



Putnoe and Linden Medical Partnership and Walk In Centre Patient Newsletter No 12 December 2020

Welcome to our 12th Patient Newsletter which has been produced, in liaison with our Patient Participation Group.

We appreciate that the last few months have presented us all with unexpected challenges. We wish to assure you that our Practice Teams constantly strive to meet your needs and support you, as best we can, with all the restrictions and changes that have been essential to keep everyone safe.

Since the merger of Putnoe Medical Centre and Linden Road Surgery in October 2016 we have been working to align our Practices over both sites. Our Newsletter is therefore now available to all patients served by our Partnership.

The Partnership consists of 7 GPs – Dr Bharat Mehta, Dr Sudha Elangovan, Dr Amjad Khan, Dr Ankur Khandelwal, Dr Sagar Kanungo, Dr Christopher Haggart and Dr Tajvir Gill.

Covid 19

With the onset of the Covid pandemic in March 2020 Dr Chris Haggart took on the challenging role of being the Covid Lead GP for our Practices. He swiftly and effectively implemented new ways of working to keep our patients and staff safe. This includes an intercom at the front doors of both Practices so that our Receptionists can remotely talk to patients and advise them on how they can be safely managed.

Patients requesting an appointment with a clinician are offered a telephone call back in the first instance. The clinician will then assess the patient's clinical needs and where possible, deal with this by telephone. However, where clinically necessary they will invite the patient to attend for a face-to-face consultation with them – usually later that day.

This new process has dramatically reduced the numbers of patients coming into the Waiting Room to ensure that social distancing can be observed at all time. The number of available chairs has been reduced and socially distances.

Please wear a mask when inside the practice, use the hand sanitiser on entry and exit and avoid using the toilet unless absolutely necessary.

We are very grateful to you for your patience and support in these new but essential ways of working to keep our patients and staff safe.

We are still doing the annual chronic disease reviews (eg for diabetes, asthma, COPD etc) but again these are being done via a telephone consultation with a nurse, pharmacist or GP.

Staff Changes

We are pleased to announce that Dr Tunde has recently returned to Putnoe Medical Centre in December.

Pharmacist – Sarah Peluso has joined our Pharmacy Team, (Nikxit Mehta and Rebecca Allen) to further support the work of this Team.

New GP – Dr Sunita Pandey (who was at PMC as a trainee until recently, but was then known as Dr Bisht). She is working at our Linden Road Surgery the majority of the time.

Patient Support Team (Receptionists) – we welcome Jacqueline Pilsbury and Rhiannon Nicol to our Linden Road Team and Kylie Novell to Putnoe Medical Centre.

Breast Cancer Care Fundraising Raffle

With the current restrictions we were not able to have a public cake sale this year, but our enthusiastic Patient Support Team at Putnoe were determined that we would have another successful fundraising event for this worthy cause. They held a very popular raffle for staff which raised an impressive £350.80.

Foodbank Hampers

Once again this year Sarah Coles, a member of our Patient Support Team at Putnoe has co-ordinated the mammoth task of the donation of Christmas Hampers for our local Foodbank. The generosity of our staff and friends resulted in her delivering 2 large family hampers, 25 one-person hampers for and also 1 hamper for a lucky cat!



Covid Vaccination Guidance

The local plans for the national campaign to vaccinate against Covid will be shared once finalised. For more information about this please see:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/943663/Greenbook_chapter_14a_v3.pdf

Cancer Audit and Patient Information

Both Practices have recently taken part in a national audit with Cancer Research UK. The anonymous results were presented in a virtual in-house meeting for staff from all Teams at both Putnoe and Linden Road surgeries. It is also going to be presented to our Patient Participation Groups at both sites in January.

