



Patient Group

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## PATIENT GROUP BULLETIN ISSUE 10, JUNE 2024

**Welcome to the new look Bulletin produced by the Balham Park Surgery Patient Group (PG). Acting upon feedback, the relaunched bulletin will be shorter, issued more frequently and will be sent to you directly by email. The content will be a mix of Surgery news, local health information and tips for healthier living.**

**Surgery News.** We have a full complement of doctors in place thanks to active recruitment and the good reputation of this Practice resulting in trainees choosing to stay. The practice has absorbed new patients efficiently without loss to current services.

The Surgery website has been updated and is much, much easier to use - clearer, more intuitive - check it out [here](#). The PG has been asking for this for some time and is delighted with the results but it still needs work, not least on the PG section. We hope to get onto this when we have received training.

**Accurx – Feedback.** The new ACCURX online booking system has been in operation now for five months and is bedding down well technically. Reception has been mixed: Doctors and Admin staff like it because it ensures patients are seen quickly and by the right person. Waiting times for GP appointments are down to two weeks. The Patient Group has come round to seeing the benefits -and is genuinely enthusiastic but wants to see more support for those who struggle or don't have the right equipment. We find it's really easy to use and responses are surprisingly quick- follow up telephone calls, appointments, answers to requests are guaranteed within 24 hours, often in practice sooner. We asked our blind and hard-of-hearing PG champions to test the service and they have reported favourably. Finally, we canvassed patients at the covid booster clinic (a group of elderly and vulnerable patients) for their reactions and this is what we heard:

"I like it – it relieves the practice and reception."

"Once set up it really is a pleasure to operate. Everything is quicker and you can do it in your own time. I was a bit hesitant about setting it up but once you get over that hurdle you realise you are in control."

"I do manage it, if drummed into you, you do remember for another time. Ask a family member to explain and help you get started - it makes you independent. I don't like to have to rely on other people. I like to do things for myself..... You can do it." Longstanding Patient, 80 years old.

"I hate it. It's \*\*\* I worked in IT - there are too many ways in e.g. prescriptions." Patient 75+ NB Now simplified.

"It's really good. I use it all the time. I used to hate waiting for 25 minutes on the phone to make a booking. It's exactly what a booking system should be". Patient in 20s with small baby.

**Good features of Accurx.** Your medical requests go straight to a doctor to triage (prioritise) the enquiry without you having to explain to a receptionist/ care navigator; doctors will call patients for clarification if needed. Admin questions are handled without fuss.

No need to battle with the 8 o'clock rush – online services are open during core hours 8 am to 6.30 pm except bank holidays (not all practices keep the lines open all day, we are lucky).

Triaging helps with the all-important issue of continuity of care, something we all prize.

Patients without good English can use google translate to send messages.

Appointments are now 15 minutes long.



## Our tips for using the online booking

Try it out - you'll find it surprisingly easy to use.

Perhaps ask a family member to guide you the first time if you have difficulty getting started.

Check out this video made by the patient group showing how to get online [here](#) (The website has been updated but the method of getting online is the same.)

It's becoming clear this the NHS app is the best of the medical apps and complements Accurx. The NHS app is by far the best way to order repeat prescriptions. For more information click [here](#).

For one-to-one support, call Wandsworth's Digital Care Coordinator, Andraya Catlin on 0203 923 9593

Contact the patient group if you are struggling - we are happy to help: [bpspatientgroup@gmail.com](mailto:bpspatientgroup@gmail.com)

**Conclusion** Online booking is not for everyone. The practice will support patients who do not have a computer or Smartphone and patients on the PACT scheme. Care Navigators cannot make bookings on behalf of patients but they can help. The more patients who take the time to familiarise themselves with online services the more support can be given to those without the know-how or equipment to get online. Look out for training/help sessions in the Surgery.

**Prescriptions** Patients continue to report difficulties with repeat requests for medication. Our advice is to use the NHS App or My GP **not** Accurx for requests because a record of your medications is retained on Apps making it easier to ask for repeats this way (Accurx does not retain any personal information so you have to list the medications required yourself.) We find it is very efficient.

**Cancelling Appointments** Missed appointments are wasteful and patients are asked to do their best to notify BPS if they cannot keep an appointment, either using the NHS App, Accurx, phoning reception or by replying CANCEL to the appointment reminder text message.

**AGM.** The Patient Group held its 25th AGM in May and agreed the following objectives for 2024/25:

1. Work with BPS to analyse patient feedback and ensure that recurrent issues are addressed
2. Produce a shorter Bulletin at least every two months reflecting practice priorities
3. Keep Patient Group part of website updated and relevant
4. Draft a programme of Education talks (2 x ed talk plus one open forum) for the year. Plan for ways to distribute more widely, eg videos, presentation notes
5. Support BPS staff projects and training by providing speakers and information
6. Maintain links with Thurleigh Road and other local and national patient groups

## Carers Meeting

The wonderful Kim Fenech arranges regular coffee mornings for carers. A member of the Patient Group attended the last one and noted two important topics: dealing with confidentiality issues when young people reach their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and accessing mental health care on behalf of vulnerable young adults. Please contact the PG if you experience difficulties of this kind and need further support or request an appointment with the Michelle (Social Prescriber).

## Education Talk - 18 July 2024

The next in our series of talks will be on diabetes, focusing in particular on prediabetic conditions and ways to avoid deterioration in your health. The talk will be given by Dr Sureshkumar at the surgery on 18<sup>th</sup> July at 6 o'clock. Everyone is welcome. You can attend in person or via Zoom click [here](#)

## Patient Group Meetings

The Patient Group has decided to continue via Zoom, not at the Surgery, to make it easier for patients and staff to drop in. Meetings are always on the second Thursday of the month at 6 pm. The next meeting will be on 13 June. To join click [here](#) - no need to register. You will be very welcome. Do consider joining the group – it's good fun and we need more varied opinions.

**NHS milestone.** This year marks the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the NHS  
*'It's so important that people know there was a time before the NHS. It makes them appreciate it more.'* Miriam Margolis.



