

# **HAWTHORNS SURGERY**

## **PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP NEWSLETTER**

**MAY 2022**

Welcome to this special edition of the newsletter from the Patient Participation Group (PPG).

Due to the pandemic the group have not been able to meet but as the surgery is now open we hope to meet soon. There will be a re-launch of the PPG, its membership and recommencement of the newsletters.

***If you wish to become a member of the PPG please ask at reception who will take your details so that I am able to inform you of our meeting dates.***

***The meetings are held 4 times a year on a Friday at 1.00pm and are attended by a doctor and the practice manager.***

In order to start the ball rolling, myself, as Chair of the group, and another group member were able to meet with Dr. Clarke, Dr. Wright and Bilal Shah, the Practice Manager.

**BUT FIRSTLY BEFORE GOING INTO THE DETAILS OF THIS MEETING THERE IS SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS.**

**On 15th of June 2022** the surgery will be moving to a new clinical system and as part of this transfer, the surgery will be working offline from the **09/06/2022 till 14/06/2022** (inclusive) to allow NHS England to transfer all relevant data from the old clinical system to the new one.

During this time the surgery will be open and operating as normal but please be aware that there might be slight delays in processing your queries as the staff will be working through a manual system during these days.

There may also be potential delays immediately after the change to some aspects of the daily business such as processing prescription requests or consultations might run over while staff adjust to the new system.

However, every effort will be made to minimise disruption and aim for a smooth transition so please be a “patient patient” during this critical time.

Now back to the results of the discussion with the doctors and practice manager .

### **1. Patients concerns and questions**

Several issues and concerns have been raised with me which include:

- \* when will services be back to how they used to be.
- \* difficulties in contacting the surgery.
- \* the situation now the pandemic is receding.
- \* telephone service.
- \* recommencement of face-to-face consultations

These and other issues were discussed with the surgery and I highlight these as follows:

## **2. Back to the normal service, as it used to be.**

The service will never be completely back to how we once knew it and some contacts will be different in the future.

Over the last the two years contact with the surgery had to change to on-line virtual and telephone consultations and many patients and carers have said that they would like it to continue in this way.

The reasons given include:

- \* it fits in with their work changes as many are now working from home and these type of consultations mean they do not have to have time from work
- \* they prefer not going to the surgery and are happy with a telephone or virtual consultation.
- \* their need to speak to a doctor or nurse does not need a face-to-face meeting.

However, all appointments will now be triaged with a doctor when a decision will be made if a face-to-face consultation is necessary. When calling the surgery for an appointment or if booking on-line the first appointment will be a telephone call. When you call the surgery you will be given an approximate time to expect the doctor to call you. If at this call it is decided that you need to be seen a suitable appointment will then be made face-to-face or virtual.

During the period of the pandemic it was shown that often many health issues can be identified, treatment advised and if needed, prescriptions ordered at this first phone call.

## **3. Telephone system.**

There have been some major problems with the surgery telephone service but the contract has a few years to run and it is very costly to cancel it. However, there have been many discussions with the telephone contractor and some alterations have been agreed including a better system during busy times. The previous system could only cope with a queue of 7 callers but there is now a longer queue of up to 25 callers before the engaged tone occurs.

This may seem a large number but there are also extra staff now answering the telephones to reduce the wait. The surgery has also now introduced designated times for patients who are wanting access to the secretarial team or the prescriptions team. This hopefully will allow the surgery to keep more lines available in peak times for patients who have urgent needs and want access to a GP.

## **4. Changes to Infection Prevention and Control Guidance - a move back to near normal pre-pandemic behaviour.**

The surgery has opened its waiting room for all patients to use with immediate effect. This means, if a patient is arriving for a face-to-face appointment (regardless of which clinician), they will be asked to come through main reception and wait in the waiting room, as it was pre-pandemic. All signage instructing otherwise has now been removed.

Patients do not need to wait in their cars anymore unless they prefer that option, which they will have to mention when booking their appointment.

Patients do not need to maintain a distance while in the waiting room, so all tapes/signs have been removed.

**However, wearing a face covering is still mandatory while on surgery premises.**

## **5. Emergency appointments.**

If there is a real emergency, which may not need a hospital visit, these extra appointments are now available, as they were before the pandemic. This does not include patients with chronic conditions, only an acute issue.

Now that the surgery has introduced designated times for patients to access the secretarial team or the prescriptions team this hopefully will allow the surgery to keep more lines available at peak times for patients who have urgent needs and want access to a GP

## **6. Booking future appointments.**

Appointments can now again be booked two weeks in advance by calling the surgery i.e. these are routine telephone appointments and accordingly a clinical decision will be made if there is a need for a face-to-face appointment.

I hope you have found this useful and please consider becoming a PPG member.

Sheila Try  
PPG Chair