

Tadley Medical Partnership Newsletter Summer 2021

As always, if you have a friend or neighbour who cannot access this newsletter online please pass this on

A personal message from Dr David Newman on behalf of the partners

Thank you to all who have been so careful, caring, patient and sensible over the last 15 months. It has been incredibly difficult, sad and stressful, but could have been so much worse. A special thank you to all of you who got stuck in to help and cheer those who were shielding and housebound. To Dr Victoria Bailey and Chris Normand and all the teams of community helpers and volunteers, we thank you.

Another special thank you to the careful, caring, patient and sensible staff of the Tadley Medical Partnership who all went the extra yard in very difficult times to keep everyone safe and to keep the Practice going. We were incensed by the National Press recently implying that General Practice had re-opened when we have never been closed and had in fact been working harder and in much more difficult circumstances than ever.

Our primary role of caring, managing and treating are obvious, but everyone had to be kept safe. Many of you would have been sent to and seen in the summer hot hub at St Andrew's Surgery and the winter assessment centre at Old Basing as we strived to keep Covid 19 away from the surgeries. Our collaboration with all the Basingstoke Practices was very successful. These services were staffed by our own doctors and nurses throughout, who accepted the risks involved, but provided what was necessary. We will never forget the anxiety involved in those first few months and also when the second wave hit. Another success has been the Covid oximetry at home service for those with Covid who needed monitoring of their oxygenation and were managed at home.

Another of our finest achievements has been working with all the other Basingstoke Practices to set up the Covid vaccination programme at the Chineham Court Hotel. We passed 150,000 vaccines this week. Our Practice staff have been integral in this; organising invitations by text message or letter or dealing with the many queries. Many of our staff have also been working at the vaccination centre in their spare time. In addition we have managed to vaccinate our care homes and their staff, learning disability homes and all other housebound patients with their two vaccinations before the end of May, a massive achievement.

We have learnt many lessons from the last 15 months and will now no doubt continue to deal with the fallout for years.

It has meant that we have had to work differently and had to expand ways of working. The most obvious is that not everything or every problem needs to be seen to be sorted out. Going forward we have adopted a different consultation model. Most will be by telephone or e-consult and if appropriate the patient will then be invited in for a face to face consultation. We do understand that this is frustrating, but we will not be going back to the waiting 4 to 6 weeks for an appointment. The other factor in this is the massive increase in demand for appointments or advice; to this end we have increased the workforce of Doctors and Nurse Practitioners and also some additional roles.

We are very pleased to welcome Dr Andleeb Amin as an Associate GP, Sister Lorna Farmer as a Nurse Practitioner and Mandy Strudwick our new Healthcare Assistant. Dr Rachel Chander will be

joining us in July as an Associate GP. We have also recently recruited some new receptionists after sadly losing 3 to well-deserved retirement.

There are limits to how many consultations we can manage safely and safety is our priority. With extra resources we do understand that you will not always be able to get the appointment you desire or see the Doctor or Nurse Practitioner that you wish to see. Please do not take out your frustrations on our reception or admin staff. Swearing, rudeness or verbal abuse will not be tolerated in any form.

With regard to additional roles the Practice has been collaborating with Watership Down Health, previously Kingsclere and Overton Surgeries, in what is called the Rural West Primary Care Network. This network is coming up to its second anniversary and shares numerous staff across both Practices with the intent of offering appointments which are neither Doctor nor Nurse appointments, but just as important in meeting patient needs.

These additional roles are:

Proactive Care Nurse – Alyssa

Reviews patients who are unable to attend the surgery either at home or over the telephone. Usually patients who are at risk of hospital admission, falls and poor mobility, social isolation and loneliness or have other issues. Supported by **Gemma – Care Co-ordinator**

Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technician – Maddie, Hafeeza, Zara and Alison

Medicines reconciliation from hospital discharges and clinical letters, medication related queries and structured medication reviews

Health and Wellbeing Coach – Jo

Health coaching helps patients who are struggling with making lifestyle changes to improve and manage their health eg Pre-diabetes, lack of fitness or poor nutrition

Social Prescriber/Community Connector – Tracey and Stephanie

Provide low level support for up to 12 weeks to individuals affected by long term physical health needs. Support unpaid carers and those with mild mental health problems or anxiety.

The network is managed by Elizabeth Allison with collaboration of our Practice Manager, Gillian Herbert and Watership's Practice Manager, Susannah Altmeyer-Ennis. The Clinical Directors are Dr Judy Lindsay (WDH) and Dr David Newman (TMP) who are all answerable to the Partners of both Practices.

Incidentally it is the six networks, and their Directors, around Basingstoke who have set up and managed the Covid vaccination programme. The North Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group has been extremely helpful in the setup and ongoing support. Obviously there are also the many volunteers who have made the service flow and work so well.

We will continue to keep you all safe and work as hard as we can to keep primary care as accessible and safe as possible.

Dr David Newman June 2021

Your contact details

We rely increasingly on our text service to provide information or respond to clinical or other queries. It is essential we have your current contact details. Particularly your mobile phone number. You can update your contact details via our [website](#), putting it in writing or of course you can give us a call but we appreciate the lines are always so busy.

