



Regal Chambers

Patients' Newsletter

Issue 16: Dec 2021

Staff Update

In recognition of increasing demand on the telephones for appointments, we have recruited additional receptionists to our team. We have recently welcomed Alessandra and Ben; they join Mira (Team Leader), Liz, Naomi, Natalia, Meriam, Brooke and Dana.

Our receptionist, Leanne and Dr Ami Handa are currently on maternity leave. Both gave birth to healthy baby boys in October. We send them both our best wishes.

We are in the process of recruiting additional GPs and have recently undertaken interviews. A further update will be provided once posts have been confirmed.

Thank you for your Patience

We apologise to those patients who have experienced problems getting through to the surgery on the telephones. We understand how frustrating that this must be. As many patients are aware, we did invest in a new telephone system in May this year which has a call waiting facility (there have been some technical issues with this which our phone provider is trying to resolve). We have also recruited additional receptionists to the team. Unfortunately, despite this investment, we are still struggling to meet the significant and increasing demand. This is a picture that is reflected nationally across General Practice. Patients can use e-consult to access advice. This is available via our website during practice opening hours and patients will usually receive a response from the surgery within two working days.

We would like to thank patients in anticipation for their co-operation and understanding.

Message from the Local NHS – Health & Support Available from GP Practices

We have been provided with a statement from the local NHS which we have displayed on our website. This explains the reasons for some recent changes that patients may have experienced when accessing the GP. We are busier than ever before and we are delivering more appointments; these are just in different ways. The full statement is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/3ujm4ntz>.

COVID Boosters

We have received a number of complaints from patients or their relatives with concerns about housebound family members, who are unable to leave their homes, not having had the COVID vaccination booster.

The COVID vaccine booster programme was something which practices were able to sign up for only if they were also able to continue to offer normal GP services at the same time. We do not have enough

staff to offer both normal services and COVID vaccines; a decision was therefore made to opt out of providing this service. We appreciate the frustration felt by some patients, however, it is the responsibility of the local NHS to ensure that these patients are vaccinated.

NHS colleagues are urgently making arrangements for our housebound and most vulnerable patients to receive the COVID vaccinations they need. Anyone who meets those criteria and is eligible for a COVID vaccine will be contacted by us shortly by text and letter, with an update on these arrangements. Please accept our apologies for any delay you have experienced.

Other patients who are eligible for the COVID vaccination can attend a mass vaccination clinic. We strongly encourage anyone who has not yet had their 1st, 2nd or booster dose to book their vaccine through the National Booking Service online or by ringing 119. Alternatively, go to the nearest walk-in site from this list, which is regularly updated. If you're not sure whether you are eligible for your booster vaccination, check here: <https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/> . 0800 068 2238

Thank you.

Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS)

A new service was implemented in Hitchin on 22nd November . It allows practices to refer patients with minor illnesses such as sore throat and headaches cold sores to a **same day** consultation with a community pharmacist (at a local pharmacy). This is designed to help reduce pressure on general practice. Please refer to this video for more information <https://view.vzaar.com/22504178/player> .

Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT) Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) Services

There is a really helpful online portal for mental health services that patients in Hertfordshire can access. This offers a range of confidential talking therapy treatments and practical support for adults with common mental health problems such as anxiety, stress and depression. Patients can self-refer and access webinars and self help guides. More information is available here <https://www.hpft-iapt.nhs.uk/>.

Flu Vaccines

At Regal Chambers, 57% of patients over the age of 50 have received the flu vaccine so far this year. We ran two successful clinics on a Saturday and received overwhelmingly positive feedback on how these clinics were run.

We still have vaccines available and mid-week clinics are running on a Wednesday and Thursday afternoons up until mid December. Patients can book an appointment via 01462 547208. This line is open from 1.30pm to 4.30pm each weekday.