



March 2020

UnityHealth

PATIENT NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Spring issue of the Unity Health Patient Newsletter which has been compiled by the management team, together with the Patient Participation Group (PPG). We hope that you find it full of useful information and that it helps you to access what you need from the practice.

For those who don't know, the purpose of the PPG is to improve communication between the practice and the patients. This includes making positive suggestions for improvements and being an advocate for patient preferences when appropriate. The PPG have an email address should you want to get in contact with them: ppg.unityhealth@gmail.com

In this issue we're leading off with an exciting new project that we hope will help us all to be well, stay well and get the most out of life. No, it's not magic, it's a programme packed with common sense and medically sound information. Don't miss it! Take a look at the piece on repeat prescriptions too - it is very helpful and could save you a lot of time.

Jackie Highe, Chair of the Unity Health PPG



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Note: You can find a hard copy of this Newsletter in all of our surgeries or online at <https://www.unity-health.co.uk/about-us/patient-participation-group/>

Managing Your Health and Wellbeing: new programme and tips

Unity Health's vision is *"To improve the health and wellbeing of our patient communities and practice teams through a culture of collaboration, inclusivity and compassion."*

Increasingly, we are trying to shift the practice's focus towards prevention, and in so doing, helping our patients live a healthier life.

We are all at risk of developing some health conditions and often the way we live will increase the likelihood of developing them. The good news is that they can often be prevented – even if there is a family history. At Unity Health we support and encourage our patients to make decisions to improve their health and to help prevent many of the conditions that we all become more at risk of developing as we get older.

To help you do this, working in partnership with Buckinghamshire CCG, we are in the process of launching the 'Live Life Well' programme. This is delivered in three interactive sessions (two hours each). Each session gives you the opportunity to discuss and explore the advantages of having a healthy lifestyle. They cover healthy eating, recognising stress and anxiety and physical activity.

This is not about "telling people" what to do but is intended to support individual understanding and give tips and tools to help you make choices about your health and wellbeing that reflect what is important to you.

Places are limited, and to join the sessions you will need to be referred by your GP or Practice Nurse. Please call the surgery if you think this programme could benefit you. This could be the start of your journey to a healthier you and a healthier future!

For those patients who are not referred, there are some resources below that might be of interest to you in trying to improve your health and wellbeing:

Evidence suggests there are 5 steps you can take to improve your mental health and wellbeing. Trying these things could help you feel more positive and get the most out of life.

Just google "5 ways to wellbeing" and you will find lots of useful resources. One of our favourites is offered by MindKit, as it gives you practical steps to take depending on how much time you have (1 minute; 1 hour; or longer): <https://www.mindkit.org.uk/5-ways-to-wellbeing/>

Another useful resource is from Living Life to the Full - <https://lltf.com/> - who offer free online courses covering low mood, stress and resiliency.

Finally, Every Mind Matters, created by Public Health England offers tips and advice developed with experts and approved by the NHS. They offer a free short quiz (less than 5 minutes) to create your Mind Plan. This provides advice, support and encouragement every step of the way, to help improve your health.

Why not give it a go today...?

“Spotlight” on Dawn Ilsley, our Clinical Pharmacist



I grew up in Birmingham, studied at the Welsh School of Pharmacy in Cardiff before moving to Hertfordshire to take up a position as a community Pharmacist. I progressed through a well-known retail pharmacy chain to become store manager at Beaconsfield before settling locally and starting a family. I then worked part-time as a community pharmacist in Thame for over fifteen years.

The opportunity arose to become a receptionist with Wellington House and I decided the time had come to try a change in direction. During this time I also worked as a Clinical Pharmacist for a small GP surgery elsewhere. When the opportunity arose for a Clinical Pharmacist position at Unity Health I was lucky enough to secure the role. I carry out a range of tasks within the surgery and my role changes day to day depending upon requirements. The role of Pharmacists within GP surgeries is still a relatively new idea so my position is ever evolving.

My current role at the surgery is to deal with all queries relating to medication, these queries may arise from a clinical colleague within the practice; from patients who would like information; or from the various letters and discharges that I deal with on a daily basis.

I want to ensure that Unity Health is always following the latest guidelines when it comes to prescribing, to provide the best possible care for our patients. Patient safety with medication is always my priority.

I currently have telephone query clinics daily in the same way as the GPs here but I am hoping to expand my role to have patient facing appointments to help patients get the best from their medications soon. Currently reception can add patients to my call list so if you feel I may be able to help with a query you have, then please call the surgery and ask to speak to me.

Outside of work I love to travel and I have also recently taken up running using the NHS Couch to 5K plan. I have just discovered Park runs and although I am often near the back it is still very supportive. I will happily discuss this with any patient who would like to give running a try but is nervous of taking the plunge...!

Working as part of the multi-disciplinary team here has enabled me to use my pharmaceutical knowledge to improve patient care and also free up some much needed GP time for other tasks. I feel privileged to work with such a supportive, friendly, forward thinking team and my only regret is that I didn't start working for the surgery sooner.

