

Update from our PPG

As a PPG we thought it may be helpful to explain our purpose and how we work with the Practice to represent their patients.

Every GP Practice in the country is required to have a PPG and they all operate slightly differently. The PPG at Deddington Health Centre is a group of up to 20 patients, all registered at the Practice. As a group we meet 4 times a year with the Practice Team.

The PPG are not a lobbying group but they meet with the team at Deddington Health Centre to ensure the patient's voice is heard. They work alongside the Practice team in a supportive and consultative way. For example, the PPG met with the Practice Manager on 3rd October 2023 to discuss the upcoming changes in the Practice. There was an opportunity to question the impact of the changes and draft this Health Matters which we hope will communicate these changes to patients.

As well as the regular PPG members who attend the quarterly face to face meetings there is also an extended "virtual PPG" who the Practice team may consult with via email to inform of changes and updates.

The PPG members may occasionally act as test subjects to try out changes and new systems within the Practice and provide feedback.

We have recently appointed a new Chair, Jackie Mahon and a new Secretary, Anne Hunsley.

Should there be a CQC visit the PPG will be invited to meet with the inspectors to provide feedback.

The PPG are keen to hear from anyone who feels they have the skills and inclination to apply to become a member of the existing PPG. We hope to be a group that is representative of the Practice population from all demographics. Please email ppg.deddington@nhs.net if you would like to request an application form.

Updates from the Practice team

We are delighted to share with you that despite the national shortage of GPs we have recruited a further two GPs who join us in September 2023. We now have 10 GPs, covering various days and equating to 7 full time equivalent GPs. We also have a new full-time clinical pharmacist joining us in October 2023.

The list of our GPs are here: <https://deddingtonhealthcentre.co.uk/practice-information/gps-and-specialist-paramedic-practitioner/>

We continue to work on recruitment for our operations and dispensary teams.

New appointment system

You will all be very aware of the crisis within General Practice nationally and the historical models of working are no longer sustainable. The government and NHS England continue to implement unrealistic targets and contract changes.

General Practice is continually being asked to do more with less; more appointments, in a quicker time frame, for an ever-increasing population, with less staff and less funding.

At Deddington Health Centre we have been very fortunate to have suffered the consequences of the ongoing crisis a little later than many GP practices, but we cannot continue with our current working model and must now make changes.

From the 6th of November the way the practice deals with the majority of your requests will change to an online triage system. The new system will be available via the NHS App and our website.

Please note that our nursing appointments will continue as usual and any changes to this will be notified to patients.

It is important for the sustainability of our Practice that patients use our services in the most appropriate way and that those who can, use the online triage system to allow our team to provide urgent medical services to all of our 12500 patients and to support those patients who really cannot access online systems.

The main aims of the new system are to:

- Improve patient access
- Improve patient care
- Reduce the '8am rush'
- Improve staff wellbeing

This will be a new system for you and for our teams, we ask for your patience whilst we all get used to the new system.

Despite the challenges of the last few years we are lucky to have patients who have been incredibly supportive and gone out of their way to share positive feedback with us, in the most challenging of times your kind words and deeds have kept us going.

Important note whether calling or using online services for requests

Please be clear, concise, and accurate with the information you provide. If you do not give enough information, you will get a reply asking you to provide more information; we cannot triage if there is insufficient or unclear information.

Please be truthful, the information you provide whether by telephone or an online triage form, will become part of your permanent medical record and incorrect information may cause confusion or harm in the future. It also may prevent a patient with a greater need getting an appointment.

Urgent medical requests

Whether you can use online services or not, you should continue to call the Practice on 01869 338611 if you have a medical emergency that does not need 999 but needs a same day appointment. Our Patient Services team will complete the triage form on your behalf and mark this as urgent. This will then be reviewed by a GP. The GP will decide if this requires a same day appointment. If the GP advises that a same day appointment is appropriate, one will be provided to you, this may be face to face or it may be telephone and will be with the healthcare professional decided by the GP. As this will be an urgent medical appointment there will be very little choice to rearrange.

If the GP does not feel that your request needs to be dealt with on the same day, they will review along with other requests with the aim of responding within 2 working days.

Patients who genuinely are unable to use online services

We request that patients who are able to, or who have someone who is able to on their behalf, use the online services for non-urgent requests. We have limited resources which we must protect for those patients requiring urgent medical assistance or who are genuinely unable to use online services.

