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## SHP Update FAQ's

In line with NHS England's directives and managing patient care during COVID-19, Solihull Healthcare Partnership has made several changes over the last 4 months which has changed how patients can access healthcare support from us. In order to uphold our vision and mission statement in providing safe, effective care for our patients, we have moved to provide care as a larger organisation and centralised our provision of care by utilising all healthcare professionals who previously used to work at our 7 sites. In order to answer some questions you may have around this we have produced a series of FAQ's to help our patients understand the changes that have taken place.

### **Are SHP Surgeries closed?**

No. All sites have remained open but services have re-arranged the use of each surgery to keep our patients and staff safe during COVID-19. (Please refer to the SHP unlock plan)

### **Why is there a long wait time when I call?**

During these unprecedented times we are receiving a high number of call volumes and due to this it is creating longer waiting times. Call handlers and call navigators are capturing

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#### **GP Partners**

Dr M Ali Dr N Behl Gupta Dr M Caughey-Rogers Dr B J Dickinson Dr M Font Dr B Gandhi  
Dr S L Green Dr S Kotecha Dr K Lad Dr J Lawley Dr A Lupoli Dr R Pal Dr B Patel  
Dr N Patel Dr M Reynolds Dr J Russell Dr M Sterry Dr E L Stokes Dr M Webb

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more information from patients to help best direct the needs of your call to the relevant healthcare professional, which in turn has increased the call duration. We are also getting a number of calls for prescription requests and administration queries.

To help mitigate high telephone call volumes and improve efficiency, SHP has a new online consult system that gives you 24-hour access to a wealth of health advice, self-care tips, online medication requests, administration queries and information on your next steps. Plus, you can submit request forms directly to your GP for review if you need further guidance. This will free up the telephone lines for vulnerable patients to contact us, urgent queries and for those who do not have access to the internet.

### **Why can't I see my own GP at my surgery?**

The practice site you may have been associated with previously is now part of SHP as a whole. Therefore, you can be seen by anyone of our GP's from across our sites within SHP. We are moving away from seeing your own GP at your original site to a more unified approach. Whilst you will have a named GP to assist with the administrative aspects of your care, a registered patient at SHP will have access to a diverse array of healthcare professionals.

SHP has over 40 general practitioners, multiple clinical pharmacists, advanced nurse practitioners, diabetic specialist nurse, practice nurses, healthcare assistants, and social prescribers. SHP has also recently recruited phlebotomists and pharmacy techs as a drive to provide a neighbourhood health facility for all your health needs. All SHP patients will therefore have access to a wealth of healthcare professionals. If you would like to speak to a preferred healthcare professional for a routine query, please indicate this in your online submission or to our care navigators on the telephone. Whilst the care navigation team will ensure your preference of a specific health care professional will be met, it may take longer to arrange contact with your preferred choice.

### **Are SHP adopting NHS England's Digital First approach?**

Yes. Digital technology is transforming how patients and health professionals interact. As a result, NHS England is supporting primary care to move towards a digital first approach, where patients can easily access the advice, support and treatment they need using digital and online tools. These tools need to be integrated to provide a streamlined experience for patients, and quickly and easily direct them to the right digital or in-person service.

In practical terms, this means patients should be able to use online tools to access all primary care services, such as receiving advice, booking and cancelling appointments, having a consultation with a healthcare professional, receiving a referral and obtaining a prescription.

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## **Online Consultations**

GP practices are increasingly offering more online access to services, including the option to have an online consultation. Online consultation systems allow patients to contact their GP practice without having to wait on the phone or take time out to come into the practice, and they form an important part of Digital First Primary Care. Online consultations enable patients to ask questions, report symptoms and upload photos. The practice then looks at the request and responds within a stated timeframe, connecting the patient to the right person, service or support. Currently, most practices who have implemented online consultations use a questionnaire-based system, with their own staff then looking at requests from patients and delivering the service in response. However, there are also opportunities to manage online consultations at a larger scale, for example across primary care networks or via a hub model. Some practices are also offering patients the option to have an appointment with a clinician via video (a video consultation).

Research has been commissioned to understand the impact of online consultations on general practice. However, evidence to date and case study findings show that where online consultations are implemented as part of a comprehensive primary care service, they enhance the experience of care for patients and support general practice in managing time and workloads, improving both access and sustainability.

