

# Health Matters

The Newsletter for Deddington Health Centre by the Patient Participation Group

## Flu Update

At this time of year we normally advertise our flu clinics in village newsletters. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Deddington Health Centre will not be advertising this year. Delivering flu vaccination is slightly more challenging this year with the need to social distance, all our staff are required to wear PPE and longer appointment lengths are required. The Government has also announced an extension to the usual cohort of patients that will be vaccinated against flu this year. Our current flu vaccine stock is limited to the patients who would have received it in previous years, i.e., those over 65, those aged 2 and 3 (other children will be vaccinated through the School Health Service) and those in a clinical risk group.

We are hoping to offer several Saturday flu clinics, children's flu clinics twice a week and a regular daily lunchtime flu clinic to our patients. We will keep our website and Facebook page updated with any changes to this plan.

We anticipate these clinics being available from Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September for 2 and 3 year olds and those over 65. Those in a clinical risk group who are aged under 65 will be able to book an appointment from 28<sup>th</sup> September onwards.

This is our current plan to get as many of the community vaccinated against flu this year. As things are still somewhat unpredictable at the moment with vaccine supply and government announcements we would ask you to be patient with us whilst we do our best to get arrangements in place, come alone to a flu clinic (unless you need an escort), come at your appointment time and not earlier and wear a face covering when attending your appointment.

We will update our Facebook page and website with further information regarding 50 – 64 year olds when we have received guidance on availability of flu vaccines. This will be later in the flu season and is not anticipated to be before November.

## Dispensing Services Update

The COVID-19 situation has thrown many challenges to us all and certainly to the team at DHC. One of the key areas where procedures have had to change is in the dispensary. Several surrounding villages quickly set up collection and delivery services for those who were shielding or self-isolating due to COVID-19. The dispensary staff have been working tirelessly to introduce procedures to take account of the situation and, according to Andy Anderson the Chair of DHC's Patient Participation Group, have provided one of the best services in the area.

As the situation is now easing, the Practice are using the opportunity to review the dispensary services and incorporate some of the COVID-19 related systems that have worked well into permanent practice. Changes have already been made to some village deliveries meaning that these deliveries are now made by the dispensary delivery drivers allowing the Practice to accommodate more patient delivery requests.

One of the key changes being made over the coming months is that telephone calls for repeat prescriptions will cease, these services are no longer deemed to be safe and sustainable and will allow the team to focus on the increase in dispensing as the patient cohort continues to grow. Patients who have been using this system will be contacted and offered alternative solutions, this work has already commenced.

The most efficient way to order repeat prescriptions is via online services but the Practice will work with those patients who are unable to use this system to find an appropriate alternative method. The Practice will publish more information and guidance and have already started to contact patients who use the repeat prescription telephone service.

The benefits of using online services to order repeat prescriptions are:

- You can order your repeat prescription at any time that is convenient to you (24/7) on your PC or using the Patient Access App on your phone (search for the app on your phone or PC)
- You will see all your medication that is available to order and just tick those that you want

- You can look back at your account and see that we have received your prescription request
- It is a safer alternative to telephone messages

## NHS Volunteer Responders

NHS Volunteer Responders have been supporting tens of thousands of people across England during COVID-19, with tasks including; collecting shopping, delivering prescribed medicines and making 'check in and chat' calls. Restrictions may be easing but NHS Volunteer Responders are still here to help those self-isolating, including people with long term health conditions or who have been advised to shield at any point.

If you or someone you know needs help with essential tasks, NHS Volunteer Responders are here to help - please call 0808 196 3646 (8am to 8pm). People with caring responsibilities and frontline health and care staff can also request support. Health and care professionals, as well as a range of public and voluntary sector professionals, can continue to refer vulnerable people into the scheme. Referrals can be made online at

[www.goodsamapp.org/NHSreferral](http://www.goodsamapp.org/NHSreferral) or by calling 0808 196 3382. NHS

Volunteer Responders will be available to provide support until at least December 2020. Further information is available at:

[www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk](http://www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk)

DHC is keen to support continuation of local groups/volunteer groups that have done sterling work during this pandemic, it is great to see the sense of community and people supporting each other and it would be sad to lose this.

## COVID-19 Appointments & Updates

In line with the national guidance most consultations are now completed online for via the telephone. The online consultation service being used by the Practice is called Engage Consult and patients can sign up to this service via the Practice website at [www.deddingtonsurgery.co.uk](http://www.deddingtonsurgery.co.uk). The previous system has

now been removed as it did not meet the NHS requirements for online services that became a contractual requirement in April.

Please be assured that where a clinician has assessed a patient needs to be seen at the Practice this continues to happen.

We will be conducting a survey on the appointments system in the coming months and would be grateful to patients for completing this survey.

We still have separate entrances, where appropriate patients are waiting in their cars to be collected by clinician (or the clinician calls their mobile to tell them to enter) via the closed main entrance.

We have marshalls organised on the dispensary door which is the only entrance in general use at the moment, they will ask you to use hand sanitiser and a face covering (unless you are exempt) and will check the reason for attending the Practice.

The current COVID-19-19 guidance is changing on a regular basis and the Practice adapt accordingly, please continue to be considerate of each other and of the team within the Practice.

Patients are required to use hand sanitiser and to wear a face covering when entering the Practice (except where patients are exempt from face coverings).

## Patient Participation Group

Members of the PPG have been supporting the volunteer prescription deliveries during the height of the pandemic and have been a support to the Practice and to the patients, they have allowed the Practice to manage the significant issues that have arisen over the past few months and been on standby to listen to any concerns. As previously mentioned, DHC is a member of the North Oxford Regional Alliance (NORA), a Primary Care Network and the 5 practices involved have seen an even greater benefit in collaborating since the pandemic arrived.

The PPG will continue to support the practice as the situation develops over the coming months and will be involved in the dispensary planning and procedure changes.

Andy Anderson  
Chair, PPG.