

# PATIENT NEWSLETTER – FRESSINGFIELD & STRADBROKE MEDICAL CENTRE

Questions	WE LISTENED
Why does the Receptionist ask so many questions when I ask to make an appointment?	<p>Our Receptionists are CARE NAVIGATORS - NHS England have recognised the need to ease pressures on doctors by training reception staff to undertake enhanced roles in active signposting. A Care Navigator will make sure you get help from the right person.</p> <p>To do this, Care Navigators will need to ask why you are calling so that they can arrange the right care or support for you.</p> <p>Care Navigators have been trained to keep information confidential and to provide a safe service.</p> <p>They make sure every person contacting the medical centre is helped in a way that is right for them. This could be anything from arranging an appointment with a GP, Practice Nurse, Phlebotomist, Pharmacist, Physiotherapist or providing information on services within your community that could help you such as attending a Pharmacy. Getting help from the most appropriate person for your need will help ease pressures on GP appointments.</p>
Why can't the practice have more GP's?	<p><b>WE ARE FORTUNATE THAT THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS THAT IS ASSIGNED TO EACH OF OUR GPs IS LESS THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.</b> Practices are funded based on the number of patients registered with the practice; this means that we do not have the funding to recruit a further full time GP. We however are always looking at other ways to improve appointment availability for our patients by employing other healthcare professionals.</p>
What are you doing to improve appointment availability?	<p>We have improved appointment availability by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employing further <b>ADVANCED NURSE PRACTITIONERS (ANP)</b> – Our two Advanced Nurse Practitioners Shelley and Carol are experienced Registered Nurses who are educated at Masters Level in advanced practice. They are able to deal with many of the problems you would normally take to a doctor. They can initiate treatments, prescribe medication and refer you to other health professionals such as hospital consultants.</li> <li>• Utilising other healthcare professionals such as <b>PHARMACISTS, PHYSIOTHERAPISTS &amp; PARAMEDICS</b> – We do not have the funding to employ our own pharmacists, physiotherapists &amp; paramedics so we share these resources with other practices in our primary care network (PCN). It is great news that our patients now have access to a range of healthcare professionals.</li> <li>• You can self refer to a <b>Connect for Health Community Connector by telephoning 01473 835477</b> - They can provide non-clinical solutions to improve patients own health and wellbeing. It may be that some of your needs can be met by a referral to a Community Connector rather than seeing a GP or Nurse. Community Connectors can help with: A healthy lifestyle, welfare benefits and financial support, employment, training and volunteering, education and learning opportunities, arts, culture and creative activities, befriending, counselling and emotional support groups</li> </ul>
Who do I contact at the Hospitals?	<p>The NHS is under huge pressure and hospital waiting times are increasing. If you want to speak to somebody at the hospitals you can either ring the hospital department, their telephone number will be on any communication you receive or contact the PALS (Patient Advice &amp; Liaison Service): Ipswich Hospital (ESNEFT) - 01473 704781 or send an e-mail to <a href="mailto:PALS@esneft.nhs.uk">PALS@esneft.nhs.uk</a> Norfolk &amp; Norwich Hospital (NNUH) - 01603 289036 or 01603 289045 or send an e-mail to <a href="mailto:PALS@nnuh.nhs.uk">PALS@nnuh.nhs.uk</a></p>
What are the opening times of the Dispensaries?	<p>The dispensary at Fressingfield is open: 8:30am to 1pm &amp; 2pm to 6:30pm every weekday The dispensary at Stradbroke is open 8:30am to 12:30pm every weekday &amp; between 3:45pm and 6:15pm on a Monday and Friday. We need 3 working days' notice to process your repeat medication request. Did you know that you can use the NHS App to order your repeat medications? The NHS App is free to download from the App Store and Google Play. You can also access NHS App services from the browser on your desktop or laptop computer at <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/">https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/</a></p>

<p>How will the covid booster programme work?</p>	<p>Further Information about the Covid Booster Programme can be found at <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination">www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination</a></p> <p>How and when to get your COVID-19 booster vaccine</p> <p>You'll be offered a booster dose at least 6 months after you had your 2nd dose.</p> <p>The NHS will let you know when it's your turn to have a booster dose. It's important not to contact the NHS for one before then.</p> <p>Most people will be invited to book an appointment at a larger vaccination centre such as the one in Harleston or a pharmacy</p> <p>The following groups are eligible and will be invited in the same priority order that you were invited for your previous dose of the vaccine:</p> <p>frontline health and social care workers</p> <p>all adults aged 50 years or over</p> <p>all those aged 16 to 49 years with underlying health conditions that puts them at higher risk of severe COVID-19, and adult carers</p> <p>adult household contacts of immunosuppressed individuals</p>
<p>Can I see a female clinician?</p>	<p>Shelley and Carol our Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANP) are often able to help with any concerns that you would normally take to a GP</p>
<p>Can I see a clinician face to face?</p>	<p>In March 2020 NHS England instructed all GP Practices to switch to a total triage system. This meant that we had to offer all GP &amp; ANP appointments as telephone or video consultations. This was to ensure the safety of patients and prevent packed waiting areas which could increase the spread of coronavirus. Many practices have chosen to continue with this way of working to prevent the spread of the disease. You have told us that you want the ability to choose to see a clinician. We have listened to this and since May 2021 we provide you the choice to come to the practice to see a clinician or have a remote consultation via telephone or video call. We are working to strict infection control processes which means that seeing patients face to face is taking longer than it did pre-covid. So please be aware that there may be delays and you may have to wait a little while in the waiting room before being called in for your appointment.</p>
<p>Am I waiting longer to see a clinician for a routine issue than I was pre-covid?</p>	<p>You tell us that you want to be seen on the day if you have a medical emergency but also that you want the ability to book ahead for a date &amp; time that suits you. So we continue to provide the ability for you to book ahead for routine appointments and be seen on the day if your condition will not wait until the next routine appointment. We appreciate that you want to be seen as soon as you can and frustrated by the length of time you need to wait for a routine appointment. <u>We have compared waiting times now with those pre-covid and the length of time between patients booking an appointment and being seen is 1 day quicker now than it was pre-covid.</u> Hopefully this shows how hard we have worked to increase the appointment availability with Advanced Nurse Practitioners, locums when clinicians are on holiday and other healthcare professionals, especially as demand for appointments has surged to a level never seen before. The complexity of patients we see is greater than ever as some patients that would usually be under hospital care are discharged to general practice. The increasing hospital waiting times are also impacting patients as they need more support from us while they wait for operations.</p>
<p>When will I hear about my long term condition review?</p>	<p>If you normally have a review of your long term condition such as Diabetes, Asthma, COPD or a heart condition you will now be sent a review invitation letter in the month of your birth. It is nationally recognised that a 'month of birth' recall system is a good way to ensure that every patient with a long term condition is invited to an annual review. Over the last year some patients understandably have chosen not to attend the practice for their review so have fallen outside their normal review period. It therefore especially makes sense to transition to a new system now, so patients know when they will receive their next review invitation. During this first transitional year it may mean that patients have a longer or shorter interval between their reviews. The nurse may feel that you should be seen more frequently than annually and they will discuss this with you and ask you to make more frequent appointments. Please wait for your review invitation letter. Thank you for your help and bearing with us during this transitional time.</p>

**GP practices now deliver one million more GP appointments per week than before the pandemic.**

**Please be kind to our staff as we are under extreme pressure currently.**