



Dear All,

November 2020

As we enter a second national lockdown, it's important to reflect on the impact on everyone and to support each other during these challenging times. As a community we have always been proud at how we rally round at difficult times, and this sense of togetherness is so important for the weeks ahead.

Whilst the impact of COVID hasn't been as extreme as in other parts of the country, we cannot be complacent as there have been and continue to be COVID cases in our community. We need to remain alert to stay safe and to protect our families, communities and our hospitals, especially as COVID collides with the winter pressures on the NHS. Visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november> for the latest lockdown information.

Whilst we do sympathise, the doctors at the surgery have no additional information and are unable to help with requests for sick notes with regards to workplace COVID issues, or to make decisions about children attending educational sessions.

Please continue to follow the guidelines and sign-up to the NHS Covid app [covid19.nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk/covid19) to protect yourself and others:

Remember - 'Hands. Face. Space.':

- **Hands** – wash your hands regularly and for 20 seconds
- **Face** – wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet
- **Space** – stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings or increasing ventilation indoors)

Surgery remains open

The first thing to share is that the Surgery remains open at this time (but not with an 'open door', see below), so please do attend your appointments or call and speak to one of our doctors if you are feeling unwell or have any concerns around your physical or mental health. It's so important that you don't put off contacting us as we'll be working throughout the lockdown and are here for you.

Ongoing restricted access to the surgery

We continue to control the numbers of people in the surgery in order to allow for the appropriate distancing and we encourage everyone to use our website www.oldbridgesurgery.co.uk to explore ways to access support, including 111, E-consult and LIVI, without the need to contact the surgery directly. If you need to phone the surgery, you will usually be given a telephone appointment, in which a doctor or nurse can discuss your health needs. To help our clinical staff, a receptionist will ask you for the reason for your call and if appropriate will send you a link to upload a photo. This could be for a lump, rash or other skin lesion, but also for a sore throat. Only if a phone call or video call hasn't resolved the issue will you be invited to the surgery. You can only attend the surgery if you have a pre-booked appointment and please do not arrive more than 5 minutes early as it is important to manage the number of patients sat within the surgery waiting rooms. When you arrive at the surgery you will be asked again to ensure that

you do not have a new persistent cough, sore throat or loss of taste or smell, as well as having your temperature taken and being asked to sanitise your hands before coming into the surgery building.

Portacabin

Many of you may have noticed that the marquee in the patient car park at Looe has been removed. This is because it doesn't provide a winterised solution for patients we need to see who are experiencing COVID like symptoms. With effect from Thursday 5th November, a portacabin is being situated in the Looe surgery staff car park and will be operational from Friday 6th, with two separate rooms for our doctors to see you outside of our main surgery building. Please do not be alarmed if you are invited to attend your appointment in the portacabin. It is a precautionary measure to ensure that we protect frail and vulnerable patients, as well as surgery staff themselves to help protect the service that we provide.

Flu Clinics

Thank you for the amazing feedback we received following our drive-thru flu clinics held at Looe Community Academy, with special thanks to the Looe Lions who volunteered their time and expertise to co-ordinate the traffic. In fact the feedback was so great, we'll be looking to repeat drive-thru clinics going forward, even when COVID has hopefully gone! In the meantime, we have a number of smaller flu clinics continuing to take place at the surgery, so please attend if you have an appointment booked or call to book an appointment if you haven't done so already. Demand this year has been unprecedented, so please call as soon as possible as it's vital that all vulnerable patients are vaccinated, after which the government will assess the availability of vaccines for patients aged 50-64 years who wouldn't typically qualify.

If these vaccines (for 50-64yr olds) become available, we'll invite eligible patients, with text or email being the quickest and easiest way to contact you. If you haven't registered your mobile number or email address, please email the surgery with your name, date of birth and contact details to make sure you hear from us as soon as possible as stocks are likely to be limited.

LIVI (GP video consultations)

As an additional resource, along with other local practices, we offer the services of LIVI. The GP- video appointments, available weekday evenings and during the weekend, can be scheduled up to 7 days in advance or you can simply drop-in for the earliest appointment. LIVI GPs are all GMC-registered NHS-GPs, who (with your consent) are able to access your medical records and give a considered, in-depth diagnosis based on your medical history. Free of charge, over 1300 of our patients have already signed up for LIVI (over 400 in the last month) and the feedback has been very positive. You can download the LIVI app via the App Store (iPhone) or Google Play (Android), or [click here https://bit.ly/32S8HCz](https://bit.ly/32S8HCz) to visit their website.

THANK YOU

We would like to give special thanks to you all for your continued support and understanding and to:

- Jason Bond & Matt Taylor for helping to secure and set-up a portacabin
- Looe Community Academy for allowing us to use their facilities to host the drive-thru flu clinics, especially Stan Minnette and Dave Lees for getting up early on their day off to help set-up
- Pelynt and Polperro Village Hall for allowing us to use their facilities for smaller localised flu clinics
- Looe Lions, for giving their time generously and turning our vision of large scale drive-thru clinics into a reality

Finally, keep positive, keep safe and let's get through this together.

Drs Roy, Kodde, Mogford and Buchanan
Partners, Old Bridge Surgery