



Welcome to the third Newsletter produced by Highview Patient Participation Group (PPG) in partnership with Highview Medical Centre.



Hello everyone. I am delighted to welcome you all to the third edition of our newsletter. This newsletter has been produced by members of the Highview PPG with support from Highview Surgery staff. We have focussed on the following topics for this edition:

Role of paramedics at the surgery

Accessing Patient Records

Potters Bar Health & Wellbeing Event

Please take time to read the information and pass it onto your friends and neighbours living in Potters Bar. The Health and Wellbeing event is packed with a busy schedule of Market Place, Information Stands, Health Talks and a number of activities and taster sessions.

Please join us for the event.

I would welcome your feedback and suggestions on the content of the newsletter so that the future editions can provide the information that is useful for you.

I do hope you all enjoy the summer.

We look forward to your participation in the Health & Wellbeing event In September.

Surgery Update

Sadly, Dr Jessica Hayes will be leaving us mid-July to work at a practice closer to her home following a recent move. We welcome Dr Rediet Wiebel (f) who will work for us on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and Dr Veidika Chohan who will work Monday morning, and Tuesday and Friday all day.

Local NHS Services leaflet

This has been sent to all households regarding local NHS services from your GP, Pharmacist and 111 and how they can help.

Future plans

Highview offers face to face or telephone triage with the Clinicians which is working well meeting differing preferences from patients. The PPG will always continue to work together with Highview regarding patient access. Whilst patient numbers in Potters Bar do not fluctuate much, Highview has ensured that the GP & nurse appointment offering is maintained at a consistent level and has introduced other roles to compliment the team further. In the past few years two paramedics, two pharmacists and a mental health worker have joined the team and the surgery is looking to expand to include an on-site physiotherapist early next year. The practice also actively supports the aim of bringing more GPs into the world of general practice and is a registered GP training practice, typically having an additional 3 GP trainees across a year.

Technology: The telephone system will be upgraded in the next two months and the website will also undergo renovation within the next 4 months, more detail to follow in the next Newsletter. Both should contribute to making access easier which will be welcomed.

Zero tolerance for abuse aimed at the Highview team

The admin team at Highview are an established and experienced team who try their best to assist patients and direct them to the appropriate clinician. The majority of patients respect and treat the team accordingly, but regrettably some patients are aggressive towards the administrators and clinicians. Verbal or physical attacks on the team will not be tolerated in ANY circumstances and steps will be taken to remove you from our patient list.

Why are surgery waiting rooms not as busy as they used to be?

Following a patient comment as to "Why are there hardly any patients in the waiting rooms? What are the doctors all doing?", the surgery has provided some information to answer this question from a patient's perception. Highview has always maintained GP staffing throughout the pandemic. At the start of the pandemic, a total telephone triage system was in operation with doctors bringing in patients when needed. As soon as it was possible Highview was the first practice in Potters Bar to open its doors and offer face-to-face appointments. Initially as more than 50% of patients liked and were asking for telephone triage appointments, face-to-face appointments were converted to accommodate this, but it has now settled to a 50-50 split.

As a result of the pandemic, Highview has seen the behaviour of patients change. Some patients do not want to sit in a waiting room with people coughing etc. when their problem can be dealt with on the telephone whilst they are at home or work. As a result of this, only half of patients are physically going to the surgery for their needs with the other half preferring other channels such as e-consult and telephone triage. There are certain conditions that definitely need a face-to-face consultation and some patients also still have a personal preference to travel to the surgery.

Age demographics also potentially play a part regarding attendance to the building. Our largest patient group are people of working age. Previously these patients would have taken time off work to come to the surgery for an appointment whereas now they have other ways of access such as telephone triage/e-consult/NHS app/Patient Access. Patients can use these apps/websites to obtain repeat prescription requests/sick notes etc. Highview's patient demographics are: 23% are under 20, 57% are between 20 and 65 and 20% are 65 and over.

The pandemic also moved many of us to use technology that perhaps we would not have tried before, and this has enabled us all to review how we access the surgery and its services.

Hopefully this has explained why the waiting rooms are not as busy. However, behind closed doors the clinicians are dealing with patients by phone when not seeing patients face-to-face.

Accessing your patient records

Your GP Record

If you are registered with Patient Access or have the NHS app, you can view your GP record online. This gives information on your medications, allergies, vaccines and test results.

