



Why are GPs needing to work differently?

GPs, their teams, and patients have faced an extremely challenging time during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite lockdown measures lifting **the pandemic is still not over**. Face-to-face contact has been limited across all NHS services to protect you and keep you safe from the risk of infection.

We want to be honest with you. General practice will continue to struggle to meet the growing needs of patients. This isn't the way we want it to be, but practices are open, and we are here for you when you need us.

Why are things different?

To keep you and everyone else safe appointments are being triaged. This helps give you the type of appointment you need:

- To be seen in person
- A phone consultation
- A video consultation
- Help from your local pharmacy



If you need to be seen face-to-face you will be.

Why am I seeing someone who is not my GP?

Not everyone needs to see a GP. Many practices now offer appointments with other healthcare professionals, including nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists, physician assistants, mental health workers and paramedics. This ensures you see the right person for your condition as quickly as possible.



Why do receptionists ask such personal questions?

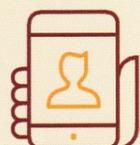
Receptionists are a vital part of the practice team. Their questions are to ensure that you are seen by the right person at the right time, and all answers are kept confidential.



Where else can I get help?

Visit www.nhs.uk for advice on how to treat common symptoms or contact www.111.nhs.uk or dial 111 to speak to someone who can help.

In a life-threatening emergency always call 999.



Your GP surgery needs your support, so it can be there to support you.

We can't meet this challenge alone. General practice desperately needs help from the Government.

Visit www.bma.org.uk/supportyoursurgery to find out more

BARGOOSE

Dr Simon P Hughes and Partners
Patient Participation Group

Newsletter No 52 - Winter 2021/22

How did we get here?

Who could have ever predicted how life would change for us all 18 months ago. For the NHS the impact of change was going to be enormous and pressures across the whole of the service would be felt for months if not years to come.

In GP land suddenly the doors were shut and a whole new way of working had to be introduced and maintained. Clinicians had to quickly learn how to consult patients by phone, video, and texts. This proved to be hugely stressful for both clinicians and patients alike who were used to being able to sit together and talk about health issues.

Full PPE had to be sourced. We received over 100 face shields from Redbourne School and a local lady provided hundreds of face masks and put us in touch with a school in Luton that provided us with again over 100 face shields.. Scrubs for clinicians purchased at the same time as all practices in the country were trying to buy scrubs. Masks had to be worn at all times by all staff. Signs up everywhere telling patients that they couldn't come into the building. Phlebotomy services down to an absolute minimum. Everyone struggling to cope and understand. Phone lines busy all the time as patients couldn't come in leading to frustration from patients, increase in complaints and social media attacks. Our staff have carried on working throughout the whole time up against enormous pressures and difficulties and we are very proud of every one of them.

Anyone with a fever had to be seen in a separate room, so we set aside a room at Gooseberry Hill which was known as the 'hot room'. This was shared with two other two practices in our PCN – Greensands and Houghton Close from Ampthill. If a GP saw a patient in the hot room, they had to wear full PPE, remove all PPE once the consultation was finished and clean the room including the floor before they could see another patient. Anyone who saw patients face to face went to enormous lengths when they went home to change all clothing and shower before seeing any of their family.

The Surgery
Hexton Road
Barton-Le-Clay
MK45 4TA
T: 01582 528 700



www.bartongroupsurgeries.co.uk

Health Centre
Gooseberry Hill
Luton
LU3 2LB
T: 01582 528 721

Eventually the vaccine came, and life eventually became somewhat calmer. Although our reception staff had to learn new systems in order to send invites for vaccines, and there were hundreds of queries in relation to vaccines – which continue today.

We all have to learn a new ‘normal’ with different problems arising frequently. Currently lack of blood bottles is impacting on provision of care, backlog of annual reviews outstanding and now the issue of delayed flu vaccines meaning clinics of over 400 patients having to be cancelled.

Somehow, we will all get through this. Thank you to the patients that continue to support us and understand. Thank you to all those who thanked us with cakes etc at the beginning of the pandemic. Thank you to all our staff who haven’t faltered, even if they wanted to run to the hills.

Celebrating older people and the contribution they make to society

Central Bedfordshire residents are invited to come and join in a celebration linked to **International Day of Older Persons**. The event is taking place on 1st October 2021.

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire is delighted to be able to host the annual **Festival for Older People**, now in its 10th year, at the Rufus Centre, Steppingley Road, Flitwick, MK45 1AH, from 10.00 – 14.30.

As well as being a fun social event, this is also an opportunity for older people to receive information about health, social care and housing services available locally and how to access them.

