**Access to TOFS and Contacting the Nurses and GPs**

Most of you will be aware that **the surgery is open** we are just operating a little differently at the moment to allow for us to adhere, safely, to social distancing regulations and to limit footfall in and out of the building; this will continue to be monitored, and altered accordingly.

**COMING TO THE SURGERY**

Please only come to the surgery if you have an appointment, you’re dropping off a sample that has been requested, or you are collecting paperwork. For ANY enquiries or to book an appointment please contact the office on 02380448558 or 02380448901. We understand the phone lines can be busy but we ask that you keep trying, as the receptionist on desk is often dealing with patients in with the Nurse or GP and cannot let you in to deal with your query; the foyer is a small space, so not socially distanced enough for you to wait while other patients are entering and exiting the building.

**ARRIVING FOR AN APPOINTMENT**

If you have driven to the surgery, and are parked in the car park, unless you have been informed otherwise, please phone 80435569 to book in for your appointment; the receptionist will mark you as arrived and take your vehicle details, informing the Nurse/GP you are in the car park.

If you have walked to the surgery, please come to the main door and ring the doorbell; the receptionist on desk will arrive you from there, informing the Nurse/GP you are in the waiting room.

**PHONING THE SURGERY**

We truly do appreciate the difficulty, sometimes, in getting through on the phones…this is often as frustrating for us as it is for you…but due to the reduced face to face appointments available this puts a higher demand on incoming calls and outside lines being used. Be reassured that if the lines are busy/engaged/ringing it’s because all available receptionists are dealing with a patient, or there are more lines coming in than there are staff to answer them. This brings me on to how best to contact the surgery…

In the first instance and where possible, before phoning the surgery, please go to our website: [www.oldfirestationsurgery.co.uk](http://www.oldfirestationsurgery.co.uk) and click on the ‘signposting’ tab in the main menu. This will advise on who is the most appropriate health care professional to contact for your ailment, as it isn’t always the Nurses and GPs at the surgery; there are links to many self referral services, making it a much more efficient way of getting the treatment you may need. **You will also find the e-consult form on our home page, which should be used for any non-urgent or ongoing problem – you can also submit requests for admin queries such as sick notes, test results and GP letters. Your consultation will be submitted to your GP and responded to within 3 working days, (often much quicker than waiting for a telephone appointment**). If, however you feel you need to contact the surgery then please do so.

As mentioned previously, face to face appointments are reduced at the moment and can only be booked if a Nurse or GP has requested it – online booking is currently suspended because of this – the receptionists will do their best to offer you an appointment or signpost you appropriately.

If your medical need is more acute, (ie an infection, acute onset of pain, sudden appearance of a rash/swelling), then we will add you to our daily triage list for a Nurse or GP to phone you.

I hope this helps in advising how best to get the treatment you need in the most effective way.