Accessing Full Medical Records

Patients wishing to view their full records (e.g., clinical notes, hospital and consultant letters), must initially apply in writing to their GP. You have a legal right to see your own records. You do not have to explain why you want to see them. The surgery will contact you to make a mutually convenient appointment for you to read your records: this may incur a charge. When presenting at the surgery for this purpose you will be asked to produce some identification to enable us to maintain your right to confidentiality. Photocopies of records can be made at your request; a charge will be made for this service.

You can ask to see the records of a child under 16 if you have 'parental responsibility'.

Summary Care Record (SCR)

Care Records contain key information about the medicines you are taking, allergies you suffer from and bad reactions to medicines you have had in the past. If you have an accident or fall ill, the people caring for you in places like A&E departments and GP out-of-hours services will be better equipped to treat you if they have this information.

Your Summary Care Record will be available to authorised healthcare staff whenever or wherever you need treatment in England and they will ask your permission to look at it.

If you do not want your data shared and would like to opt out there is form you can complete. This can be found on the Highview website under Practice Info > Information Sharing.

Confidentiality

Your medical records are confidential. Nobody else is allowed to see them unless they are a relevant healthcare professional, have your written permission or have a medical power of attorney to deal with your affairs.

The role of paramedics at the surgery

Highview now has two paramedics providing a range of services to patients. They are Dan Bottrill and Alice Morson.

Here Dan explains more about the work they do:

As a first contact paramedic I have moved from the traditional role of responding to emergency calls on an ambulance to working alongside doctors, nurses, healthcare assistants and other primary care workers within a general practice surgery. My main role is diagnostic work within the surgery itself or visiting care homes and patients in their own homes.

Since starting several months ago, I have run clinics mainly dealing with patients on telephone consultations and face-to-face appointments for a large range of conditions including cardiac, respiratory, infections, minor injuries and long-term musculoskeletal problems. I have also run a few flu clinics ensuring residents get their flu jabs, have taken bloods and performed many assessments. Part of my role is to continually progress and work to becoming an Advanced practitioner by completing many courses to expand my knowledge and assessment/diagnostic skills.

Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS)

The NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) is a new service which has been launched to ease pressure on GP appointments, 111 and emergency departments as well as providing patients with treatment closer to their homes. The service is set up so that the GP surgery can refer you to a local pharmacy who offer this service and you will receive a call back from them within 24 hours to discuss your concerns/be offered an appointment to see someone. Referrals are made via the reception team who will ask you to briefly give them some information about your reason for an appointment, and should you fit the criteria for referral they will book you in for a call back from a participating pharmacy. In this area these are The Elms, Questmoor, Tesco and Boots Pharmacy.

Your local pharmacy is able to help with the following conditions:

- Allergic reactions
- Bites or stings (insect or spider)
- Diarrhoea
- Headache
- Nasal congestion
- Sore throat
- Vomiting
- Lower back pain
- Vaginal discharge/itch/soreness
- Hearing problems or blocked ear
- Constipation

As well as many more minor illness conditions.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY HEALTH & WELLBEING EVENT.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 10.00-15.00. WYLLYOTTS CENTRE

After a two year gap due to the pandemic, we are very pleased to announce the return of the annual Health & Wellbeing Event. This is organised by the Patient Participation Groups of Highview, Annandale and Parkfield, supported by the three surgeries, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertsmere Borough Council and the Wylyotts Centre.

The format will be:

Over 25 stands representing organisations offering a wide range of information and advice on community and health related issues.

Health Talks by GPs from the three local surgeries

Taster Sessions, e.g., Falls Prevention Exercises, Musical Memories Singing Session, Fitness Exercise for the Over 50s, Exercises for Memory Loss.

Further details will be available over the next few months through leaflets, posters, surgery websites, etc.

Get In Touch

We would love to hear your thoughts and suggestions for future newsletters. We would like to include topics that you, as patients of Highview, want to hear about.

Please email your feedback and suggestions to highview.ppg@nhs.net

This email address is monitored regularly but not every day. Your suggestions will be anonymised to maintain your confidentiality.

*By emailing this address you are aware that you are contacting the PPG who are patients at the surgery that volunteer to support the surgery. Please do not use this email for medical or personal questions as we are not qualified or authorised to deal with such enquiries. Any such questions must go through the usual channels and will not be acknowledged or passed on to the Practice.