

The Corner & Marshside Surgeries

Next Steps on Infection Prevention & Control – 1st June 2022

NHS England & NHS Improvement released the following **guidance** in a letter to NHS providers (reference C1657, dated 1st June 2022):

Health & Care Staff

'Health and care staff should continue to wear facemasks as part of personal protective equipment required for transmission-based precautions when working in COVID-19/respiratory care pathways, and when clinically caring for suspected/confirmed COVID-19 patients. This is likely to include settings where untriaged patients may present such as emergency departments or primary care, depending on local risk assessment... Health and care staff are in general not required to wear facemasks in non-clinical areas e.g. offices, social settings, unless this is their personal preference or there are specific issues raised by a risk assessment. This should also be considered in community settings.'

Patients

'Patients with respiratory symptoms who are required to attend for emergency treatment should wear a facemask/covering, if tolerated, or offered one on arrival. All other patients are not required to wear a facemask unless this is a personal preference.'

Visitors

'Visitors and individuals accompanying patients to outpatient appointments or the emergency department are not routinely required to wear a facemask unless this is a personal preference, although they may be encouraged to do so following a local risk assessment.'

Risk assessment

- 1) We are both relatively small GP surgeries & the absence of even one member of our teams to illness, particularly our clinical or nursing staff, could adversely affect our service provision.
- 2) We share a large waiting room, which enables effective social distancing & it can be isolated from our administrative areas. However, our consultation rooms are relatively confined spaces, so these have a higher risk of airborne transmission of Covid-19 & other respiratory infections.
- 3) Whilst our reception teams use active signposting to identify the reasons why our patients are attending for an appointment, a patient's condition may change between the time they book their appointment & the time that they attend the surgery.

- 4) We assess some patients with acute respiratory illness face-to-face & within the same building, we have patients who are extremely clinically vulnerable to Covid-19 infection attending for appointments.
- 5) None of our current staff are extremely clinically vulnerable to Covid-19 infection & all of our current staff have received a full primary course of Covid-19 vaccination.

Decisions

The Corner & Marshside Surgeries have reviewed the NHS England & NHS Improvement guidance in light of these risks. We have determined to proceed as follows:

- Patients, staff & visitors should continue to wear face masks within our consultation rooms, apart from when one member of staff is in the room alone, subject to any genuine medical exemptions.
- Patients, staff & visitors will not be required to wear face masks routinely in other areas of the building unless it is their personal preference.
- Patients with acute respiratory symptoms or other symptoms of potential Covid-19 infection should continue to wear a face mask at all times whilst in the building, including in our non-clinical areas. This will be identified by our reception team when booking appointments & text message reminders may be used for prebooked appointments. These patients will also be asked to sit away from other patients in our waiting room.
- When assessing a patient with acute respiratory symptoms or other symptoms of potential Covid-19 infection, the assessor is responsible for cleaning the surfaces in their room using Clinell Universal wipes, opening the window to improve ventilation or using another consultation room, if appropriate.
- We will review these decisions if the infection prevention & control guidance is changed again, or if we subsequently identify that any of our staff are extremely clinically vulnerable to Covid-19.

We will communicate these changes to our patients via our practice websites, using appropriate posters at the entrance & on our consultation room doors, & at the time our patients book an appointment.

Dr David Smith
Dr Rob Caudwell
8th June 2022

Routine review date: June 2023