



# Friends of Amersham Health Centre Patient Participation Group

## Newsletter

January 2023

### From the Chair

We have been busy since our last Newsletter in October, so I have plenty to share with you.

There is information in this Newsletter about the following:

- Amersham Health Centre is one of the 5 surgeries which make up the **Mid Chiltern Primary Care Network (PCN)**. It was established on 1 July 2019 with the aim of improving patient access to GP care.
- Have you downloaded the **NHS App** or the **AskFirst App**? Both can be helpful in managing your health, accessing health advice and appointments. More about this later.
- I am delighted to say that the Social Prescribers put on a very helpful and informative **talk about Scams** at the surgery in December.
- We are still looking to recruit members for the committee, or to have a list of people with useful skills which we can use from time to time.

It has been a difficult and emotional time since the Pandemic for our youngsters, and many others, so we are arranging a talk on **Mental Health** for early Spring. We will inform you of dates a little nearer the time.

I asked our Practice manager, Meeta Jobanputra how surgery life had changed since the first lockdowns in 2021. During the lockdowns the surgery coped very well, as lead practice during the inoculations at the town hall, and then managing to work seamlessly when they had to evacuate the surgery into the carpark.

Since then, the following initiatives have been introduced.

- Promoting more digital access to the surgery through the AskFirst and the NHS apps, which is helping to ease pressure on the phone lines.
- The FAHC and surgery are also setting up training sessions for those not confident or used to using digital platforms.
- The phone lines now have a call back option so that patients do not have to hang on waiting for their turn.
- The surgery is now almost fully back to F2F appointments but still offers both phone and video calls if requested. Inevitably, this depends on levels of staff sickness with Covid or flu.
- The surgery is still having to catch up from the Covid backlog from the hospitals. Where patients should be being treated in hospital, but can't be, the surgery is supporting those patients still waiting for admission.
- Reception staff have all been fully trained as Care-Coordination so that they can direct patients accurately to the correct clinician.

A very happy and healthy 2023 to you all. Let's hope that it is more peaceful and rather less eventful than 2022.

Daphne Lally

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## Accessing GP services online

The Practice is encouraging patients to use the [NHS App](#) and the [askFIRST](#) app to help access GP services as easily as possible. Initially, taking the app route can appear to be more complicated than just calling the surgery but, with increasing familiarity, their convenience becomes apparent.



With the [NHS App](#) you can:

- **access your NHS COVID Pass** – view and download your COVID Pass for travel abroad
- **access advice about coronavirus** – get information about coronavirus and find out what to do if you think you have it
- **order repeat prescriptions** – see your available medicines, request a new repeat prescription and choose a pharmacy for your prescriptions to be sent to
- **book appointments** – search for, book and cancel appointments at your GP surgery, and see details of your upcoming and past appointments
- **get health advice** – search trusted NHS information and advice on hundreds of conditions and treatments. You can also answer questions to get instant advice or medical help near you
- **view your health record** – securely access your GP health record
- **find out what to do** when you need help urgently using NHS 111 online
- **manage a patient's first hospital or clinic appointment** with a specialist, following referral by a GP, through the NHS e-Referral Service (e-RS)
- **register your organ donation decision** – choose to donate some or all your organs and check your registered decision
- **find out how the NHS uses your data** – choose if data from your health records is shared for research and planning
- **view your NHS number** – find out your [NHS number](#)

All GP practices in England are connected to the NHS App. This means that anyone aged 13 or over and registered with a GP practice in England can use it.

A range of digital tools is available alongside the NHS App, giving people an important choice in how they [access GP services online](#). (Click to see online health and prescription services)

The [NHS App](#) is free and is available for mobiles and tablets from your app store.



AskFIRST is an online consultation platform developed in partnership with the NHS, helping patients to self-help and connect with the right service at the right time, 24/7. It has the potential for interaction with a virtual assistant. Further information can be found at: <https://sensely.com/askfirst/>

The main features are:

- Triage: instant symptom checking and arranging an appointment, as appropriate.
- Self-care: health information
- Service finder: pharmacies, GP practices etc
- Wellness: advice about healthy eating

The [askFIRST](#) app is free and is available for mobiles and tablets from your app store.

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### Scam awareness and community safety advice event held on 6 December

Presentations were given by a representative from Buckinghamshire and Surrey Police forces and a community social support worker.

The presentations began with the four types of scams commonly encountered - doorstep, post, phone, and the internet. We learned how scammers behave and why they are so successful. What you can and should do when you recognise a scam. It was highlighted that fundraising is heavily targeted by scammers. Leaflets on how to deal with cold callers were handed out, along with information about a device to stop nuisance calls. Burglary was also covered - how to keep homes, outhouses, garden equipment and cars safe. Safe use of cards at ATM's and safe havens within businesses in town centres were mentioned.

Participants were reminded to look out for family, friends and neighbours who might be vulnerable and to help signpost them to the right organisations for support.

Useful Contact Details:

Citizens Advice: 0808 223 1133

Trading Standards (newsletter highlighting current scams): <https://scc.newsweaver.co.uk/tradingstandards>

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### Mid-Chilterns Primary Care Network

Mid Chiltern PCN was set up on 1st July 2019, its population is approximately 43,600 patients made up of 5 Practices (Amersham Health Centre, Hughenden Valley and Chequers Surgeries, John Hampden Surgery, Rectory Meadow Surgery and The Prospect House Surgery).

With a reciprocal locality agreement, as part of the Government's commitment to 8am to 8pm GP availability (Enhanced Access), appointments are also available to you at other local surgeries in our PCN. **These appointments should be made by contacting reception at the Amersham Health Centre.** There is more information about this process on the Amersham Health Centre website.

The PCN website provides information about their aims, self-referrals to a Social Prescriber, the Talking Café, Health and Well-Being <https://www.midchilternpcn.nhs.uk/>

### Mid-Chilterns Social Prescribers Talking Café

Mid Chiltern Social Prescribers will be at the Chiltern Lifestyle Centre in Amersham every Thursday morning from 10am – 12pm. Julie Dennis, the Health & Wellbeing Manager/Social Prescribing Team of the Mid Chilterns Primary Care Network, hopes that patients will go along and have a chat with members of the team and find out a little more about social prescribing. She also hopes this will become an opportunity for patients to meet each other to have a chat and a coffee. She has provided these links containing further general information about the Chiltern Lifestyle Centre and for self-referral to social prescribing:

<https://www.everyoneactive.com/centre/chilterns-lifestyle-centre>

<https://www.midchilternpcn.nhs.uk/self-referral/>

## Would you like to help us to liaise with the Practice?

The committee of Amersham Health Centre's Patient Participation Group (PPG), known as Friends of Amersham Health Centre, would like to welcome new committee members.

Are you someone who has the enthusiasm, interest and skills to draw attention constructively to areas in which service provision by the Practice might be improved?

Would you be interested in addressing perceived gaps in the service throughout the patient age-range, from the very youngest to the oldest?

We would like to hear your ideas!

Information about the PPG can be found on the Amersham Health Centre website, under Friends of Amersham Health Centre. All GP Practices must have a PPG as part of the GP Contract. Membership of the PPG committee provides you with a unique opportunity to contribute to the quality of the service provided by the Practice.

Please contact [Chair1ppg@outlook.com](mailto:Chair1ppg@outlook.com) for an informal chat and to learn more about what we do

