

Winter 2020

November & December

BGP Community Christmas Carol Service

Join us for our 'Virtual' Carol Service on Tuesday 8th
December 2020, from 7:30pm

Details on how to access the service will be available on
our website soon!

Opening Hours

24th December: Winnersh & Chalfont closed from 12:30

Brookside open until 18:30

25th - 28th December: Closed

29th - 31st December: Open as usual

1st January: Closed

We're still here for you!

2020 has been a very difficult year for everyone, and the way in which we help our patients manage their health has had to change significantly (and we may have to make even more adjustments going forward if the spread of Covid-19 worsens again). But **we are still here for you** and have outlined the main changes here so you know what to expect when you contact us.

Online Access—Please register for online access to your medical record so that you can order prescriptions, book appointments and see test results without the need to call us. Using online access, leaves the phone lines free for those who aren't able to use the internet or a computer.

Routine Appointments—Vaccinations, blood tests, dressings and antenatal/postnatal appointments are all face to face appointments. For all other routine appointments patients can book online or call the practice to book a phone call. If the clinician then needs to examine the patient they are asked to attend the surgery. This ensures the patient is kept as safe as possible away from others. As we need to clean the room between patients, the amount of face to face patients we have capacity to see is restricted so we are ensuring we see the most medically urgent.

E-consultations— If you feel you need help sooner than the next routine appointment, patients now need to complete an e-consultation on our website homepage. *No login is required* and we will respond by the end of the next working day. All forms are triaged by a GP which ensures the most medically urgent matters are dealt with quickly. If a patient does not have the internet or a smart phone, they can call us. Our team will ask about the symptoms so that patients can be

triaged by a GP in the same way.

LTC Reviews—During lockdown we contacted all our high-risk patients to ensure they had their medication and reviewed them over the phone. Since then we have prioritised their care when needed (e.g. those with diabetes with very high sugar levels). If you're concerned about your long term condition, or if your review is due, please book a phone call with a nurse.

Access to the Buildings—Sadly, we aren't able to leave our doors open at present due to strict guidelines around numbers of people waiting and moving around the building. We're also required to do some 'Covid checks' for everyone coming through the door. We've installed an intercom system at Brookside, and will have one at the Chalfont and Winnersh sites in the next few weeks, so that patients can speak to reception staff more easily. If patients have a booked face to face appointment they are able to wait in the waiting room on designated chairs just before their appointment time.

Dermatology—We've created a new clinic for patients who are concerned about changes in their skin (e.g. an unusual mole) and, by using text messaging, we ask patients to send a photo so that it can be reviewed by our specialist dermatology team. Patients are then contacted regarding advice and asked to attend a face to face/minor op appointment where needed.

Help us Help you —As you would expect we are exceptionally busy, but we want to ensure we're able to provide timely care for all those who really need it (for those with Covid symptoms and other conditions too). But we need your help! If you have a minor ailment please visit a local pharmacy or look for advice on NHS.uk or our own website first. That way we can be there for you when you really need us.

How To Get Help And Advice

If you have a **medical emergency**- such as chest pain or are unable to breathe- please call 999. If you have a medical concern book a **routine appointment** or complete an e-consult via our website.

If you think you might have coronavirus or you've been in close contact with someone who has it, visit NHS 111 for advice.

Website: www.111.nhs.uk/covid-19

If you have an **general enquiry** or an **administration question** please fill in our website form called 'Ask receptionist a question', or click the '**Message button**'.

If you **need advice about symptoms**, use the 'Health A-Z' on NHS.uk website to check if you need to take any action.

Website: www.nhs.uk

Or, visit your **local pharmacy** where trained clinicians can assess and advise you in a private room if needed.

Visit the practice website for access to masses of information and advice about many health concerns in the **Advice & Help Zone**.

Website: www.brooksidegrouppractice.co.uk

For **non- medical concerns** we're working with '**One Front Door**', a Wokingham Borough Council initiative, who are working with local organisations such as local foodbanks, First Days, Age UK, Wokingham Volunteer Centre, Involve, Link Befriending and many more. The aim is that everyone has somewhere to go should they need advice with practical or emotional issues to support their wellbeing. They can help people with food, prescription collection, linking up with friendship support and advice on issues such as redundancy, debt, statutory sick pay or other benefits.

If you need help – visit citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk/coronavirus, or call **0300 330 1189**

Taking care of your mind as well as your body is crucial whilst facing the challenges of a pandemic. Visit the **NHS Every Mind Matters** website for practical advice and support groups. Plus there are some really helpful leaflets available on our own website in the **Advice & Help Zone** under '**Mental Health & Wellbeing**'.

Link Befriending Scheme

Loneliness and social isolation is a painful reality for many older people these days, especially during the pandemic season we find ourselves in. Research from Age UK shows that nearly a million older people feel lonelier at Christmas time, two fifths of whom have been widowed. Many reported that Christmas is 'just another day' and passes them by unnoticed. According to Age UK, more than 2 million people in England over the age of 75 live alone and more than a million older people say they go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member.

People can become socially isolated for a variety of reasons, such as getting older or weaker, no longer being the hub of their family, leaving the workplace, the deaths of spouses and friends, or through disability or illness. Loneliness left unaddressed can have a serious effect on health such as heart problems, strokes and mental health issues.

The Link Befriending Scheme is a charity which operates locally and aims to offer advice, friendship and support to anyone who is isolated or lonely and who would benefit from having regular contact with someone who cares. If you, or someone you know, would like to find out more, call **0118 979 8019**, or visit linkvisiting.org

Looking after yourself.

Rest Up—it's ok to say 'no' to things if you need a break.

Eat Well—remember your 5 a day & control your portion sizes.

Stay Hydrated—plenty of water and soft drinks are essential

Keep Warm—make sure you wrap up whether inside or out.

Be Active—it keeps you warm and keeps you fit.

Keep Talking— your mental health matters, find someone you can be honest with.

Remember Joy—think of happy things, it can brighten your mood.

Practice Information

Opening Hours:

Brookside: Mon - Fri 8am - 6.30pm

Chalfont: Mon - Fri 8.30am - 5.30pm

Winnersh: Mon - Wed & Fri 8.30am - 12.30 & 2 - 5pm
Thurs 8.30am - 12.30pm (closed pm)

Surgery Switchboard: Mon - Fri 8am - 6.30pm

Contact details:

Brookside Group Practice

Brookside Close

Earley

Reading

RG6 7HG

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@BGPRReading