

## **Herefordshire's approach to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic**

As you will know, cases of Coronavirus have been increasing in the UK and we expect to continue to see more cases here in Herefordshire over the coming days and weeks.

It is vitally important that you continue to follow Government advice regarding hand washing and self-isolation / social distancing. For full details, please visit the Government's website (link to: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>).

In order to protect our healthcare staff, patients and the general public (in particular the most vulnerable members of society), please be aware that we are introducing changes to the way that Herefordshire General Practice operates during the crisis.

In particular, anyone needing an appointment will first be spoken to on the phone or via video. This will help to protect vulnerable patients, staff and the wider population. For the vast majority of cases, this will be sufficient to diagnose and advise on the issue. Face-to-face consultations will be rare and only offered if it is felt important in determining your management or for an intervention – eg to take a blood test.

If a face-to-face appointment is considered essential, you may be asked to attend a surgery at a different location to the one you are used to. Please rest assured that your notes will be securely accessible from the new location.

**These changes will affect all GP surgeries and will take immediate effect.**

The changes are necessary given the serious situation we are facing and to ensure that GP services are as resilient as possible during the crisis period.

**We ask you to please play your part to enable the NHS to play theirs.**