If you are unable to use online services to make your request then you can call the Practice and our Patient Services team will complete the online request form for you. This will be put into the system along with all requests submitted by patients using the online services. Calling the Practice will not result in a quicker solution for non-urgent requests. GPs will be prioritising urgent medical queries first and will then review all other requests by the date/time stamp they are submitted onto the system. Electronic requests will be the quickest way to get a non-urgent appointment or a solution to other queries.

Please see the below information for more information on how non-urgent online requests will be dealt with.

Online non-urgent requests (we will aim to provide a solution within 2 working days)

When submitting an online request we will triage to the most appropriate team:

- Administrative queries will be dealt with by our operational teams; Patient Services, Clinical Support
- Medication queries (NOT prescription requests) will be dealt with by our Pharmacists or Pharmacy Technicians (requests for repeat prescriptions will not be processed via this system, these requests should go through the normal channels)
- Medical queries/issues including appointment requests will be triaged by our GPs

There will be various solutions utilised by GPs who will triage the medical queries/appointment requests:

- Signposting to an alternative provider
- Links to self-care advice
- Links to book an appointment with the most appropriate healthcare professional and within the timescale advised by the GP (for those patients unable to use online services our Patient Services team will book the appointment with you)

Please note that Patient Services will not be able to override the advice and decisions provided by the GP.

The system we will be using is called AccuRx, some of our patients will already be aware of the name as we use other parts of AccuRx systems already. There is a general overview of the AccuRx system on YouTube here: [How to use Patient Triage for patients - YouTube](#)

Deddington Health Centre healthcare professionals

Our patients have benefitted from the development of our healthcare professional team who work alongside our GP and nursing teams. We have a paramedic, urgent care practitioner, physiotherapist, clinical pharmacist, pharmacy technicians and wellbeing worker.

Your GP is not always the most suitable healthcare professional for your medical need so you may be provided with care by other expert healthcare professionals within the Practice.

Signposting to other NHS services

Part of the NHS plan to improve access to GP practices is to reduce the use of inappropriate appointments with us by signposting patients to other NHS funded services that may be more appropriate.

Your medical need may be more suited to one of these services which may include the First Aid Unit in Chipping Norton, a local pharmacy, minor injuries unit, minor eye conditions service, dental services. If we feel that your request can be appropriately dealt with by an alternative service, you will be advised of this. This will enable us to free up more GP appointments for those who really do need GP care.

Repeat prescription answering machine

As patients will be aware, we have made the decision to withdraw the repeat prescription answering machine.

Patient Safety is paramount to us, and we are constantly looking at ways to improve our processes and procedures surrounding this. NHS England are encouraging patients to use the NHS App to order their prescriptions. This prevents errors and empowers the patient to take a greater role in their own healthcare. Answer machine messages are not always clear, and this raises the risk of dispensing errors.

Online ordering is much more efficient and less time consuming both for the patient and for our team and with the shortage of available staff we must use our valuable resources in the most efficient and safest way possible.

In preparation for the withdrawal of the telephone ordering line, we turned off our answering machine for a 2-month period during the summer to enable our patients that regularly use this service to have a bespoke telephone call with one of our dispensers to discuss any queries or concerns they may have had. In this time we are pleased to report that only a small number of patients were adversely affected by the change and we have been able to resolve these on a case-by-case basis. There are several alternative options for those patients who are genuinely unable to use online services and if you find yourself in this position and have not spoken to our dispensing team over the summer then please do so.

Online Services

The NHS including Primary Care is not only suffering from the lack of available GPs, nursing and other healthcare professionals but also from operational teams including those working in Patient Services, Clinical Support and Dispensary. To help reduce the burden on NHS teams and to help people get more information about their health and care, the NHS is actively promoting and encouraging all patients that are able to, to use the NHS App.

The NHS App is a simple process to sign up for and delivers many benefits including:

- Online ordering of repeat prescriptions
- Immunisations history
- Allergy information
- Test results
- Book and manage COVID vaccinations
- Choose how the NHS uses your data

Ongoing work within the NHS App will allow more detailed information from your medical record to be viewed over the coming months. More information on the NHS App can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/about-the-nhs-app/>