

# The Alney Practice Newsletter



November 2020

Welcome to our 3<sup>rd</sup> newsletter for 2020, as we are just about to embark on lockdown No.2. We still continue working at both sites to minimise the risk of infection. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with an update of how we are working, staff changes and the Highnam extension.

## **Ways of Working**

We still have to adapt how we work in the practice in order to reduce the footfall coming to the surgeries to minimise the risk of spreading Covid-19 amongst our staff and our patients. Currently, our doctors and nurses are triaging all patients by telephone and patients are only asked to come to the surgery if there is a clinical need for a further face-to-face consultation (these are therefore still available for our patients). The GPs also have an alternative option to provide an encrypted video consultation (via an application called cinapsis). If this is appropriate they will discuss the mechanics with the patient.

## **Appointments**

Improved Access (IA) appointments continue, which means that early and late appointments and Saturday mornings will be available. We will be delivering these IA appointments alongside our primary care network colleagues (Longlevens, Churchdown, Hucclecote and Brockworth surgeries).

**In accordance with Government guidelines, if you are asked to come to the surgery we ask that where possible you wear a face mask (or other suitable covering such as a scarf) as we are unable to provide them.**

## **Flu**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020, The Practice held a flu day across 2 sites, one at the Highnam Surgery and the other at Milestones School. As a practice we tried our best to carry out and adhere to social distancing rules and guidance when in the buildings, and feedback received from many patients, congratulated the practice on achieving this.

We will continue to hold catch-up clinics for anyone that has not yet had a flu vaccination and is entitled to it, please contact the surgery to make an appointment.

## **Staff Changes**

Rachael Banfield has moved on from her role as HCA at the practice and has joined the Primary Care Network as a Social Prescribing Link Worker, fortunately, she will still be based at The Alney Practice for this role.

Dr Aisha Sohail (Salaried GP) sadly left us in August 2020. We wish her all the best,

Dr Sian Richards and Dr Jack Watson will be joining the practice as salaried GP's in replacement.

We welcomed two new Medical Receptionists the latter end of September- Tracey and Angela.

## **The late Gill Griffiths-Practice Nurse**

It is with great sadness, that we mention the dreadful loss of our friend and colleague Gill Griffiths, of whom many patients would have become familiar with over the years. Gill was our Practice Nurse who predominantly worked at Highnam, and before that The College yard branch. Gill was best known for her sense of humour and having us in fits of laughter whenever she was around. Gill impacted on the lives of many, and will be continue to be remembered by all who knew her.

## **Social Prescribing Link Worker**

Rachael Banfield has joined our Primary Care Network as a Social Prescribing Link Worker. She wanted patients to know more about what her role entails and had the following to say:

Social prescribing is about changing the question from 'What is the matter with you?' to 'What matters to you?' Finding this out, thorough listening and talking helps the Social Prescribing Link Worker to develop a personal plan which will empower the patient to help improve their health and wellbeing by being linked and introduced to activities and support groups within their local communities.

In a nutshell a Social Prescriber helps where medication can't. For example, loneliness, isolation, grief, anxiety, financial problems, relationship problems, domestic abuse. These are only a few examples.

A Social Prescriber will help a patient get more control over their own health and more personalised care when they need it. Evidence shows that people will have better experiences and improved health and wellbeing if they can actively shape their care and support.

"As a link worker, it is a privilege to give people time to be heard, space to consider positive changes in their lives and empowering them to move forward."

## **Highnam Extension**

The building work at Highnam continues but is nearing completion, we now have 3 functioning consulting rooms on the extended side, and the new dispensary and reception area is ready to move into soon. The work being carried out is still causing some temporary disruption and we ask for your understanding and support to our staff while this essential work is underway. We anticipate works should be complete sometime in the next 4-6 weeks.

## **Patient Participation Group**

The Alney Practice has over 12000 patients. We are fortunate to have a highly skilled, dedicated and hard-working staff group, but nevertheless it can be hard to engage with that number of people. So, we now have a group of patients – the Patient Participation Group (PPG) - to speak for patients generally and to make sure that our views and ideas are considered. The purpose is simply to help patients get the best possible experience.

There are always developments in health care, and these have been hastened by the Covid 19 experience this year. It feels as though the pace of change is increasing. Many of the changes are to be welcomed, but some may prove more contentious, and so good communication to and from the surgery and patients is vital. Patients have a right to know what is going on, and to have a chance to contribute, but also need to have a way of making suggestions for improvements.

The PPG is now set up, has a clear and agreed sense of direction, and is already looking at several issues. We want a constructive relationship with the surgery, and to be able to work together – with them, not for or against. However, we are in the early stages of getting started, and now need a few more people to become members of the PPG so we can really start putting ideas forward and offering a patient perspective on developments.

### **Our patients need you!**



Interested? Want to ensure that patients are at the heart of decision making? Want to find out more? Then please think about joining us. We are looking for those from all walks who have the commitment, the time (monthly meetings plus projects as and when), maybe some skills we can put to good use, as well as the ability to work as part of a team of similarly minded people. Primarily though, you will want to work to improve things for the patients. At present we meet by “Zoom” but will go back to ordinary meetings when we safely can.

To find out more, and to have an informal chat, please contact the PPG Chair Pamela Dewick

Email [alney.ppgchair@nhs.net](mailto:alney.ppgchair@nhs.net)

### **And finally once again...**

Everyone at The Alney Practice would like to express their thanks to the patients and their families for the support they have given. We still have a constant flow of cakes, biscuit, chocolates and flowers, numerous cards and supportive comments.

Thank you