

SEPTEMBER PATIENT NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our September 2021 newsletter.

UPDATE

The reputation of General Practice in this country is constantly being challenged through national media and increasingly across social media. The impression is that Surgeries across the country have closed doors and are not seeing patients face to face when needed.

I know that many of our patients have been frustrated when trying to access our services by telephone and online over recent months, with the resultant feeling that patient services have deteriorated since the individual Practices joined forces as Shore Medical.

All the sites across Shore are open to patients and all the doctors and other healthcare professionals are seeing patients face to face when necessary, with the proportion of such appointments rising weekly as restrictions have been eased. We do however still need to ensure that we reduce risk to patients as much as able by ensuring face masks are worn, and that waiting rooms are not crowded. Covid prevalence is still high, and healthcare sites cannot be as relaxed as some other settings.

Many patients may still find that they would prefer a remote consultation, and we will keep this option in the long term.

Over the last 6 months we have seen demand for appointments increase above any levels that we saw pre-pandemic, mirroring the experience across the country. In addition, we have been delivering Covid vaccinations to our population throughout this year, now moving on to the booster programme in conjunction with flu jabs. This all takes time and workforce resource away from our normal care delivery. Our staffing levels have been challenged by isolation and illness, as has been well reported across much of the service industry this year.

Despite the promises of increased GP numbers many are leaving the profession early or reducing commitment due to the ongoing pressure of the role. GPs are specialist doctors with wide ranging knowledge and skills who spend every working day making decisions that can have significant impact on the lives of others. Direct consultations with patients are just one facet of the role, with all GPs working significant hours outside their scheduled sessions. There are many vacancies in GP Practices across the country and Surgeries are closing or being taken over as a result. By merging, the previous 5 Practices making up Shore Medical have gained resilience but still struggle to recruit to GP vacancies. However, the reduced GP numbers has

allowed the opportunity for us to develop our team of healthcare professionals including advanced nurse practitioners, clinical pharmacists, mental health workers and physiotherapists who may now be your first point of contact for relevant conditions.

The increase in demand does not bring in more money for us to employ more staff, and as noted above more GPs are leaving than joining the profession. We therefore need to be innovative in how we ensure patients receive the care they need at the right time from the right person. Some responsibility lies with our patients recognising the challenges and considering their options for self-care and other support before contacting us. Online tools can help, and we are looking at options to streamline access which in turn will reduce the burden on the telephones.

Plans are in place to restart the Shore Patient Groups (that have been dormant through the pandemic) to ensure we are engaging our “service users” in our planning.

General Practice in the UK remains the envy of healthcare systems across the world, delivering the majority of healthcare to the population on less than 10% of the NHS budget. At Shore Medical we are confident that we can develop our teams to improve the patient experience, but need also to be realistic about the pressures that Primary Care faces nationally.

Dr Andy Rutland – Clinical Director

SUPPORT YOUR SURGERY



GP practices and patients have faced an extremely challenging time during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Face-to-face contact has been limited to protect patients and reduce the risk of infection.

GPs do not want it to be this way, but general practice will continue to struggle without help.

We are calling on the Government to provide the funding needed for better services, more GPs, and more safe space to see patients.

Show your support for your surgery so it can be there to support you by signing our petition

#SupportYourSurgery



HOW TO ACCESS CARE

Why do receptionists ask such personal questions?



Receptionists are a vital part of the practice team. Their questions are to ensure that you are seen by the right person at the right time, and all answers are kept confidential.



Our doors are open and you are very welcome to come to our Surgeries for all bookings and enquiries. Please wear a face covering and do not attend the surgery if you have any symptoms of Covid-19 or have been advised to self-isolate.

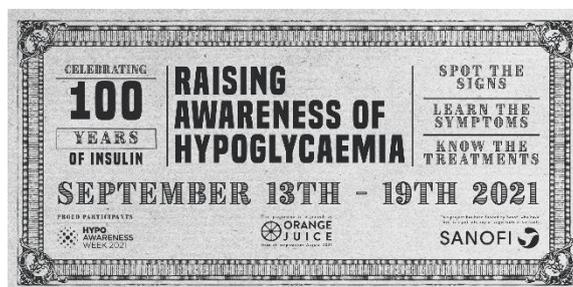
Our phonedlines are busy but our reception teams aim to answer your call as quickly and efficiently as possible. We do apologise for any delays you may experience. Please give our call handlers as much information as possible so that they can help you get the care you need.