Helen Nellis, HM Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire said of the virtual festival held last year:

“People who are slightly older are full of wisdom and full of experience and we need to hear that voice. I just wanted to thank you all so much. I am delighted that there are so many organisations participating this week...to make the lives of our older citizens better in so many ways”.

This year, we are thankful to once again be joined by exhibitors from many statutory and voluntary organisations and local groups offering advice and information about local services for older people, including leisure activities, holistic services and much, much more.

All working together to engage the older community and promote their wellbeing, there will be plenty of free refreshments and entertainment throughout the day, such as **May Blossom**, Vintage Inspired Singer entertaining us with her rendition of 50’s and 60’s music, **Escape2VR** virtual reality wellbeing and entertainment, complementary therapies and treatments will be available in the Wellbeing room and **Mobility Physio** will be taking us through some gentle exercises. Blood pressure checks will be available on the day and **Macmillan Cancer Support** will be selling cakes donated by volunteers, **Meal Time** and **Central Bedfordshire College**.

COVID Safety – free hand sanitiser and masks will be available and we recommend that visitors have received both vaccinations and do not have any COVID symptoms prior to entry.

For more information about the event please contact Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire by email at info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk, or call on 0300 303 8554.

Visit the website <https://healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk/festival-for-older-people.2021>

Healthwatch was created by the Health and Social Care Act, 2012. We are part of a network of local Healthwatch which helps to ensure that the views and feedback from patients and carers are an integral part of the design and delivery of local services.

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire (HWCB) is the local consumer champion promoting choice and influencing the provision of high quality health, social care and wellbeing services for all across Central Bedfordshire.

In Memory

Sadly, a stalwart member of BARGOOSE Patient Participation Group, Brian Finney passed away earlier this year.

Brian instigated the quarterly newsletter in 2005 and produced over 50 before handing the editorial role to Roger Bannister. He was the Chairman for several years and during his time helped get the breast screening vehicle to Barton and steered the practice to success in an Investing in Health Award in 2005.

Brian was a very diplomatic individual in his dealings with others, caring and honest. He ran the Open Evenings and worked tirelessly to support the Practice and the PPG. He was a key member of the group and was a huge support to the practice. He will be greatly missed.

A true gent.

Online Ordering of Medication



Did you know you can order your medication using the Systmonline login that you already have for booking appointments.

This system allows you to see your repeat medication on the same system that the Doctor uses. All you need to do is tick the items you want to order when they are due. No need to write or type out lists of medications.

If the item you want isn’t on the screen, you can still put in a request using this system or add any additional notes you may wish your GP to see.

If you have a login but are unsure how to use the system for ordering medication, speak to Dispensary or Reception.

If you don’t have a login yet, and would like one, please speak to Reception and they can set up a password for you.

The benefit of ordering on line is that YOU the patient are in control and there is less room for error.

Ask your Doctor a question

If you visit the Practice web-site www.bartongroupsurgeries.co.uk you will find loads of helpful advice reference ordering Medicines, making an appointment etc. A very useful tool is a section where you can ‘ask a Doctor a question’. By entering your details you will be able to send your GP an email in which you can ask for advice, information relevant to yourself or for someone you are a registered carer for.

You will always receive a reply from the Practice and they endeavour to do this within 3 working days.

Flu Clinics 2021

- ⇒ Saturday 2nd October for patients aged over 65
- ⇒ Saturday 9th October for patients under 65 in risk groups
- ⇒ Saturday 30th October for patients aged over 65
- ⇒ Saturday 6th November for patients aged over 65
- ⇒ Saturday 13th November for patients under 65 in risk groups

Please Support your Practise

This is an important part of the care of our patients, there is a payment from the NHS for carrying out this possible life saving 'Jab' procedure and the income helps towards the costs of Patient Care. This year Supermarkets etc with an internal Pharmacy and are trying to get Patients not to attend their practise but to put the payment into the Supermarket's coffers.

Comment from Ed - *I am sure the Supermarkets will be aware of the care etc in offering the 'Flu Jab' and therefore I assume they will be asking all participants for their present Medical Situation and have in place all the necessary controls. The one thing that I am concerned about is will they have the medical expertise on hand if there is a problem? This is a worry I would have in 'straying' from the Practise.*

Having suffered from a bad tummy problem I rang 111 in the late evening, was then contacted by a Lady GP early the next morning.

She gave me some great advice re our eating patterns etc. 'the worst bit was the fact that as we get older our stomach cannot cope as well as it did in years gone-by and is far happier working quietly during most of the day than having to cope with large intakes of food three times a day, understandable when you think about it.