Ordering Repeat Medications

We offer several ways to order your repeat medications:

- **Online via Patient Access:** ask at reception how to set up an account;
- **Pre-printed Repeat Slips:** tick the items you need and put in prescription box;
- **Handwritten Repeat Slips:** as long as you clearly write your name, address, date of birth and the items you require.



We DO NOT accept prescriptions made over the telephone as this can lead to safety issues. Furthermore, We DO NOT accept requests made through any online app run by pharmacy companies (e.g. Pharmacy2U, Well+, Boots Online) or from any High Street Pharmacy on your behalf, as per CCG guidance.

How to Get the Best from the Repeat Prescription System

Order Early

Always order your prescriptions in good time. Standard Repeat items take 2 working days for the surgery to produce the prescription. For patients using community pharmacies they need at least another 2 days (sometimes up to a week, as now many are using off-site dispensing) to process the prescription. Please speak to them directly to check on their timelines. Our dispensing sites (Long Crendon and Brill surgeries) need 3 working days from ordering to collecting.

Don't Add Unnecessary Messages

If using Patient Access, please do not write anything in the “message” box unless it is something really necessary. If you have already nominated a pharmacy your prescriptions will go there until you speak to reception to change it; you do not need to add it in the box. Furthermore, please don't even put polite messages like “thank you” in that box either as it makes it much slower for the GPs to review and process.

Book Your Reviews

We like to review our patients with long-term conditions in their birthday month, so if your birthday is coming up please give the surgery a ring and arrange anything that is needed. Reception will be able to assist you in working out what is required, or it may be listed in your care plan if you have one.

When your review is overdue, the process of producing the repeat prescription is slower and we may also need to reduce your medication quantities until we have completed your review. We encourage patients to take charge of arranging their own reviews and we think your birthday is the easiest way to help you remember to come and see us! (Note: we no longer send out reminders).



Emergency Requests

Requests for urgent items cause our GPs an increase in workload and disrupt the safety of clinics due to interruptions. Because of this they have produced a very short list of items that they have agreed to process on the same day if needed, as an emergency. These are medications that could cause a severe risk to health if not taken for a day e.g. anti-epileptics, insulin and anti-coagulants, salbutamol and EpiPens. Please do not complain to reception if they cannot process your (other) requests more quickly; they are following the GPs instructions.

Quantities

We try very hard to make sure that all your medications run for the same amount of time, but if you are obtaining different quantities of medication and it is proving inconvenient please drop a note in to the surgery addressed to the Clinical Pharmacist providing a brief explanation of the issue and we will look in to it and see if we can change things to save you having to make extra trips to the surgery.

The CCG have requested that we start producing 56 day prescriptions for patients that we feel are clinically very stable – those who attend all review appointments promptly, who do not have medications in certain classes of drugs (mainly some painkillers and mental health medicines which have stricter regulations) and who would not be confused by having larger quantities of medications at home. Changing our patients over to larger quantities is a huge undertaking so we will work towards this over the next year as we do patient reviews so please don't contact the surgery if yours hasn't been changed yet. However, please feel free to mention it whilst speaking to the GP at your Review. Note: The 56 day recommendation does not apply to patients who receive a dispensing service from Brill or Long Crendon or for patients who receive prepared Dossette Boxes from local pharmacies.

Non-Repeat Items

Patients frequently drop in request slips for medications that they have previously been given as an "Acute" treatment for a particular condition and have not been added to Repeat as they should not continue to be used. Most conditions will need to be re-assessed before an Acute item is prescribed again so your request will likely be refused, and you may be asked to arrange a telephone call / appointment instead.

Over The Counter

Everyone understands that the NHS is struggling to work within its budget. The CCG have introduced a new policy that requests that we no longer prescribe for self-limiting or minor conditions where patients can self-medicate effectively with Over the Counter products. They recommend speaking to your community pharmacist for advice for problems such as dry eyes, threadworms, sore throats, conjunctivitis etc. This policy applies to everybody equally, regardless of whether they pay for their prescriptions or obtain them free of charge. Patients may now be expected to buy from the pharmacy some items that we were supplying previously on prescription.

Outcomes from Unity Health's CQC Report: November 2019

The Unity Health Team have achieved an overall rating of 'Good' with an 'Outstanding' assessment against the 'Well-led' domain, an excellent result which endorses the skills, knowledge, experience and expertise that every member of the team contributes to ensure the best possible care of and experience for all their patients.

Opportunities to make improvements to patient care and delivery of services are constantly being identified and acted upon as a matter of practice across all 5 sites. The CQC Report process provides a further opportunity for reflection on issues identified in the process and the development of a specific improvement plan to address these too. The inspection focussed on three areas:

- Are services safe?
- Are services effective?
- Are services well-led?

Ratings for the following two key questions were confirmed at the levels awarded in previous inspections in October 2015 and April 2016:

- Are services caring?
- Are services responsive?