Covid Vaccination “Passports”/NHS App

The simplest way to have proof of your vaccination status is to apply for the NHS App. This is not the same as the NHS Covid-19 app that some of us use for contact tracing, checking into venues and reporting test results. If you already have online access to your records you can link the two systems. If not you can apply for online access to your medical records via our [website](#). As you can imagine we have received an awful lot of requests to process so please bear with us as we try get through them. If you do not have a smart phone you can also apply via this [link](#). If you have no computer access call 119 and they will send you a letter. Only use this service if you have received both vaccinations and are planning to travel in next 4 weeks. Tadley Medical Partnership cannot provide proof of vaccination for travel purposes.

Push Doctor

We are working in partnership with Push Doctor who are supplementing the number of appointments we have to offer our patients. If appropriate we can offer you an appointment with one of the GPs who work for Push Doctor; in effect a locum GP who works remotely, but has access to your medical records, and can prescribe and refer you for further treatment if necessary. The GPs who work for Push Doctor are fully qualified and work under the same regulations as any other Locum we would use. Appointments would be either over the telephone or via video. A smart phone is essential for this service.

Minor Injuries – booked appointments

If you suffer an acute minor injury such as a twisted ankle or knee or a cut or laceration you can book an appointment at either Basingstoke A&E or the Minor Injury Unit in Newbury. This can be done by calling 111. It means you have a timed appointment and avoid the wait to be seen.

Information for parents – especially for those with children under 5

There are currently lots of unseasonal viral infections circulating at the moment. The [Healthier Together](#) website contains lots of useful information about what to look out for when your child is unwell.

Telephone System

One of the most common complaints we receive is about our telephone system and we acknowledge that it is not good enough so we are looking to move to another supplier when our contract expires. However, whilst the system itself has faults, and lacks features that we would like to offer such as letting callers know their position in the queue we cannot ignore the fact that the number of incoming calls we receive are proving challenging - on an average day over 650.

We hope you will appreciate that the service is being stretched pretty thin. We are struggling to keep up with patient demand, not all of which is unreasonable, but we have a few asks:

- Before you request a GP appointment for a minor illness such as a sore throat, earache or diarrhoea please try something from a pharmacy. Most of these illnesses are short lived and

do not require GP intervention. **We are not suggesting you ignore red flag symptoms such as chest pain, bleeding, paralysis or difficulty swallowing.**

- We have lots of self-help and self-referral options available on our website which you can use to receive diagnosis, treatment and or advice. Options such as urgent eye care, muscle, joint and back problems, hearing loss and ear wax management, counselling and mental health support. Please use them. We also have various medical review forms. These have questions that help the doctor process your request and we would appreciate you taking the time to complete them correctly.
- If you have a query or want to chase up a hospital outpatient appointment you need to contact the hospital. We don't have any quicker telephone access to hospitals than you.
- Be realistic with your expectations. Before Covid there was an average 10-14 day wait for a routine GP appointment. Currently patients are offered a routine telephone appointment with doctor within 2 or 3 days. We deal with all clinically urgent requests on the day. On an average day we offer 400 telephone or face to face appointments.

eConsult/Contacting us online

Offering online appointments via providers such as eConsult and accuRx was seen as a way of reducing the demand on the telephone system and allowing clinicians and administrators to handle requests more efficiently. It has proved popular with patients but unfortunately has become a victim of its own success. We are often inundated with requests and we simply do not have the resources to respond in a timely manner. Regretfully this means we have to disable the service occasionally.

Prescriptions and change to Dispensary opening hours

Please do not telephone Dispensary to order your **repeat** prescriptions. Use online access, complete the order sheet attached to your prescription or drop us a line. We cannot take **repeat** prescription requests over the phone. The Dispensary team can help over the phone with requests for prescriptions that have been previously dispensed for acute problems. Also, please do not ask a GP to issue a prescription for something that can be bought "over the counter" at a Pharmacy such as cough medicine, eye drops or paracetamol.

Dispensary will be changing its opening hours with effect from **1 July**. This is due to current staff shortages. The new hours of opening will be 9 - 12 and 2 - 5. The Dispensary will remain contactable by telephone 8.30 until 18.30.

GDPR – The General Practice Data for Planning and Research Information System

You may have noted in the media plans by NHS Digital to extract data from GP patient records. This collection will start from 1 September 2021. Your name or where you live will not be reported and other data that might identify you such as your NHS number, date of birth or postcode will be replaced with unique de-identification codes before being shared with NHS Digital. This process is known as pseudonymisation and means that nobody can identify you directly in the data.

Although we cannot object to this data leaving the practice patients can instruct us to prohibit the transfer by opting out. If you wish to do this, you must inform us by **1 September**. If you opt out after this date, some of your data may already have been extracted but no further extractions will take place after you opt out. There are paper copies of the Opt Out Form at the surgeries and you can also access one via our website. Further information is available [here](#).

Covid Vaccination Programme

Currently anyone aged 18 and over (or 16 and over with underlying health conditions) is eligible. There has been talk of a third booster for the most vulnerable in the autumn but we have not received any confirmed information.

Award

We are very proud to have received the **Learning Disability Friendly GP Practice award**. We have a Learning Disability champion in Dr Victoria Bailey who is an advocate for patients with learning disabilities and their carers. We offer annual health checks and offer person centred adjustments to our services. We are one of the few practices in north Hampshire to have received this award.



29.06.2021