She advised the following:-

- 1) Spread our food intake out during the day. We now have cereal, fruit and a cuppa at breakfast time, the balance of breakfast midway between Breakfast and Lunch .
- 2) Repeat above between Lunch and Supper.
- 3) Not easy and a bit time consuming but well worth the effort.
- 4) At least 1litre of water per day, (have tried to do that, but drink enough so that do not spend the rest of the day in the 'Loo').

She was happy with our general diet but advised that need a happy medium with potatoes as they are a 'two-headed' vegetable as they contain Vitamin C, B6, Potassium and Choline which are important for health but too many generate weight gain. (that has been a bit difficult as my dear Mother was Irish!!)

Within a week was feeling the benefits, no stomach pain etc and feeling a bit hungry all the time.

Has reminded me of listening to an Interview with a Swiss 93 year old gentleman who had just set the world record for the mile in his age group. He was still working and walked up a hill every day to catch the tram to where he worked. The interviewer asked him how he managed to do all that at his age and he replied that he kept his weight at the right point by eating wisely and therefore always feeling hungry!! - Ed



BedfordshireLive conducted a Survey of Doctors Surgeries in Bedfordshire.

Data from the NHS Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes CCG patient survey for 2021 has been published and shows which GP surgeries are highest rated.

This is based on 12,513 questionnaires which were filled out and returned by the public.

It measures patient satisfaction across a range of topics such as making an appointment, when the GP is closed, how your last appointment was and more.

Our Surgery was voted 4th out of all the Surgeries

71% of patients found it easy to get through to the GP surgery by phone.

89% of patients found the receptionists helpful.

92% of patients describe their overall experience as good.

83% of patients were satisfied with the appointment they were offered.



Please remember that we need a minimum of 2 working days for any prescription requests to be processed

Thank you



I received the following email recently. Thought I would share it, to help you twig it is a phishing scam. The oxford dictionary gives the meaning of phishing as 'the fraudulent practice of sending e mails purporting to be from reputable companies in order to induce individuals to reveal personal information, such as passwords and credit card numbers.'

Dear Btinternet User

We have a new terms of service(TOS) all BT customer is required to review and accept this terms in order to continue to access your BT Mail account. We also need a few moments of your time to explain how we manage your data and provide you with some choices in relation to the processing of that data.

The information has been outlined in the terms of service brochure. Open and review it.

Review

If you do not want the new Terms of Service and Privacy Policy to apply to you, you will no longer be able to access your account from September 30, 2021. If you would like the contents of your email account, you may obtain a copy of your data by clicking here.

If you receive an email like this just read it carefully and you will see English errors that I have shown in red which is the first clue that it is a scam. It is imperative that you do not click on anything (ie review) as you will go to a web-site that will immediately download Phishing software, they can now track everything you do.

You can forward ones like this to the company they refer to, just in case they do not know about it, but if you are unsure and worried about making a mistake just delete it. Ed.

Stay Safe, Be Aware

Would you like a PDF copy of the Bargoose Newsletter e mailed to you?

There are different topics covered each issue with up to date information. Would be particularly useful for Carers etc. Also there are many changes happening re NHS England and as things develop this will get extensive coverage in the Bargoose.

To receive a copy please apply by email to: barton.letters@nhs.net

Managing your medicines

Certain medicines can affect your balance. Let your GP know if you ever feel unsteady after taking medication – you may need to change the dose or look at alternatives. If you take several medicines, your GP should review them regularly in case you no longer need them or the dose needs to be changed.

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a condition which causes bones to become fragile and break more easily. Vitamin D is needed, and sunshine is the major source for most people. Extra vitamin D is recommended for certain groups of the population, including people aged 65 and over. If you think you could be at risk of not getting enough vitamin D, particularly if you are housebound or cover your skin for cultural reasons, raise this with your doctor. Always speak to your GP before starting to take a vitamin D supplement or over-the-counter medicine on a daily basis.

Help from the Surgery

You must tell your GP if you've had a fall or start feeling unsteady, even if you feel fine otherwise. There could be many reasons for this and, equally, many different ways to help you feel confident again.

