



## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR OUR PATIENTS**

**FROM THE 17th FEBRUARY 2020**

### **Lambgates Health Centre will use Online Consult to assess all appointment requests**

#### **Why online consult**

It is no secret that GP Practices face increasing pressure to help patients get the right medical advice they need, as quickly as possible.

In a standard appointment system there are some on the day urgent appointments, a limited number of phone appointments, then routine appointments with a waiting time that is often 2-3 weeks. This means long waits for problems that should be dealt with sooner, and some people being turned away without their problem being addressed.

At Lambgates health Centre we pride ourselves on continually looking at new ways to improve our service and we recognise that the vast majority of our patients prefer the same day telephone consultation system we provide, there are others who would prefer a different type of access. Therefore, in order to ensure we meet the ever increasing demand and needs of our patients whilst ensuring resources are utilised appropriately, we need to adapt the way we deliver care and look at new ways of supporting our patients.

We want to challenge the status quo and provide a more efficient service that enables patients to contact us digitally.

#### **What is online consult**

Online consult is an evidence based online platform that enables patients to request medical advice from their GP by simply undergoing an online consultation. During the online consultation patients may be provided with advice for self-help or for them to contact other services to receive the care that aligns with their symptoms. For example, the patient may be signposted to a pharmacy for minor ailments or emergency services for signs of critical illness. Patients can submit an online consult for a condition they have of which they want advice on (e.g. heart disease) or a new condition.

If a GP feels that a patient needs a face-to-face appointment then they will contact the patient within 48 hours and invite them in for an appointment that same day. For many medical queries (approximately 65%), the GP can and will complete the patient request remotely and/or during a telephone encounter within 48 hours of submitting an online consult

### **What are the benefits to patients?**

Patients will:

- Not have to wait in a long telephone queue to request an appointment at 8am
- Patients can send an online consult at a time convenient to them and not have to wait until the surgery is open
- Capture illness sooner – no waiting days for an appointment to get an important diagnosis
- Receive medical advice 24/7 via online consult self help online services
- Patients have their symptoms remotely assessed by their own family GP and contact within 48 hours potentially without the need to visit the surgery in person
- Patients won't necessarily have to take time off work or use holiday entitlement for the sake of a 15 minute GP consultation.

We are confident that online consult will significantly improve patient experience at Lambgates Health Centre. Online consult is used by over 6 million people throughout the UK and has demonstrated high patient satisfaction and excellent outcomes.

We hope you will join us in supporting this significant service improvement that we know will greatly benefit our patient population and give them access to their GP when they need it most.

Those patients who cannot do online forms because of difficulty with English, with reading or writing, or with using online forms (on their phone or computer) can contact reception for assistance, and will be supported to complete the forms.

**Online systems are not suitable for emergencies or the most urgent problems: in an emergency call 999, for an urgent problem call 111 or call the surgery.**

As this is a new project, we would welcome any comments and feedback regarding online consult and further service improvements.

**Please email: [TGCCG.C81106@nhs.net](mailto:TGCCG.C81106@nhs.net)**