

# Chase Meadow

HEALTH CENTRE

## **September 2020 Newsletter**

This Newsletter has been compiled by the Patient Participation Group, with the backing of Chase Meadow Health Centre.

Chase Meadow Health Centre continues to provide care for all our patients, but there have had to be some changes to ensure your safety, and the safety of all the staff working in the health centre.

This newsletter has been created to let you know what we have been doing, and what we are doing now, to deliver the best health care at this time:

## **Accessing Care**

There had been a significant decrease in patients contacting the practice and attending for appointments, but numbers have now returned to previous levels. The Practice and the PPG have been keen to promote the use of the electronic systems to book appointments, request repeat prescriptions etc. and there has been a big increase in this as more of you make use of the website, eConsult and the NHS App. Currently, because of the need for triage, you are not able to make any appointments using electronic systems, but this is under constant review.

All patients seeking medical care or advice must either phone the Practice and go through telephone triage, or use the electronic triage system via the NHS App or eConsult - there are options to upload photos using eConsult. The new website for the Practice will guide you through the process of making a routine or urgent appointment, including appointments for extended hours.

These telephone and electronic triage systems will determine if you can be treated by a pharmacist, require a prescription, need a telephone consultation, require further investigation or hospital follow up or if there is a clinical need to see a GP or another member of the clinical team. All of these systems are risk averse, with robust safety nets to ensure that you are kept safe.

Please be aware that whilst the same level of clinical capacity is in place, the additional requirements to ensure safety have reduced capacity in real terms. This includes donning/doffing PPE and cleaning of areas and equipment after every patient. As with everyone else, staff may be required to self-isolate at short notice and this will further impact upon capacity.

Where it is clinically appropriate to be seen face to face, or have urgent blood tests, and you do **not** have Covid symptoms, you will be given an appointment to be seen at CMHC. If you **do** have any Covid symptoms, but still need a face to face appointment, you will be given an appointment to attend the 'hot hub' at the Brese Avenue Surgery, Warwick.

To maximise access to healthcare Chase Meadow Health Centre has become an Extended Access Hub. This means that for a 12-month period, you can access a variety of GP and nurse appointments on Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 6pm and 9pm and 9am to 12pm on Saturday mornings.

## **Priorities**

The focus for the Practice has been on patients that are shielding and those that are high risk, and we have been proactively contacting our patients who we know to be

vulnerable or at risk. One area in particular that has received great focus are our care homes and frail patients, and we have been working to ensure that they have care plans in place and are supported. Our Social Prescriber Amanda has also had a hugely positive effect during this period and has been able to support many of our patients.

We have also been providing information for all patient enquiries relating to Covid-19. There has been confusion and misinformation around some things, particularly on social media, such as the availability of rescue packs and inhalers for asthma patients, but this was not correct. We then had to undertake additional work to provide clear and accurate information to combat this.

As priorities within healthcare have changed, a range of services have had to be deferred or stopped and this includes minor surgery, private medical reports and routine health checks e.g. over 75s and long term condition reviews. However patients requiring urgent reviews and / or blood tests were contacted and were still being seen. Some of these changes were because of local / regional changes e.g. cervical screening had to stop because the regional testing facility was altered to become a Covid testing station. This screening programme has now recommenced.

### **Health Reviews**

We are now working to reduce the backlog of annual reviews from April and May, and determining which reviews can be done 'remotely' and which need to be done in person, and then prioritising these based on those at most risk/clinical priority (for example poorly controlled Diabetes). To ensure safety for staff and those patients who are coming into the Practice, reviews are being done remotely as far as possible, with the patients being seen face to face for the elements that can only be completed this way (such as blood tests and diabetic foot checks). Patients that do need to be seen in person will be contacted so that they can make an appointment. The way these reviews are done has also been altered, so patients come in for their blood test, blood pressure and foot check at the first appointment, and the nurse will ring them the following week to complete the remainder of the review. Where possible we are also utilising eConsult to complete reviews, as this is often easier for patients to access and we then review the submission and contact the patient with a follow up if needed.

Reviews for long term conditions are being prioritised, but if you have not received a phone call or an appointment for your usual health review and have any concerns or are worried about your condition, please contact the practice.

### **Mental Health Services**

To support the ongoing, and rising, demands for those with mental health concerns, an Active Monitoring Practitioner from Springfield Mind has joined the practice team and, along with a Social Prescriber they are able to offer support and help to patients over the age of 16. The Active Monitoring Practitioner will soon be able to support children over 11 years of age.

### **Changes to the Environment and Systems**

To maximise your safety there are now screens at reception, and an intercom from the main door to reception. When you have an appointment you notify reception via the intercom, and then wait outside until called through. If you cannot wait outside and

need to utilise the waiting room there are now plastic chairs - 2 metres apart - and plastic sheeting on the floor, to enable thorough cleaning.

A new computer system has been introduced to the practice, and this has proven to be very timely, and very useful, in supporting electronic consultations. This has also supported the introduction of a new system that enables sick notes to be texted to patients.

The new website is now live, and is an intuitive system making it much easier for you to navigate and find the services that you need and information about how to access them. The system can be used to request sick notes, GP letters and even find out your test results. The website is updated regularly and as and when services recommence or there are any changes to healthcare provision.

### **Next Priorities**

In addition to arranging for health reviews to resume, planning the response to the National flu immunisation programme is vital. This is going to take a lot of organisation as the number of patients offered the flu vaccine is likely to double, compared to previous years, and social distancing and PPE guidance must be upheld. Similarly, the Pneumococcal Vaccine programme is currently being planned.

In addition to text messages and letters to patients who are in the target group for vaccination, information will be posted on the website once these clinics have been established.

The PPG would like to express our thanks to all the staff at Chase Meadow Health Centre for everything that they have done to help and support their patients, and carers, during these difficult and unprecedented times.