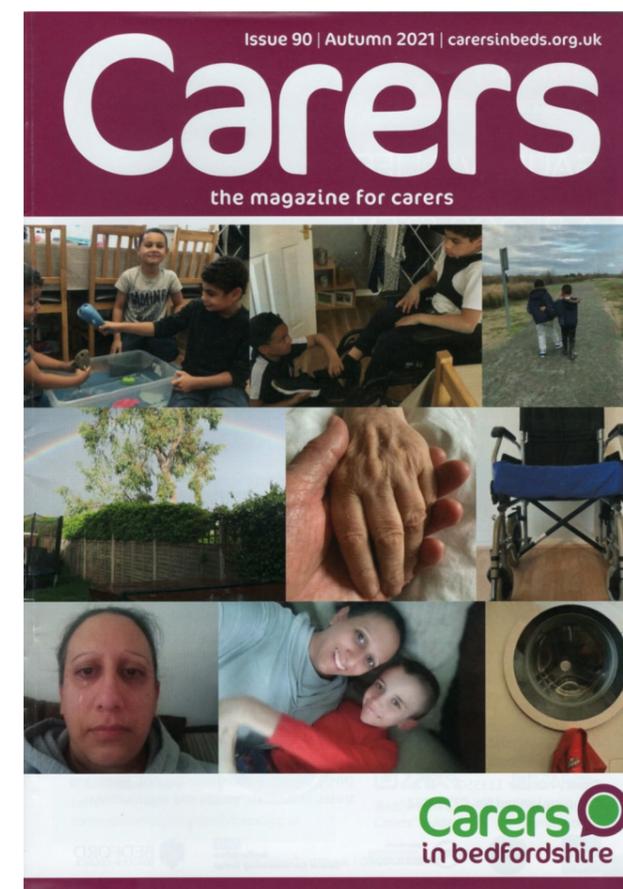
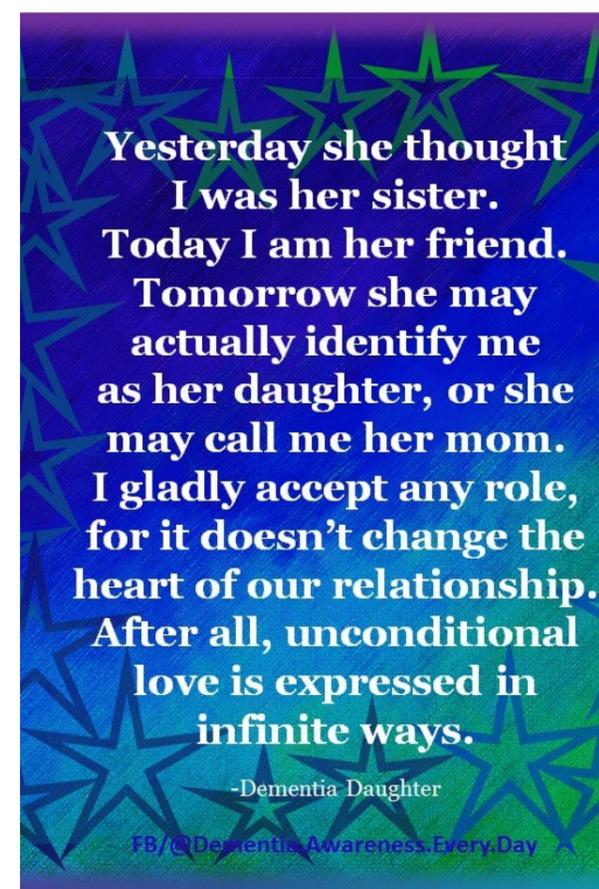
The main article is by Miriam Coffie, with additions by the Ambulance Service Trust and Carers in Bedfordshire.

Message from Doctor Hughes

It is wonderful that the PPG has now been able to meet again and is once again producing its newsletter and though we may be hoping that the vaccination programme has begun to show us a way out of the pandemic we must still be cautious about the risk still posed by coronavirus. The last 19 months or so have been the most challenging in my 29 years in Practice and indeed in my 41 years as a medical student and doctor. In January 2020 none of us here could have conceived how our Practice would have changed by April that year and which have continued since. Prior to COVID General Practice was in crisis and it remains in crisis.

We have now passed through Summer and we are remaining hopeful that the vaccination programme which will continue with boosters this winter, will allow us to return to a more normal way of Practicing. More face-to-face consultations are occurring which is pleasing to us but will still have to clean our rooms and equipment between patients which is time consuming. We have taken to new ways of working through some digital and online type of simple consultations but this work is now additional to what we had before. Indeed, we now have 1000 emails per week coming into the Practice through the various communication systems whereas prior to the pandemic we had none and this is just one example of how things have changed.

As a Practice we have been lucky compared to many Practices – we managed to recruit 2 new partners in Sept last year. We have amazing staff in all areas comprising reception, dispensary, administration and nursing teams. All have adapted in unimaginable ways and have worked so hard wearing masks and PPE to do their best for our patients and this is despite personal worries and concerns about family members and despite personal illness and isolation. I feel extremely proud to be associated with so many selfless and generous people and we are so lucky to have them.



Autumn 2021 Edition now available if you are a Carer and do not receive it contact carers.inbeds.org.uk - 0300 111 1919