



# West Malling Group Practice

## Newsletter – July 2022

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### IMPORTANT NEWS

Staffing - we remain understaffed. But we are recruiting for another GP and 6 receptionists. See below.

The e-consult service is suspended for the moment, but there are planned improvements. See below.

Additional services are available through "Care Navigation". See below.

Options other than a GP appointment may be appropriate. See STOP THINK CHOOSE below.

Annual review appointments for long term conditions are now available. See below.

The deadline for choosing how your confidential information is used is 31st July. See Below.

Face masks are no longer required unless respiratory or covid symptoms are present. See below.

### JUNE 2022

#### We've taken:

- **10,058**  
Incoming Telephone Calls

#### We've Done:

- **3236**  
GP Contacts
- **474**  
Nurse Practitioner Contacts
- **537**  
Nurse Contacts
- **913**  
Health Care Assistant  
Contacts
- **152**  
Patients did not attend  
booked appointments.

## **PRACTICE TEAM / RECRUITMENT**

We are delighted to have appointed 3 clinicians to our team.

**Sacha Clarke** – Nurse Practitioner, is returning to the surgery in September. She is working some locum sessions at the surgery before her return.

**Wadzanyi Chidume** – Nurse Practitioner, is joining the Practice in August.

**Felicia Goualin** –Physicians Associate also joins in August.

**Nurse Practitioners** are specialist nurses who undertake additional training to enable them to provide advanced nursing care; they can diagnose, prescribe, and refer patients.

**Physician Associates (PAs)** are healthcare professionals with a general medical education who work alongside the doctors. They provide medical care as an integral part of the clinical team. PAs work under the supervision of the doctors but can work autonomously with appropriate support and were introduced in 2003.

We are very much looking forward to working with these new clinicians and offering their services to our patients.

**Dr Usha Ramjeeawon** - returns from maternity leave in July.

## **PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS**

**eConsult** (Online consultations) were suspended in May, but we are looking at ways to increase on the day appointments using our Clinical Assessment Team. Discussions are underway with our neighbouring practices in the Malling Primary Care Network (PCN) and further details will follow.

It is widely known that the NHS is under a lot of pressure and demand for appointments is ever increasing. Other services are available.

## **CARE NAVIGATION**

This gives people the option to access the most appropriate care and information which best meets their health and social care needs. Our receptionists will ask patients for the necessary information to enable us to signpost them to the most suitable service. These additional services include:

**First Contact Practitioners** - Specialists in musculoskeletal problems, (joint pain) can assess, offer joint injections, and refer.

**Child and Young Person's Mental Health nurse** – for children and young people who are experiencing issues including: low mood, self-harm, anxiety, school refusal, behavioural difficulties, sleep difficulties.

**Social Prescriber** - Social prescribing involves helping patients to improve their health, well-being, and social welfare by connecting them to community services which might be run by the council or a local charity. For example, signposting people who have been diagnosed with dementia to local dementia support groups.

**Children's Health and Well-being Co-ordinators** – their role is to help improve the care and support offered to children, young people, and their families, particularly those with mental health problems and neurodevelopmental disorders. Please contact reception who can organise a referral.

## **LONG TERM CONDITIONS**

Letters have been sent to patients with long-term conditions asking them to book their annual review. If you get a letter, please contact the surgery - our receptions are ready to book your appointment.

## **STOP THINK CHOOSE - get the right treatment when you need it**



All over Kent, the local NHS is very busy now. “Stop Think Choose” is a national campaign aimed at helping the NHS to weather this storm.

You can help ease the pressure by choosing the right service for you when you need medical help or advice.

Knowing the right place to go can help you get the treatment you need faster. Please choose wisely and help us help you.

Acute hospitals and the ambulance service are particularly busy treating patients who are very ill now so please consider an alternative to A&E if your condition is not serious or life threatening.

For example, Urgent Treatment Centres (UTCs) and Minor Injury Units (MIUs) are equipped to diagnose and deal with many of the most common ailments people attend emergency departments for, including sprains, minor burns and minor illness, and are open 8am to 8pm. There are UTCs in hospitals in Maidstone, Pembury and Sevenoaks. You can use the UTC for many of the minor ailments that you might have, in the past, gone to the GP.

Appointments can be booked at an urgent treatment centre by going online at [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk) or by calling 111. Patients are also able to “walk in” without an appointment but may have to wait longer to be seen depending on their condition. They can also be used when you can't wait for an appointment with your GP.

For more information use this link: <https://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/your-health/local-services>

### **Community Pharmacy service**

This service enables receptionists to signpost patients with minor ailments to a local pharmacy. The pharmacy will contact the patient, carry out a consultation, and offer treatment. If the Pharmacist is unable to resolve the issue, they refer directly back to the Practice, and we follow up. We referred over 50 patients last month saving precious appointments.

The link below will take you to more information and the locations and addresses of services.

## **YOUR DATA MATTERS**

Information about your health and care helps the NHS to improve individual care, speeds up diagnoses, plan your local services and research new treatments. You can choose whether your confidential information is used for research and planning. For more information, visit our website or <https://www.nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters/>

## **ECONSULT**

With demand increasing, it had become increasingly difficult to manage the numbers of eConsult contacts coming in each day. We therefore made the decision to suspend this service and review it in the New Year. Furthermore, we were finding that patients were submitting an eConsult and then also contacting the Practice by phone, which resulted in us doubling up on time dealing with them.

## **COVID UPDATE – FACE MASKS**



The wearing of face masks / coverings was essential to protect each other; this includes vulnerable patients in the waiting room, other visitors and staff. Most patients respected this requirement, and we thank you for doing your bit.

From June, face masks are no longer required unless respiratory or covid symptoms are present. In all other circumstances, the wearing of face masks is a personal choice and will be respected.

The Practice will implement any changes to this guidance as covid cases are rising once again.

## **MESSAGE TO PATIENTS**

We fully appreciate the frustrations our patients experience when trying to contact us by phone. Staff shortages have certainly put a strain on the system.

Some clinicians have worked additional sessions and we have utilised locums to increase appointment provision.

Some of you may have heard clinicians have worked from home. We feel it is important to clarify that all staff are expected to come into the surgery to work, however on occasion home working is permitted if the staff member is isolating and feeling fit to work. This flexibility enables us to maintain appointments for patients.

We take this opportunity of thanking all our patients for supporting us through what has been and continues to be a particularly challenging time. Our staff are dedicated and endeavour to provide the best possible service to our patients. We are very much looking forward to working with our new recruits and continuing to serve the local community. Thank you for your support.

**Debbie Dean, Practice Manager**

## **ITS ALL ABOUT YOU**

This newsletter is produced by your Patients Participation Group, the PPG. Do join us! To get involved or to send us a message, email us on [wmgpppg@gmail.com](mailto:wmgpppg@gmail.com)

The link to the West Malling Group Practice Website is <https://www.westmallinggpr.nhs.uk>

