# Letter to practices to send to patients / put on their website

Dear Patient,

You will have seen that the highest priority for the NHS is to offer booster COVID jabs to everyone over 18. This is a big challenge as it will require everyone to work even harder and longer than they do now. Winter has always seen a lot more illness and higher demand for services. COVID has made it even harder, and the new Booster campaign makes it impossible for us to maintain normal services. Our phone lines are overwhelmed by the volume of calls we receive, and we kindly ask you to only ring the surgery when it’s essential. That way we can respond to our patients with the highest need. If you have a vaccine query ring the national booking service, not the surgery.

To keep our patients safe and prevent our staff from catching COVID or having to self-isolate, we will be doing telephone (or digital) consultations first and then inviting those patients that we need to see face to face into the surgery. In view of the extremely infection nature of this new strain we will be rigorously applying control of infection measures within the practice and ask patients to comply with these requirements.

We will do our very best to meet our patients needs but there may be times in the extreme circumstances we are now in that we have to prioritise those in greatest need. Many minor illnesses are self-limiting and do not need a clinical intervention. Patients can often seek help for such conditions from the local pharmacy. Routine care where a patient’s condition is stable may need to be delayed for a while.

We will always do our best for our patients but ask for your understanding in these most challenging of circumstances.