



Mword Issue 57 - Dr Michelle Drage's latest update for GPs and practice teams on Covid-19

22 April 2020

Dear Colleague Covid-19 – Learning; and the role of the GP and practice team during the Covid-19 pandemic As you know, through our regularly updated Londonwide Living Guide, we have provided carefully curated material relevant to the concerns you have all raised with us, either directly or through our LMC representative mechanisms. We have carefully worked, wherever possible, with colleagues in the wider system to bring you the clearest information and guidance we can. The Living Guide is your companion, the equivalent to the driver's manual, for getting through these tough days, and I am indebted and so proud of Dr Lisa Harrod-Rothwell (deputy CEO and GP in Chelmsford), and Dr Elliott Singer (Medical Director and GP partner in Chingford) for their unbounded commitment in creating this nuts and bolts guide, and for leading the work from all of our contributors across Londonwide LMCs' teams. And so now four weeks into "lockdown" (although in London it is probably nearer six), notwithstanding all the political, economic and practice funding uncertainties on a daily basis and rapid adaptations to the way we deliver our care, there is learning to be had:

Not since the pandemic flu of 1918 have we in general practice had to carry out face to face consultations with known risk to ourselves and our colleagues, along with vector spread to and from our patients.

We have seen that when a nation locks down, it has basic life-function implications for those who are least able to access the essentials of living and health and care.

During a pandemic lockdown patients, whether out of fear of contagion or the desire to avoid adding to general practice pressures, avoid calling or attending when symptomatic (Covid-19 or otherwise) or in need of a diagnosis or follow-up. And we have seen immunisation rates starting to fall. Yet, out of practical necessity rather than top down central diktat, we have rapidly adapted to new ways of consulting and introduced many other innovations at practice level and across communities.

What we have gleaned so far is that the consultation remains the essence of general practice and remain our professional drivers, whatever the form; the continuity of care; the proactive care; the end of life care; and the focus on our local population and community. As GPs, and as GPNs and other HCPs. And from what we can see, these consultations remain the core of what our patients wish to receive from us. And so for us and for our patients those drivers, and the general practice-based model, will and must prevail. It is therefore paramount that we are able to reach out to our patients and our communities, making sure they know that despite the lockdown and the universal precautions we are taking, we - their GPs, GPNs and practice teams - are there for them. We are particularly there for our vulnerable patients, our patients with long-term conditions that need monitoring, and our youngest and oldest patients. And we will use our the fullest of our professional endeavours to look after them safely, to the best of our ability.

Because that is what professionals do. To which end I am today giving prominence, with all due attribution to Lisa and Elliott, to this, our new publication: General Practice During the Covid-19 Pandemic: The Role of the General Practitioner and Practice Team. Please do read it and share it among all your practice team members, and with others as you see fit. As ever I welcome your feedback at mword@lmc.org.uk, and know that my team of experts and leaders here at Londonwide LMCs will always be by your side. Keep well. Stay safe. With best wishes

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