Judgement of quality of care provided was based on inspection findings, information from ongoing data monitoring and information from provider, patients, public and other organisations.

Key headlines shown below.

- Overall: **Good**
- Providing safe, effective services and for the following population groups: older people; people with long term conditions, families, children and young people; people whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and people experiencing poor mental health (including dementia), in a way that kept patients safe and protected them from avoidable harm: **Good**.
- Providing well-led services supported by compassionate, inclusive and effective leadership at all levels, with leaders demonstrating the high levels of experience, capacity and capability needed to deliver excellent and sustainable care. This included the management of the merger of two multi-site practices into one large practice, and covering two counties with approximately 21,750 patients across 5 sites. Service delivery showed collaboration, team-working and support across all functions, with a common focus on improving quality and sustainability of care and people's experiences, through a fully embedded and systematic approach, using a recognised improvement methodology, driving up performance and learning, seeking out and embedding new, more sustainable models of care shared locally and nationally: **Outstanding**.

If you would like to read the full report it can be accessed via a link at the bottom of the Unity Health homepage: <https://www.unity-health.co.uk/>

Did You Know.....?



- If you would rather **not receive texts** from the practice, you can “**opt out**” of these (just let reception know). However, this will mean that you will not receive any text communication from us whatsoever including appointment reminders, flu clinic information etc.
- The easiest way to **cancel an appointment** is to reply to your appointment reminder text with the word “CANCEL”. However, please do not add any other text otherwise this message will not be received by automated cancellation service.
- There is a new **ultrasound scanner at Thame Community Hub**. If you have been referred elsewhere but would prefer to go to Thame, please ask the surgery if this can be changed.
- Some **chemotherapy treatments** are available at the Thame Community Hub on a Wednesday Morning from 09.00 to 13.00hrs. The Cancer Care and Haematology teams at both Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville can provide further information and consider if a referral may be appropriate.
- A leaflet describing all the services available at the Thame Community Hub will shortly be available for you to pick up at all our surgeries.
- The practice no longer sends out **reminder letters for annual reviews** with the GP or nurse; this was an old Trinity Health policy and has been phased out over the last 18 months. Instead, The Care and Support Planning document given to you when you come in for your annual review details when you are next due to be seen/who you should see and for how long. If you are unable to locate this letter, please just call the surgery in your birthday month and the receptionist will help you to book your annual review appointment.
- If you are a parent to a child under 16 years old, a carer or someone who looks after a loved one, you can get “**proxy**” **Patient Access**, enabling you to order repeat prescriptions on their behalf, access test results etc.
- The practice only offers **vaccinations covered by the NHS** (Hepatitis A, Typhoid and Tetanus, Diphtheria and Polio). If you require any other vaccinations in order to **travel** to your desired destination you will need to go to a private travel clinic for these.
- If you would like to have a **triage call with a particular GP**, please do ask the receptionist when you call to make the appointment; they will always try and accommodate your request if possible.
- For certain conditions, you can consult with a GP from home or work, without having to come to the surgery. This is via the Q Doctor video conferencing service. See further details at: <https://www.unity-health.co.uk/q-doctor/>
- On our website you can find lots of information to support you if you **care for someone**. See: <https://www.unity-health.co.uk/services/carers/>

SURGERY OPENING TIMES

BRILL:	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday: Thursday:	8.30am - 6.00pm 8.30am - 1.00pm
LONG CRENDON:	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: Wednesday Saturday:	8.30am - 6.00pm 8.30am - 1.00pm 8.30am - 10.30am
THAME:	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday:	8.30am - 6.00pm
PRINCES RISBOROUGH:	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: Wednesday:	8.30am - 6.00pm 8.30am - 1.00pm
CHINNOR:	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday: Tuesday:	8.30am - 6.00pm 8.30am - 1.00pm

We also open for extended hours appointments at the following times:

BRILL:	Alternate Tuesdays:	6.30pm - 8.00pm
LONG CRENDON:	Saturday: (Also noted above in Surgery Opening times as this is every week)	8.30am - 10.30am
THAME:	Alternate Wednesdays:	6.30pm - 8.00pm
PRINCES RISBOROUGH & CHINNOR:		6.30pm - 8.30pm

This operates on a three-weekly rotation, with one week on a Tuesday at Princes Risborough; the next on a Wednesday at Chinnor; and the final week on a Thursday at Princes Risborough.

Note: consultations during extended hours are only available by prior appointment. There is no ability for patients to 'drop in' and the telephones are not manned at this time.

TRAINING DAYS

In line with other practices in the area, all 5 surgeries will be closed for essential staff training one afternoon a month (excl. August and December). Dates in 2020 are:

Thursday 19th March	Thursday 18th June	Wednesday 21st October
Thursday 23rd April	Wednesday 15th July	Thursday 19th November
Tuesday 19th May	Tuesday 22nd September	