

SEPTEMBER 2021 - Hanscombe House Patient Participation Group Newsletter

Hello and welcome to our Summer Newsletter coordinated by Hanscombe House Patient Participation Group, GP's and other Practice staff to keep you up-to-date and help you get the best out of your contact with your surgery.

GPs are busy!

Did you know that GPs are treating 15-20% more patients now than before the Covid pandemic according to the East & North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group. Our Practice is using e-Consult, telephone consultations and drawing on the expertise of pharmacists and physiotherapists when needed to treat patients.

Patient Participation Group – come and join us

All GP Practices need a means of consulting with their patients and most choose to do this via a patient group that meets regularly with practice staff to discuss areas of interest. We have a thriving PPG at Hanscombe House and notes of our meetings can be found on the Practice website – www.hanscombehousesurgery.co.uk. We welcome more of you to join us. If meetings 'aren't your thing' perhaps you'd like to be a member of our virtual PPG. The PPG is currently exploring the use of a dedicated Facebook Group to communicate with our patients who use this social media platform.

Patient Survey Results

The Practice is delighted with the results of the National Patient Survey that can be viewed here - <https://gp-patient.co.uk/>

Revised Surgery Opening Hours

The surgery is now closed between 1-2pm daily. The closure is necessary to allow time for processing of paperwork and referrals and to allow dedicated time for staff meetings and training.

Blood Tests

If you are referred for a blood test at Hertford County Hospital you now need to make an appointment. The Phlebotomy Clinic (open weekdays only) has introduced this system to stop queues and overcrowding at the hospital. You can book an appointment online www.enhertstr.nhs.uk and your patient letter should contain all the information you need such as your NHS number. If you are unable to book online their telephone line is open weekdays between 8-9am and 1-2pm.

Beckton Dickinson blood specimen collection – supply disruption

Via NHS England, Becton Dickinson has alerted us to a shortage of products from their Blood Specimen Collection Portfolio that is impacting across most main blood tube supplies. The supply position remains constrained and is forecasted to become even more constrained over the coming weeks. While it is anticipated that the position will improve from the middle of September, overall supply is likely to remain challenging for a significant period.

To safely manage demand during this period, measures have been applied across the NHS in England. This means that all primary care and community testing has been halted until 17th September 2021, except for clinically urgent testing.

The Practice appreciates that this temporary position is challenging and will be frustrating for our patients. These requirements are being kept under review by NHS England & NHS Improvement as the supply situation evolves.

Ordering of Repeat Medication

We no longer accept medication requests by email from patients. If you are aged 16+ years and have access to our online services (SystmOnline) or the NHS App please request your medication via this service. Requests received this way are automatically and immediately assigned to the appropriate member of staff enabling us to provide a quicker and more efficient prescription service.

Alternative ways to order your medication are via the pharmacy of your choice, by post or hand delivery or through our website via the "request medication online" option. These alternative methods are all available to patients aged 0 to 16 years. If you wish to register for SystmOnline please produce photographic ID to our reception to enable us to provide you with a username and password. If you need your existing username and/or password to be re-issued please contact our reception team.

For help with the NHS app (managed by NHS Digital please visit -

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/nhs-app-help-and-support/getting-started-with-the-nhs-app/>

If you do email a request to us, you will receive a standard response informing you of the actions you will need to take.

Cancer Awareness

No-one wants to think about illness, especially cancer, when they're well but sadly many of us and our friends and relatives will go on to get cancer at some point in life. How much do you know about how to prevent cancer and the importance of screening and early diagnosis? Cancel out Cancer is a local initiative offering a one hour facilitated sessions to mall groups to explore the key issues. Use www.enhertscg.nhs.uk/canceloutcancer to find out more and book a session for your group.

National initiatives that affect us all

You may have seen in the media that there are plans to make much wider use of patient data and many of us were worried by the lack of consultation on this.

Although drawing insights from patient data is vital to service planning and monitoring public health, concerns have been expressed about the vulnerability of our individual personal data. The programme to extract data has been postponed until September with the understanding that NHS Digital to do a lot more to explain both the benefits of doing this and how our privacy will be safeguarded. It is possible to block your data being shared and this is a decision we will each have to make individually - your doctor cannot do this for you. If you want to know more about this there are many sources of further information online including the British Medical Association and patient groups.

Meanwhile a Health and Social Care Bill is now before Parliament. It might only seem like yesterday that the NHS was 'reformed' but in fact the last major reorganisation was 2012. Again you can read up on the pros and cons of the proposals online using published sources such as the Kings Fund Centre.

accuRX

The Practice has started to use accuRX, a communication tool that integrates with SystmOne (our clinical system), allowing the use of sending digital documents

including blood test forms/results, text and photo responses, video consultations, medical surveys and medical questionnaires, text messaging for patients who have a smartphone.

