**INFORMATION FROM ELM TREE SURGERY ABOUT COVID VACCINATION**

Why are we inviting patients to go to the Steam Museum for their Covid vaccination?

We hope the following background will help to explain why we are offering Covid vaccinations at the Steam Museum rather than at Elm Tree Surgery or another location.

Elm Tree Surgery is located on the very edge of Oxfordshire and many years ago the Partners were asked to align the practice with either Oxfordshire or Swindon. The Partners considered the benefits of both options and, taking everything into consideration including proximity of Swindon vs Oxford for hospital care, the length of time for an ambulance to reach patients etc, elected to align with Swindon.

In 2013 the NHS structure for managing GP Surgeries changed from Primary Care Trusts to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Elm Tree Surgery became part of Swindon CCG. In 2020, under the government ‘encouragement’, Swindon CCG joined with two other local CCGs and became Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG (BSW CCG). Hence Elm Tree Surgery is part of BSW CCG and not Oxfordshire CCG.

Over the last 3-4 years Elm Tree Surgery has been working closely with some of the surgeries in Swindon in order to expand the care that we are able to offer our patients.  We work together under the name of Brunel Healthcare Group and together provide GP services for approx. 150,000 patients in Swindon and Shrivenham. This loose affiliation has proved very successful.

In 2019 the NHS asked GP Surgeries to work together in Primary Care Networks (PCNs).  Initially we were told that PCNs should serve between 30,000 to 50,000 patients.  Clearly Brunel Healthcare Group was too big to be one PCN so we formed 4 PCNs within Brunel Healthcare Group and Elm Tree Surgery is part of Brunel PCN1. The other surgeries that make up PCN1 are Ridgeway View, Victoria Cross and Eldene.

In late November 2020 we were told that Covid vaccinations must be provided at PCN level rather than at individual surgeries. All PCNs were given 7 days to identify the premises from which the PCN would offer Covid vaccinations.  Following discussions we realised that none of the premises within PCN 1 could meet the requirements to offer Covid vaccinations.  The other PCNs within Brunel came to similar conclusions and hence we decided to work together at Brunel Healthcare Group level rather than at PCN level.  We identified two possible premises in Swindon that would be big enough and be available to provide the quantity of vaccinations that we were asked to provide.

Following further investigation we chose the Steam Museum and provided details to BSW CCG. The site was approved after visits from the NHS, BSW CCG, Swindon Borough Council, the Fire Brigade, the Police and others.  Fortunately, because we

acted so quickly and had all our ducks in a row we were classed, by the NHS, as a Wave 1 Covid vaccination site which meant we were one of the earliest groups to receive a delivery of Covid vaccine – our 1st clinic took place on 16 December. Those PCNs in Wave 6 are only just starting their Covid vaccination programmes.

Due to the size of the Steam Museum we can vaccinate up to 2,500 patients a day safely, dependent on vaccine deliveries.  The GP surgeries which are part of Brunel Healthcare Group have already been able to invite almost all of their patients who are 80 years and older to attend the Steam Museum for their 1st dose of Covid vaccine and are now inviting the next cohorts of patients.

We are inviting patients either via a text message for those patients with mobile phones or via a telephone for those without a mobile phone number listed in their records.  Those patients who do not book an appointment via text message will also be telephoned to make sure everyone is invited.  The text message from Elm Tree Surgery will not ask for any personal details beyond asking you to confirm your date of birth and will definitely NOT ask for credit or debit card details.

Due to the nature of the vaccine and the quantities contained in a delivery it is extremely unlikely that the ‘rules’ will change and that we would be allowed to offer vaccinations at individual GP surgeries.