The main learning point is that due to Covid our referral rates have gone down, primarily due to patients' "Covid anxiety" which may result in patients ignoring symptoms or early signs of early cancer. We are therefore raising awareness with our patients and staff to investigate any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

We encourage you to speak to have a GP if you have any concerns. Please see this related patient information "Spotting cancer early saves lives" at:

https://publications.cancerresearchuk.org/sites/default/files/publication-files/CRUK2019_SpottingCancerEarly_EasyRead_FINAL_WebAcc.pdf

Phlebotomy Service

Unfortunately, we are now only able to offer blood tests at the surgery for patients who are frail/elderly and cannot walk more than 20 yards. Clinics will be held on Mondays and Fridays between 09:00 – 12:00.

All other patients are requested to attend North Wing Gilbert Hitchcock House (GHH) at North Wing where the majority of the tests can be done on a walk in basis. Opening hours are Monday to Friday, 8 am to 4.30pm. Please call 01234 355122, extension 3402 for any enquiries.

If you have been asked to have a glucose tolerance test (GTT) this is by appointment only. Please ring 01234 792160 to make an appointment.

Please can you also note that children under 16 years of age will need to have an appointment made with the Paediatric Phlebotomy Department. They can be contacted on 01234 355122 ex 6376. They cannot be bled at GHH.

Footfall/Website Email

We are pleased to announce the new Website to support this local initiative implemented by all Bedford Practices. It allows patients to send email queries to us about any aspect of their care and includes requests for Medical Certificates (sick notes). This is monitored by Administrative staff who will either deal with the query or forward it to the most relevant member of staff. This helps to reduce the number of telephone calls which have increased dramatically in recent months.

Healthy Walking Group – Putnoe Medical Centre

The popular Tuesday mornings Walking Group recommenced on Tuesday 8 December for existing members only at this current time.

Telephones

We appreciate your patience when trying to call into the surgery. As access to the Practices is limited this has resulted in a large increase in telephone calls. The Receptionists also have to ask a number of questions resulting in each call taking longer to deal with.

If your call is not urgent please do not call us in the mornings which are the busiest times. Alternatively you can email us via the Practice website:

<https://www.putnoemedicalcentre.co.uk/digitalpractice/reception-and-enquiries/>
then select the relevant option or 'Ask the Practice a Question'.

We now have an additional member of staff on duty in the mornings at PMC to answer your calls in the morning to try to reduce the time you have to wait. We are also looking to reduce the length of the telephone message.

Chiropody Service

With the onset of Covid the Chiropody Services decided not to operate out of Putnoe Medical Centre. They have asked us to inform you that they are currently offering a limited service for high risk patients only. Their old Putnoe number (01234 31043) is diverted so you can contact them as usual with queries.

When they get back to "normal" patients formally seen at Putnoe will be seen at the Enhanced Services Centre on Kimbolton Road, but the date for this is not yet known.

On-Line Services

We encourage our patients to register to use our on-line services. This avoids the need to call or visit the Practice to order prescriptions and to book and cancel appointments. To register with our Online Services please come into the Practice with proof of ID and your address. You cannot register for this service online or by telephone because we need to verify your identity.

Covid Vaccine

The Covid vaccination programme will be launching imminently. Initially the vaccinations will be given offsite at a central location across Bedford. We will contact patients directly when they are eligible for the vaccine. For more information about the vaccine please visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/> or scan the QR code with your smartphone camera.



Your Feedback

During the current restrictions we are not able to undertake our monthly Walk In Centre Patient Satisfaction Survey or have the Friends and Family Test cards in our Practices. However, you can still give us feedback via the Friends and Family section of our websites. Your feedback is valued to help us maintain our high standards of care and look to make improvements where possible.

If you would like to post a message about our Practice this can be done on Google Review. This can be done by searching for Putnoe Medical Centre or Linden Road Surgery in your browser then selecting Google Review which on right side of search results then select Write a Review.

Other option is on the NHS Choices website via:

Putnoe Medical Centre

<https://www.nhs.uk/services/gp-surgery/putnoe-medical-centre-partnership/P43277/ratings-and-reviews>

then select Leave a Review

Linden Road Surgery

<https://www.nhs.uk/services/gp-surgery/linden-road-surgery/P42148/ratings-and-reviews>

Thank you for taking the time to read this.