If your problem or query is non urgent, or if you have an administrative query, you can bypass the busy phonedlines by visiting our website and completing an E-Consult. Our Care Navigation team aim to respond to E-Consults within 48 working hours and will call or text you to arrange the appropriate care for you. If you do not receive a response within 48hours, your enquiry becomes more urgent or you need further advice, please contact the surgery.

We continue to offer a range of appointments with all our clinicians - face to face appointments, home visits telephone and video consultations are all available. Your call will initially be triaged by a clinician on the phone so that our waiting rooms remain safe but face to face appointments are readily offered if clinically necessary and/or requested by the patient.

Demand for appointments is high and we continue to be affected by the impact of Covid-19 on our staffing levels as well as the recruitment crisis evident throughout the NHS. We are working hard to minimise the impact of these factors on our patients.

IN FOCUS



Hypo Awareness week took place between 13-19th September

Treating a hypo quickly and effectively can make a huge difference to people with #diabetes. Our staff have been learning lots as part of Hypo Awareness Week.

You can find more information on social media using the hashtags #HAW2021 and #HypoAwarenessWeek

FLU AND COVID VACCINATION UPDATE

We are pleased to announce the finalised plans for the Covid-19 Booster and 3rd primary dose vaccinations plus the proposed Flu vaccination campaign.

We are sorry for the delay in releasing this news as we waited for information from NHS England and Dorset CCG.

All of our vaccination clinics will be held at Heatherview Medical Centre and are by appointment only. This enables us to keep everyone as safe as possible and minimises disruption to all our other primary care services that we shall continue to offer.

◆ 1st Dose Covid-19 vaccinations

We are now offering single doses to 16- & 17-year-olds only.

Anyone else requiring their first vaccine please email vaccinequeries@dorsetgp.nhs.uk

◆ 2nd dose Covid-19 vaccinations

2nd doses are given a minimum of 8 weeks after the first. If you are due your second vaccine, please email:

vaccinequeries@dorsetgp.nhs.uk

◆ Covid-19 Boosters

These will be offered to the following groups:

- Those adults living in residential care/nursing homes
- All adults aged 50 years and over
- Frontline health and social care workers
- All those aged 16-49 with an underlying health condition that puts them at a higher risk from covid-19 infection and complications
- Adult household contacts of immunosuppressed individuals

We will be offering appointments in order of clinical priority.

▲ Please do not ring us to book this appointment - we will contact you. ▲

Boosters cannot be given within 180 days of the 2nd vaccine.

All boosters given will be using the Pfizer vaccine.

Boosters may be offered and given at the same time as the flu vaccine.

◆ Covid-19 3rd Primary Dose

This is different to the booster.

It will be offered to those who are immunosuppressed due to medication or an ongoing medical condition which means their immune response to 2 covid vaccinations may be impaired.

If you are in this category, you will be informed by your Specialist Doctor.

◆ Flu Vaccine

Flu clinics for those aged over 70 will start in October so that we can offer a covid booster at the same appointment - should you wish to have them together.

Appointments will be sent out to patients via letter. If the appointment date and time is not convenient you will be able to change it.

Patients under the age of 70 will be invited to book appointments for their flu vaccine via text or letter.

▲ **Please do not contact the surgery with vaccine related queries, please email:**

vaccinequeries@dorsetgp.nhs.uk ▲

It is essential that our phonedlines are kept as clear as possible for other medical issues.

We look forward to welcoming you to one of our clinics.

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG)



WE ARE HELPING TO
DEVELOP A STRONGER NETWORK
OF PPGS IN DORSET

We want our patients to be well informed about their GP Practice

We want to give you the opportunity to share your views about the services we deliver, be involved in the ongoing development, and be kept up to date with changes at the Practice.

To help do this we now have a Patient Participation Group (PPG)

To sign up to our PPG Group please go to the patient information and resources section on our website.

SHORE MEDICAL WEBSITE



Have you visited our website recently?

www.shoremedical.co.uk

There is lots of information on the website including contact details for all our surgeries, the latest information on covid-19 and covid-19 vaccinations, access to eConsult, job vacancies and on the main home page you can sign up to receive our Practice Newsletters.

SOCIAL MEDIA

You can stay connected with us and follow our regular updates on social media using the below:

Instagram: @shore_medical

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/shoremedicalGP/>

OUR NEXT QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER IS DECEMBER



Thank you for reading.

Shore Medical