## **What is happening with the staff at SHP?**

As a consequence of adopting a newer way of working and adopting a digital first model, SHP has created new roles for our current reception teams at all of our sites. These staff groups have been trained in Confidentiality and GDPR. Patients sharing information with our staff helps us to prioritise and signpost patient care effectively and efficiently. Our receptionist roles hence changed to become:

**Call Handlers** - A role that is dedicated to answering all calls that come into the organisation and direct you to the right person within our organisation.

**Care Navigators** – This role will be dedicated to assist patients in understanding the nature of your medical query to ensure we get you seen by the appropriate healthcare professional with our organisation or–outside our organisation with other healthcare professionals like dentists, opticians, emergency care like 111, A&E and hospital care.

**Senior Care Navigators** – This role will be dedicated in overseeing the care navigator team and managing the online submissions made by patients in conjunction with our senior healthcare professionals to ensure all the medical online submissions get to the right person within our organisation.

**Workflow administrators** – This role will be dealing with all of the clinical correspondence that comes into our organisation from hospitals and ensuring all the data from these letters are accurately recorded in your patient records.

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**Medical secretaries** – This role will be involved in helping our healthcare professionals in managing correspondence and referrals for your care to other healthcare professionals in hospitals or in the community.

**SHP office administrators** – This role will be dealing with managing all administration aspects of your healthcare needs; registering with us, managing communication to outside agencies like hospitals, insurance companies, DVLA, councils through to organising care for patients that require reviews for long term conditions like diabetes, asthma, COPD, cancer care.

### **When will you enable appointment booking online?**

As of the 3<sup>rd</sup> August, SHP online consult has now replaced the previous system of EMIS online where you could book appointments and request prescriptions. Every patient contacting the practice via online consult will be asked to complete an online form so that these can be triaged first by one of our clinicians before making an appointment.

One of our clinicians will review all the medical queries and requests for appointments and will then decide upon the most appropriate next step for you, whether it is a telephone call, video call, text message or an appointment with the most appropriate clinician at the right time. We encourage all of our patients to use online consult for any contact with the practice, urgent and routine, clinical and non-clinical; these will always be responded to by the end of the next working day. For more information please see <https://solihullhealthcarepartnership.nhs.uk/online-consultation/>.

If you are unable to fill in an online form or if your query is more urgent, please telephone the surgery on your usual number. Please be patient whilst our trained care navigation team answer your call. Please be aware the care navigation team will ask you for the nature of your call and details of your medical issue. This is to enable our healthcare professionals in prioritising urgent cases. Once assessed, you may be booked in for a telephone or video or face to face appointment.

We envisage this new system will help alleviate the pressure on the telephone system to make way for vulnerable patients to access the service more promptly over the phone.

**Please do not request appointments via Facebook.**

### **How can I order my medication?**

There are now a number of ways to order your repeat prescription. The easiest, safest, and quickest way to order your repeat prescription is online. There is no need to make a phone call or visit us; instead, computer, smartphone or tablet users can request repeat prescriptions from anywhere in the UK – 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also check what medication you should be taking and when.

### **How to order your repeat prescription**

Patients on long term medication can order repeat prescriptions by any of the following methods:

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## **Online**

In person – hand the right sided counterfoil in the appointment box outside each of our sites. Please ensure you write on your request which pharmacy you would like to the prescription sending to.

**By post** – please write on your request which pharmacy you would like the prescription sending to

***Please allow two full working days for prescriptions to be processed and remember to take weekends and bank holidays into account.***

Medication can **no longer** be requested via your pharmacy on your behalf.

**Please do not request medications via Facebook.**

## **How do I register at the Surgery?**

You can now register online via <https://solihullhealthcarepartnership.nhs.uk/register/>

## **Summary**

The current coronavirus crisis has highlighted to NHS England that there is an opportunity to revolutionise general practice.

The pressures on general practice are immense and it is evident that the existing ways of working pre-coronavirus were not sustainable.

Going forward our vision is not to revert to the old way of practice at SHP. We want to streamline all areas of our organisation to make patient care quicker and more responsive by introducing online consult.

Online consultations implemented as the heart of our primary care service—enhance the experience of care for patients and support general practice in managing time and workloads, improving both access and sustainability.

You can read more here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/gps/GP-online-and-video-consultations/>

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