

NHS Lanarkshire is redesigning primary care services as they begin to return

As NHS services start to return to their 'new normal' while still dealing with covid-19, Lanarkshire residents are asked to be aware of and adhere to the changes that are now in place at local GP practices.

Dr Linda Findlay, Medical Director South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership, said: "We want people to know that their practices are open and here to help. However, there have been a lot of changes due to covid-19 and these will be in place for the foreseeable future."

There are 100 GP practices across Lanarkshire and while each will have their own process, there are changes that will be consistent across practices. These include:

- Most appointments will now be by telephone or video consultation. After your initial assessment by telephone, practice staff will advise what is most appropriate for you. Remember this may be another service – for example, self-care, dentist, community pharmacy or optician. Please do not turn up at the practice without an appointment, to help reduce the risk of spreading the virus.
- Patients will only receive a face-to-face appointment when necessary – for example, when a physical examination is needed or if tests need to be carried out.
- Measures will be in place to ensure safety and physical distancing – for example, reduced capacity in waiting rooms, one-way systems, hand sanitiser and face coverings.
- Appointment systems will change to avoid queues. You will receive a precise time for your appointment, please do not arrive early or late. Reception staff will advise you on their own process.

Dr Findlay added: "I understand that it can be frustrating not always being able to see your GP, or other healthcare professional, face-to-face. However, we all need to play our part in suppressing covid-19 to keep ourselves and our communities safe.

"General practice and other community services have continued throughout covid-19, but it's important to understand that we are not 'restarting' services as they were before, but 'redesigning' them in line with national guidance to keep all Lanarkshire patients safe. I would like to thank the people of Lanarkshire for their continued patience and understanding as we move forward and services start to resume."