

24 March 2020

To Holderness Town & Parish Councils

Dear Councillors and Clerks

Changes to GP Services Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

I am writing to tell you about some important changes Holderness Health is having to make to ensure the continuation of GP services during the COVID-19 Pandemic. We have set out full details of the arrangements in the attached document.

With effect from Thursday 26 March, we will be seeing patients in only two of our seven surgeries. This is a temporary measure taken as a direct result of the pressures on the NHS due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. It means that only the following surgeries will be open to the public for appointments and collection of prescriptions:

- Hedon Group Practice, Hedon
- St Nicholas' Surgery, Withernsea

Normal opening hours will apply at these two locations.

This is not a decision which has been taken lightly. Having looked at all the options available, the practice has determined that it is essential to keep GP services running within Holderness during this crisis. The whole NHS is under immense pressure and general practice is no exception. Close to 20% of the practice workforce is already absent due to self-isolation and shielding measures and this number is likely to rise further. Closing sites in a planned way will allow the practice to prioritise patient care. It will ensure that we can offer as many phone consultations as possible with the workforce we have and that any face-to-face appointments which are absolutely essential are done in the safest environment possible for our patients.

We are undertaking considerable planning to ensure that we have identified the most vulnerable patients who will be prioritised for services and have also begun clinical outreach work to these identified patients to ensure that they understand the risks to their health and steps they should be taking to protect themselves. Also to ensure that they have the medications they need and understand how they should use them.

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**Chief Executive
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Amalia Booker

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Management
Jacqueline Carline
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Our Social Prescribing team are working on collating information about local support that is available to individuals who require assistance and are doing befriending outreach to the most vulnerable, isolated and lonely patients. We have limited capacity and will not be able to reach everyone but have deployed all the resources we have available into this work.

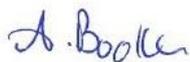
We are also working closely with partner agencies such as the Integrated Care Centre in Hull who will be offering specialist support to general practice to assist us with managing the care of the most frail patients during this time.

We would be very grateful for your help in disseminating the attached information locally in whatever way you can. We will be sending out text messages to patients for whom we have mobile numbers but these are currently taking several days to send due to the backlog in the system used by local GP Practices. We are also hoping that the Holderness Gazette will print all or some of the attached which has been sent to them as a press release. The information will also be posted on our website.

We are expecting difficult days ahead. We will have to react to the situation as it develops on a daily basis so we cannot be certain that we will not need to change things again. However, we believe that the changes we are making this week will make the difference to us being able to sustain local GP services.

Thank you in advance for anything you can do to support local residents to follow the guidance we have provided – it will genuinely help to keep both patients and staff safe and well over the coming weeks.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. Booker".

Amalia Booker
Chief Executive Officer

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