



April 2021

Bourn Surgery Newsletter

www.bournsurgery.nhs.uk

Apologies to everyone for the long wait for this newsletter; please do not take our silence as a sign of inactivity! We have had some of the busiest months ever at Bourn, managing the rapidly increasing demand for appointments, alongside running and staffing our local GP-led vaccination centre at Royston. The Royston vaccination centre, led by Dr Lockyer, has been a huge success, and to date has delivered 13,500 first-dose vaccine and 7,000 second-dose vaccines. This has all been delivered by doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals working alongside and in addition to their normal day jobs. The Royston centre could not function without the hard-working, willing army of volunteers who have braved all weathers and temperatures to support this monumental effort, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of them.

Update on our appointments system:

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought disruption to us all, and made everything so much harder. Bourn Surgery is not alone in having had to make significant changes to the way that we operate in order to comply with Government guidance on how general practices should operate in these times, and in ensuring social distancing rules are followed within our rather small building. While lockdown is beginning to ease, social distancing is still with us for now, and there will not be a return to a crowded waiting room any time soon. We are keen to open up our services as much as possible, while working within the rules. We also appreciate the understandable frustration that, as shops, hairdressers and pubs reopen, you are still unable to access us as you used to. NHS England guidance is still that all general practices should operate a remote, telephone-first system as the first point of contact for the surgery. While social distancing remains in place, we are unable to move back to a system of being able to book face-to-face appointments when wished, as we do not have space within our building to safely have the volumes of patients coming through that we previously did.

We have done some extensive work over the last 4-6 weeks to look at an appointment structure that will maintain some of the benefits and convenience of remote consulting by telephone or video, but where we can start to build in routine face-to-face appointments when the guidelines allow us to. As part of this work we have had input from every department and team within the Surgery, from the clinical team of doctors, nurses, pharmacist and paramedic, to the Reception and Dispensary teams. All parts of the surgery team have different perspectives about the appointments system, and we are keen to build all of this experience into our decisions. Importantly, this has also been a wonderful opportunity to consult the collective wisdom of our newly-formed Patient Participation Group (PPG). After an evening Zoom meeting where Dr Frame discussed the various factors and challenges involved in trying to find the right balance of appointments, surveys were sent out to every PPG member asking for their experience of

booking appointments during the pandemic, what their opinion would be of our thoughts, and what suggestions they had. This was a wonderful opportunity for us to ensure that there was a strong patient voice at the heart of our decisions, and we are very grateful to the PPG for their feedback and help with this project.

Any change to an appointment system structure is a huge undertaking. We also want to ensure we do not cause disruption for those who already have appointments booked. We are therefore looking to launch our new system in mid-May, and will start by making incremental, small changes. It is always difficult to get the balance of different appointment types right, and we want to be able to tweak the system as we go and learn from experience as it unfolds. The first system to come in will consist of:

- **Pre-bookable telephone and video consultations**, with **timed** appointments available. Please be aware that while every effort will be made to call you as close to this time as possible, there may be a delay if the GP is dealing with an emergency. Initially we will have appointments available up to three weeks in advance, but over time we hope to extend this significantly
- **Urgent same-day telephone appointments**, which will be booked as a morning call (where you will receive a call back between 9am-1pm) or afternoon call (2pm-6pm). These appointments will be reserved for genuinely urgent medical need.
- When, on discussion with your GP, a **face-to-face appointment** at Bourn is required, the GP will arrange this with you, and agree the time-frame within which this is needed.

Other points:

- Please note, because of the internet calling software we use, your call may display as an Oxford number; please do not be afraid to answer this call.
- We are keen to expand the use of video consultations, after very good feedback from those who have used them. If you would like a video consultation, please speak to Reception to request this.
- We hope to very soon be able to turn online booking for the pre-bookable appointments back on. Urgent same-day appointments will only be able to be booked via Reception. We will also be aiming to allow all types of appointments to be able to be booked online in due course, including blood tests, nurse appointments and clinical pharmacist appointments.
- If you feel that you need it due to the length or complexity of your medical issue, please request a double appointment to allow the GP sufficient time to try and address your issue.
- As social distancing eases, we will aim to convert some of the pre-bookable telephone appointments into pre-bookable face-to-face appointments. We know that for some patients, and some issues, telephone consulting has proved convenient and efficient, and we will be keeping this consultation option moving forwards.

Please bear with us while we put the above plans into action. Reception will be working hard to make this as smooth a process as possible, but we would ask for your patience and tolerance as we implement the new system.

Thank you for using the Dispensary at Bourn Surgery

You will all be aware how hard our team of dispensers work to provide an efficient and responsive service through our Dispensary. You may not be aware that the proceeds from Dispensary support the range and quality of clinical services we are able to offer; by using the Dispensary you are helping support the work of Bourn Surgery.

We firmly believe that having an integrated Dispensary provides significant benefits to our local communities including:

- Providing a personal service with a dedicated, established team.
- Dealing quickly and efficiently with issuing prescriptions, medication changes, questions and hospital requests.
- Working to ensure that medications are accessible to all eligible patients.
- Direct access for Dispensary to doctors, nurses and our clinical pharmacist for advice and best practice.
- Helping to support the viability and quality of the services of the Surgery.

As you can imagine, the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for our Dispensary team. Demand for medication has increased significantly, yet the team have continued to ensure that people receive their medication in a timely manner, despite strict infection control measures and staff absences due to the pandemic.

We are very grateful to the fantastic members of our community who help us ensure that medication is accessible to all. A group of dedicated volunteers kindly collect and deliver medication for the housebound and those without transport. The village shops in Great Gransden, Hardwick and Toft also play an invaluable role, holding medications for patients to collect at their convenience, including at evenings and weekends. Thank you to everyone that helps support the distribution of medications!

We aim to continue to be innovative and responsive to the needs of our patients. Do speak to our Dispensary team or our Practice Manager if you face particular challenges accessing your medication, or if you would like to volunteer to support the distribution of medicines in our community. In the meantime, thank you for using the Dispensary and helping to support the work of the Surgery.

Reception

- **Mon-Fri:**
8.30am-1pm, 1.30pm-6pm
- **Appointments:** 01954 719469
- **Emergencies:** 01954 719313
- **www.bournsurgery.nhs.uk**

Dispensary

- **Mon-Fri:** 8.30am-1pm,
2pm-6pm

Out of Hours

- **NHS 111**