*Dear Patient*

*The COVID pandemic has changed our lives in many ways, and this includes the way we see our GPs and other practice staff.*

*Despite the huge pressures on the NHS, your GP practice has remained open throughout the pandemic. However, the way your GP is working has changed – this includes making use of phone, video and online consultations where possible to reduce any unnecessary face to face contact. This approach has been taken locally and nationally, and is aimed at minimising the risk of infection to you, other patients and your GP staff where possible.*

*Primary care is working as a team to ensure that you speak to/see the right person at the right time. This may mean that a more appropriate person for your health needs is a physiotherapist, a nurse, a pharmacist or a mental health worker – by contacting your practice by phone or online first, this allows the staff to signpost you to the most appropriate healthcare worker.*

*This does not mean practices have stopped face-to-face appointments, and they continue to be offered where safe and necessary. There will always be a need for some patients to see their GP or another clinician in person, and where it is safe to do so and clinically appropriate practices will always ensure this is facilitated.*

*Practices also remain committed to making sure their services are accessible to those without access to digital consultations, or who struggle to use technology.*

***If you have any health concerns, please don’t ignore them****. You can seek medical advice in different ways including the use of NHS 111 (online and phone), your GP practice or your pharmacist.*