

**December 2021**

The covid-19 pandemic continues and research is now showing that the Omicron variant appears to be much more transmissible than previous strains.

The vaccination programme remains our best line of defence and boosters have been shown to increase protection against symptoms and the risk of hospitalisation.

We are now offering vaccinations to all patients aged over 18. This includes first and second vaccines as well as boosters.

(We continue not to offer vaccines to 12-15 year olds and patients in this cohort should contact NHS 119 to make arrangements).

In order to support the government's request to maximise capacity for vaccinations between now and the end of the year, it has been necessary to adapt our services. At this time, therefore, we will be offering a same-day service only. This means we will not have any pre-bookable appointments until the new-year.

It may also be the case that we have less appointments to offer as we have been asked to re-deploy staff from their standard duties enabling extended vaccine availability. We are also experiencing continued shortages through both staff absence and recruitment gaps and whilst we will do everything we can to ensure those routine appointments already booked go ahead as planned, cancellation may be unavoidable. We are sorry for this.

As a result, our clinicians will need to prioritise urgent problems and serious health concerns.

Please can we ask that if your concern can wait, you postpone contacting us until the new-year. We would also urge you to consider alternative health care services such as local pharmacies, NHS 111 or self-care advice available via the NHS website.

We ask that if you do have a face to face consultation in one of our surgeries, you continue to wear a face mask and adhere to social distancing measures.

Guidance remains in place and you should not attend the surgery if you have covid-19 related symptoms. A clinician will assess you over the telephone and make arrangements to bring you into the surgery safely if a face to face examination is needed.

All eligible patients will be invited to attend for vaccination with clinics being held at our Hanham surgery when we can offer them. Invites will be sent via text message to all patients that we hold a mobile number for. The link contained within the text can be used to access our vaccine booking system.

Please DO NOT CALL US regarding your vaccine if you are unable to find a convenient appointment with us. Further appointments are available at the local mass vaccination sites; walk in clinics and through other local providers. Full information can be accessed here: [Booster dose of the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus/covid-19/vaccine-boosters/)

All vaccines given will now be Moderna. This is an mRNA vaccine and has been proven to provide the same level of protection as other covid-19 vaccines.

Thank you for your continued support at this most challenging of times. Demand for our services has continued to increase and our team have been and will continue to work above and beyond to ensure our patients and the local community are protected.