



Regal Chambers

Patients' Newsletter

Issue 15: June 2021

Staff News

There have been lots of changes within the teams over the past few months and an update is provided below.

Reception Team

Dana, Meriam and Brooke have all recently been welcomed to our reception team. Mira has been promoted to the role of Reception Team Leader. We will sadly be saying goodbye to Natalia who leaves the team on 9th June.

Nursing Team

Nikki Timlett is working with us on a Thursday and Friday morning to provide some practice nursing cover. Lauren Coates will be joining the team as an additional Nurse Practitioner in July.

Baby News

Dr Mehta had a baby girl and Dr Randall had a baby boy in February. They are both currently on maternity leave and due to return in September.

Leanne in reception and Dr Handa are expecting babies later this year. We pass on our congratulations to all.

Written Complaints

We received an increased number of complaints in April and May. A total of 12 written complaints were received in that period and a number of verbal complaints. The reoccurring theme in the majority of these complaints was the inability to get through on the telephone to book an appointment. Since February we have been experiencing exceptionally high demand for appointments. This is a national problem that all GP surgeries are reporting. We have put in place a number of measures to help with this demand:

- We encourage patients to use E-Consult instead of contacting the surgery by telephone. We have and continue to promote this service.
- We have recruited to the reception team.
- We have upgraded our telephone system.
- We encourage patients to book non urgent appointments (such as annual reviews) outside of peak hours. For example, the phone lines are always particularly busy on a Monday morning.
- We will cease providing the COVID-19 vaccination clinic at Courtenay House Surgery within the next few weeks. This should help in terms of resource in the practice going forwards.

E-Consultation (Patient Feedback May 2021):

- 622 E-Consults were received.
- 64% satisfaction with E-Consult service
- 73% of the people who used E-Consult would/ have recommended it.

Patient comments

"It's a really good way to get advice and guidance without taking up valuable face-to-face appointments and if its not too urgent. It also works well around my job."

"It was very easy and quick to do. Loved that it saved me time and that I receive a notification about my request soon after. This is the perfect alternative to calling the practice, especially for administrative requests such as mine. I was overall very pleased with the service."

Reception has started to use E-Consult Lite when patients call and encourages them to use E-Consult via the website next time. E-Consult Lite supports receptionists by ensuring that pertinent information is picked up, which helps the GP to triage efficiently.

E-Consult can be accessed via our website (<https://regalchambers.webgp.com/>) during core working hours (Monday to Friday 8.00 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.) Outside of these hours, patients can obtain advice from NHS 111 (<https://111.nhs.uk/>).

COVID Vaccinations

We have been providing covid vaccinations as a group of practices in the Hitchin & Whitwell Primary Care Network (HWPCN). The clinics have been hugely successful and as a PCN more than 22,000 vaccines have been provided. The clinics will be drawing to an end in the next few weeks. Patients who have not had a vaccine will be able to access when eligible via the Mass Vaccination Centres. This can be booked online (<https://tinyurl.com/prev84wm>) or by calling 119.

Thank you to our patients who have been doing a brilliant job volunteering at the clinic.

COVID-19 Vaccine Record on NHS App

From 17 May 2021, people in England who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 can demonstrate their vaccination status for international travel. A full course is currently two doses of any approved vaccine. Vaccine status will be available using the NHS App (<https://tinyurl.com/5dkaejam>). You can also download this directly from the App Store or Google Play.

When signing up for the App, it may take a few days for your identity to be checked and verified before you can use the service.

If you cannot access the NHS app, and you have had both doses of your vaccine, you can request a paper letter from the NHS by calling 119. Only call 119 if you are due to travel abroad in the near future and have had your second dose more than 5 working days ago. It may take 7 working days for the letter to arrive.

GP practices cannot provide you with a letter that shows your COVID-19 vaccination status.

When you are planning your travel, check the latest information on demonstrating your COVID-19 status when travelling abroad (<https://tinyurl.com/yj5wbfyc>). Make sure there is time to get proof of your vaccination status before you leave.

Blood Test Appointments

Patients may be aware of changes to the walk in blood test service at East & North Herts NHS Trust.

- Blood test appointments, requested by GPs, should now be booked online (<https://tinyurl.com/32x6u8z2>)
- The walk-in service will remain in place only for those attending outpatient appointments.
- Patients under the age of 10 can book online (<https://tinyurl.com/ywhhfv53>).

If you are unable to book online, you can call 01438 284 044 Monday to Friday between 8.00-9.00 and 1.00-2.00.

We still have phlebotomy appointments in the practice and at Bedford Road, although availability is limited, the current waiting time is approximately 3 weeks. These appointments can be booked via the surgery. Please note that if you attend Bedford Road, you will need to collect a blood test form from the surgery before your appointment.

NHS Data Collection – Opting Out

You may have seen information posted in the news and on social media about your GP data being extracted for NHS Digital use. You do not need to submit a form to us to express your wishes regarding your data – simply go online (<https://tinyurl.com/294w7245>) and follow the instructions at the ‘Start Now’ point to record your preference. You will need your NHS number – you can find this at:

<https://tinyurl.com/3v65p3cm>.

Please note however, there is a lot of misinformation on social media about what this data will include and how it will be used.

Here’s what you need to know:

- There is no 30th September deadline for opting out of sharing your data. You can opt out at any time.
- NHS Digital will never sell your data.
- There are strict rules about how NHS can use your data. It’s only shared securely and safely.
- Shared data helps the NHS. It has been used to find the first treatment for coronavirus and for vaccine research.
- See also <https://tinyurl.com/6ftax5e9> for reasons why your data may be shared outside of this opt out process.
- For more information visit <https://tinyurl.com/5793z3k9>.

“If I Die, It Will be Your Fault”

The Institute of General Practice (IGPM) has recently produced a video to highlight the abuse that practice teams receive. We are really grateful to the patients for their kindness, understanding and support. Sadly, we have also experienced some of the comments in this national campaign video. Our team does an amazing job and is trying to provide the best care for our patients. They do not deserve this treatment. Your continued politeness and consideration is always appreciated. For more information go to <https://tinyurl.com/bujzkef8>.