All data is encrypted when stored and when being sent. This makes sure the only people who can access it is the patient, your health professional and anyone the patient authorises, providing written consent is recorded on the medical record.

For further information <https://www accurx.com/who-we-support/general-practice>

This is not instead of our eConsult service, it is to complement it. To upload a photo, with an eConsult select “I want help for my condition” or “I want general advice”

We would ask all patients not to send us photographs by email. If you are unable to send as detailed above, please complete an eConsult with the clinical information required and request either a video consultation or if you have a smartphone request from our receptionist a link via accuRX so that all photos received can be saved directly in the patient record.

To make an appointment you do need to call the surgery - but don't forget you can use eConsult to ask for advice on current symptoms. Your online form will be triaged and you will receive a call back before the end of the next day.

When visiting the surgery, our front entrance is now open - please support the staff and each other by continuing to wear a mask and follow our social distancing measures in place. This helps keep us all safer.

2021/22 Flu Campaign

The flu season is fast approaching! The Practice and the Herts & Rural Primary Care Network are planning the clinic arrangements. Once finalised, patient information will be displayed on our website and eligible patients will be contacted to book an appointment.

The Practice usually receives their first delivery of vaccinations at the end of September and all eligible patients will be contacted when clinics are available. However, some pharmacies may receive their stock prior to this and if you choose to have a vaccination with them, the pharmacy should forward details of your vaccination to us so that your medical record can be updated.

If you are not eligible for a vaccination some local pharmacies may provide a private service for which a fee will be charged. For further information, please contact the pharmacies direct.

Mask Exemptions for airline passengers in relation to COVID-19

Although there are currently government restrictions in place for travel, the Practice felt it important to share this information as this will be our response to patients who request written evidence.

“Reports have been received of airlines asking for medical evidence to support mask exemptions for passengers. Government guidance clearly states that there is no

requirement to have written evidence for an exemption for face covering rules and that people do not need to ask for proof from a doctor. The British Medical Association has stated in response to such queries that this is exactly the kind of activity that hardworking staff should not be distracted by while doing their utmost to care for ill patients, and practices are not obliged to undertake”

Data Sharing

The roll-out of patient data sharing programme (GDPR) has been delayed.

Following lobbying by the British Medical Association (BMA) and other organisations, the introduction of NHS Digital’s new data extraction programme has been delayed to allow more time for patients, the public and practices to be aware of and understand it and for patients to be better able to choose to opt-out if they wish.

Beds & Herts Local Management Committee (LMC) is involved in discussions with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG’s) and local Data Protection Officers to make sure all practices have the information and resources they need. These organisations will keep all Practices informed of further developments via their regular bulletins.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) suspended their usual inspection regime during Covid replacing them with paper based surveys covering key areas.

We’re delighted to report that Hanscombe House has recently been approved through this process recently. Our congratulations and thanks to all staff who have worked long and hard to help us through this difficult year.

COVID VACCINATION UPDATE as at 26th August 2021

Below are the latest figures for COVID vaccinations for over 16 years. From the total practice population of 9734, **78.3%** have received **both** vaccination doses.

1st Dose: 8462/9734 (87%)

- Female: 4456 (88%)
- Male: 4006 (86%)

2nd Dose (1st dose received): 7619/8462 (90%)

- Female: 4081 (92%)
- Male: 3538 (88%)

COVID Booster Programme: This is currently being organised and patients will receive notification when their cohort is being vaccinated.

- **12-15 Year Olds:** Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable or are living with someone who has been identified as being immunosuppressed, will be contacted by the NHS with details on how to arrange their appointments - this is **not** being administered through the surgery.
- **Children and Young People:** The Department of Health and Social Care have reviewed the data in these age groups and have identified that the risk is not as great and therefore, at present, will not be vaccinating this age group unless they have been identified as being either clinically extremely vulnerable OR living with someone who has been identified as being immunosuppressed.

Please find overleaf the contact details for patients with any queries.

PATIENT COVID VACCINATION QUERIES

(last updated 5th August 2021)

1. Missing Details

Patient to send email with following information direct to:

- hct.covidrecords@nhs.net (include the following information):
 - Full name
 - DOB
 - NHS number
 - Date of Vaccination
 - Vaccination Site
 - Batch number (if known)
 - Copy of vaccination card (if applicable)

2. Walk-in Vaccination Centres

- <https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/events/vaccination-walk-in-clinic-times>

3. Patients Wanting to Travel Overseas

Patients can request letter by contacting:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-pass/get-your-covid-pass-letter/>
- Calling: **119**

4. Vaccination Status Letter (if patient does not have NHS App or NHS Number)

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/covid-status-letter>
- Calling: **119**

5. NHS App Patient Queries:

- Support: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/online-services/nhs-app/>
- NHS App Team: <https://www.nhs.uk/contact-us/nhs-app-contact-us>
- Calling: **119**