

## **Bishops Waltham Surgery**

### **Surgery Update 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

Dear Patients

Firstly, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support. The pressure on Primary Care Services as a whole over the last 12-24 months has been unprecedented, especially with the Coronavirus pandemic. This has been compounded in our area by a rising population within our Primary Care Network (PCN) Area (which comprises the surgeries of Twyford, Stokewood, Wickham and Bishops Waltham), with an estimated growth in population from 2020 to 2030 to increase from around 54,000 to around 110,000 people. Bishops Waltham Surgery is currently looking after a population in excess of 13,600 in a building designed originally for only 7000 patients, and we now find ourselves the busiest we have ever been.

As a practice and as a PCN we have made recurrent attempts to get approval to look for better and larger premises and we are once again awaiting the outcome of a further Estates meeting at NHS England (NHSE) level. Without such approval we are unable to move forward on this.

In the meantime, whilst we are waiting for a more permanent solution, we have been trying to improve the current surgery and the service delivered, and there are a few changes that we would like to inform you about, in particular with respect to the appointments and e-consult service.

#### **Appointments**

The appointment system has been looked at to try and improve the current delivery of service and some changes will be instigated in the next few weeks. Throughout the pandemic we have continued to provide a service where we have seen you face to face only when necessary having triaged all the appointments first to ensure safety and in particular to attempt to protect the more vulnerable patients in our population. We are now aiming to offer more choice.

The new system will allow people to choose between face-to-face appointments and telephone consultations depending on their circumstances. It will also be possible to book routine appointments online.

We will continue to provide a service for urgent/same day medical problems. These appointments will be for conditions that cannot wait for a routine appointment. We would encourage you to be mindful that these slots are for **urgent** medical problems only, and that we do not have an unlimited capacity.

## **Urgent / Same Day Appointments**

### **(Bookable only by telephone)**

These are aimed at providing a service where you can book to see a doctor face to face at the surgery for on the day urgent and emergency problems. If you feel it can be managed over the telephone then you will be able to choose this as an option.

In order to book an urgent appointment you will need to telephone the practice on 01489 892288 and speak to our reception & admin team who will be able to advise. The slots are a first come first served basis. Once they are full then only true medical emergencies can be squeezed into the system as additional workload.

## **Routine Appointments**

### **(Bookable via telephone or online up to 2 weeks in advance)**

The routine appointments are for non-urgent problems, that is things that do not need to be seen as an emergency or urgently on the same day. You are able to book these online or by telephoning the surgery where the reception & admin team will be glad to help.

NHS England have recently stipulated that GP surgeries have to provide all appointments within a two-week window, this is not something that we have any control over. Therefore, you will only be able to book slots with a GP **up to two weeks** in advance on a first come first served basis. When you book online the available appointments are exactly as you see them, we do not withhold appointments or have any extras available.

## **The eConsult Service**

### **(Online Access for Administrative Tasks Only)**

This is a service introduced by NHS England over the pandemic that has allowed patients to contact primary care via an online form. It is now a contractual obligation for all practices to provide eConsultations in some format. You may have noticed that we recently suspended the service due to the partners feeling that it was clinically unacceptable in terms of risk and safety – the risk that a patient may have an urgent medical problem, contacted us by eConsult and for that not to be looked at for a number of days due to the excessive demand from other avenues within the GP's working day. The partners have therefore made the decision that from the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022 this service can now **only be used for administrative tasks.**

- Request for Fit Notes / Medical Certificate
- Secretarial Queries
- Online Service Queries / Requests
- When instructed to use the service by one of the clinical team

***\*Please note that any requests using the eConsult service for appointments, medical advice or clinical problems will be rejected and you will be asked to telephone the surgery to book an appointment instead\****

### **Nursing Appointments**

You will still be able to book phlebotomy (blood tests) and nursing clinics via the telephone service or phlebotomy appointments online (nurse appointments are not available to book online as different types of appointments require different lengths of appointments).

We are still unable to provide a spirometry service for the management of some chronic lung diseases due to Covid restrictions. This has been highlighted to the NHS management above us (the CCG/ICP NHS Organisations) and we are still awaiting a solution.

### **Pharmacy Service and Self Care**

There are many instances where you may have a medical problem that does not need the specialist help of a GP. Therefore, in keeping with NHSE directive, we have partnered with the local pharmacies to allow them to use their excellent professional knowledge to give medical advice and treatment for some minor illnesses that are deemed appropriate nationally and signed off by NHSE. You may be directed by our reception staff to utilise this service for the following problems.

- Minor Allergic Reactions
- Acne and Spots
- Sprains/Strains
- Athletes foot
- Blisters
- Cold/Flu
- Diarrhoea and Vomiting
- Earache, Ear Wax and Discharge
- Conjunctivitis/Red Eye
- Sore Throats
- Some Womens Health Problems

### **Staffing**

We are very fortunate to have been able to recruit new doctors to the practice following the retirement of Dr Tim Frank, Dr Nicki Evans and Dr Karen O'Reilly. We are very pleased to welcome Dr Victoria Hammond, Dr Martha Ramirez-Torres, Dr Shazatol Subari, and in the coming months will welcome back Dr Rhiannon John and Dr Matthew Harling. Dr Lucia Grosso Di Palma is currently on maternity leave and we look forward to her returning in the New Year.

### **Security**

You may have noticed that we have recently introduced CCTV to the surgery. This is necessary for the protection of our staff with growing concerns about abusive and threatening behaviour towards NHS staff. We have unfortunately not been immune to this kind of behaviour in Bishops Waltham Surgery and as such have taken this step to protect our employees as well as patients. We will continue to assess the situation and any such

antisocial behaviour whether face to face or over the telephone will not be tolerated in future.

### **Surgery Premises and Population**

We remain in the same situation regarding GP premises as we have been for the last 10-15 years, and whilst progress has been made it looks unlikely that we will be moving to a new site any time soon. This poses challenges with regards to space, especially with the increasing practice population in the surrounding area. We would ask you to please be mindful that the car park is not intended for patients unless they are disabled or unwell and been asked to park there by a GP. We have already notified the ICP/CCG NHS management above us that we are close to reaching a population whereby we will be forced to apply to them to close our list. Unfortunately, however, if we were to be authorised to close our list it would only be for a limited period before we would be forced to re-open the list again. A solution is required urgently not only for Bishops Waltham, but for all the Practices within our PCN. We have asked for a stop-gap option with Portakabins or similar but again are awaiting a response from the management above us within the NHS.

### **Covid and Flu Vaccines**

We will be continuing to provide covid vaccines and flu vaccines in the coming months and into the Autumn/Winter vaccine programme. This will no longer be at Colden Common and will be at the surgery.

We will hope to open our flu appointments late August to book once we have confirmation of delivery. Those due a further Covid Vaccination can have this with their flu vaccination and depending on delivery will aim to do these together.

Once again thank you for your support with regards to these changes.

### **The Partners**

**Bishops Waltham Surgery**