



**Whitecliff Surgery,
Whitecliff Mill Street, Blandford Forum,
Dorset, DT11 7BH**



**Eagle House Surgery,
Whitecliff Mill Street, Blandford Forum,
Dorset, DT11 7DQ**



**Child Okeford Surgery,
Upper Street, Child Okeford,
Dorset, DT11 8EF**

THE BLANDFORD GROUP PRACTICE NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2020

FACTS AND FIGURES

Between January and July 2020, The Blandford Group Practice achieved the following:

- 44,971 telephone appointments. This equates to over 300 per day and includes appointments with Doctors, Nurses, ANPs, Pharmacy and Dispensary.
- Received over 100,000 telephone calls. This works out at over 700 per day.
- Carried out 1213 home visits.
- Resolved 4734 eConsults.

E-CONSULT SYSTEM

You can access e-Consult 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via the practice website. It lets patients consult with their own NHS GP online by completing a quick form which is reviewed by the practice. After reviewing your query, you will then be directed toward the most appropriate help. This might be some advice on self-help, pharmacy advice, an appointment with one of the practice clinical team or another service. Your data is secure at all times – including during a video consultation or telephone call.

Visit the practice website www.theblandfordgrouppractice.co.uk and click on “consult our doctors online”, make your choice of how you wish to get help and follow the simple on-screen questions.

STAFF UPDATE

We are sad to announce that Dr Jane Davies, Dr David Burlton and Dr Time Blevins retired from the Practice at the end of June 2020. We know many of our patients will agree they will all be greatly missed and wish them well in their retirement.

To ensure that we continue to maintain our ratio of clinicians to patients, we are pleased to announce that Dr Katie Broad joined the Practice on 20 April 2020. Dr Paula Irving will also be continuing with the Practice permanently after completing maternity cover for Dr Elizabeth Paine who returned from maternity leave in July 2020.

We also welcomed a Clinical Pharmacist, Sarah Benney, and a new Pharmacy Technician, Naomi Loveless, who joined the Practice earlier this year. Our First Contact Physio, Simon Wiltshire, is also joining the practice in August.

PRACTICE UPDATE

Over the last few months you are likely to have noticed a difference in the way things are being done in general practice as we manage coronavirus (Covid-19). Whilst we currently have a low number of cases, we must remain alert in anticipation of a second spike.

We want to start off by saying thank you. Thank you for adapting so quickly to these new ways of working – it has been the drastic, yet fundamental, change needed to ensure the safety of you and our staff. To slow down the spread of coronavirus, we have worked to reduce the number of people coming into the practice by using online consultation systems like e-Consult (on our website), telephone appointments and video consultations.

Our top priority is, and has always been, to keep you and our staff safe while ensuring you get the care you need. This is why we ask you to continue what you have been doing to access your GP service.

Why can't I walk into my GP practice?

The coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has forced us all to work differently to help slow down the spread of the virus. All healthcare settings are taking special measures to protect you, the public and their staff. GP practices are working as hard as ever, but differently.

Where possible we want to avoid people having to wait inside a waiting room together, as we know this increases the risk of the virus spreading. Like hospitals and dentists, we have also had to change how we offer our services to you.

If you do need to come in, then we can ensure there are a minimal number of people in the practice, we can maintain social distancing and keep patients and staff safe.

How do I get an appointment?

The easiest and most effective method is to use e-Consult through the practice website, or you can telephone. You will then be contacted by a clinician to talk through your symptoms either over the phone, via email, or if needed and you have the available technology, through a video consultation.

Why can't I book a face-to-face appointment?

We have adapted the way in which you can get an appointment quickly and safely.

Most patient's health concerns can be managed over the phone or via video consultation. This is why we are providing you with either an initial phone call or video consultation to decide what would be the best way to help. If we can support you without needing you to come into the practice then we reduce the need for you to travel and reduce the risk of the virus spreading.

If you do need a face-to-face appointment, you will be invited to attend the practice.

If we can ensure there are a minimal number of people in the practice, we can maintain social distancing and keep patients and staff safe.

What do I do if I think I have coronavirus (Covid-19)?

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

If you are experiencing one or more of these symptoms then DO NOT visit your GP practice. You should visit 111.nhs.uk/covid-19 or call NHS 111 if you cannot get help online.

You must also ask for a test as soon as you start showing symptoms. You can do this online – visit www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test