Option 1)</p> <p>vcl.essexwest-hftcentraladminhub@nhs.net</p> <p>Specialist Healthcare Services:</p> <p>Please call: 0300 247 0122 (Option 3 then Option 1)</p> <p>vcl.essexwest-harlowcdc@nhs.net</p> <p>Website:</p> <p>https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk/about-us/</p>
<p>Herts & West Essex 'Healthier Together' Website</p> <p>Provides clear health information for parents/carers and young people put together by local health experts, helping you to recognise what might be wrong, when to seek help, how to keep your child comfortable and how long their symptoms may last. Also includes a dedicated section on young people's health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Website:</p> <p>https://hwehealthiertogether.nhs.uk/</p>