

PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTH



FRIENDS OF DAVENPORT HOUSE

BULLETIN NO 27 – June 2023

NEWS FROM THE PRACTICE

This bulletin from Friends and the Practice covers an update from Dr Thenuwara about the practice in the past year and plans for the future; potential to be involved in the election of a representative from Harpenden for the Bedfordshire Hospital Trust (including the L&D); recent closures and changes at the practice and some further updates on upcoming webinars

1. Review and Update from the Practice



Staffing: As usual there have been quite a lot of changes in the NHS over the last year and therefore at Davenport House as a result. We have made a determined effort to recruit the right balance of staff in order to move the practice forward.

- Two new receptionists appointed, Lisa Thorpe and Adele Walker
- Our asthma nurse replaced with general training in this area
- Practice Manager, Adarsh Mehta joined in December, and an Assistant Manager, Shereen Conteh-Jones joined in August

It has taken a bit of time to get the right balance of staff, but I think with Adarsh and Shereen this works really well and they are both very approachable, friendly and hard-working and really good with difficult situations. This means they can keep on top of things and be more proactive. Hopefully you'll notice the difference as we move forward.

On other matters we've had a couple of partners away.

- Dr Bagga has returned from his paternity leave, he came back in April
- Dr Yasotharan will be off for six months returning in October

- Dr Dewji, who covered Dr Bagga's leave, left in May, and is replaced by Dr Lindsay Fraser-Moodie doing five sessions and Dr Gillian Aggrey-Fynn working two sessions

This will mean there is no overall loss of appointments. And will also mean we will have an increased number of female appointments, the lack of which I know is a real difficulty to deal with sometimes. Both of these doctors have worked in our practice before so we're very happy to have them back and confident they will be able to hit the road running.

PPG Donations

We are very grateful to the PPG for financial help with the following:

- The JX machine that you use to login is back up and running. The screen licence and upgrade have been paid by the PPG
- The POD machine which was out of action during Covid is now back up and running and the licence fee has been paid for
- The secretarial area has had a makeover to make it larger and a room divider has been added for increasing capacity and patient confidentiality
- The spirometry machine, the ECG and the Hyfrecator have all been upgraded
- Update courses, a legal requirement, with Royal College of GPs, have also been paid for

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Friends: www.friendsdavenportthouse.org.uk Surgery: www.davenporturgery.co.uk

Charity Number 1184307

Admin and Appointments

We know that there has always been quite a difficulty with trying to get appointments. Appointments in different areas often have bottlenecks. The problem we have is for you to get through on the phones; we have had an upgrade in terms of increasing the number of lines that we have open to reception and we have enough receptionists, it is just in those peak times it's difficult to get through the phone calls quickly enough.

We're looking at different ways of doing this and how other surgeries are handling calls; some places have a call-back mechanism; we're also looking at ways of speeding up the telephone triage so that the patients' details can be pulled up automatically.

I don't want to say too much because often with these things when you look into them there are pros and cons, so I'll wait until we know for definite. We mentioned online consultations and we are definitely looking to get a little more detail on this; some practices do use something called an Econsultation where you can put in your details about your issue and send it to the practice for a response.

There are some online consultations that are available as telephone calls; we also have online appointments for things like cervical smears and blood pressure monitoring and things like that and so then we will gradually move towards that, but it's all about capacity and I'm trying to make sure that by offering more online consultations we don't lose capacity elsewhere.

I'm hoping that people will have noticed the fact that we are offering a lot more face-to-face appointments than we used to during Covid. We had a system where it was firstly telephone consultations only and what was happening was the patients were being phoned and then many of them needed to come in as well so we were basically double booking a patient. So now we are offering patients the option of a face-to-face or telephone consultation straightaway so that has definitely increased capacity.

Regarding other things that we've tried to do, for example, Helen Cruickshanks, who is our Advanced Nurse Practitioner, is now seeing a lot of patients with minor illnesses, for example a sore throat, or minor infections and that will free up more appointments with the GPs as well.

PCN (Primary Care Network) Staffing Support

There have been some big changes for the PCN as well; we've been using PCN pharmacists, first contact physios, counsellors, paramedics, physician associates, mental health workers, dieticians and we've even got an HRT nurse now, so we're slowly but surely opening up skillsets in our practice so that we can refer people to go directly to those who specialise, which might also prevent a long wait.

This is a process of learning; hopefully next year they can start to look at a patient's medication when discharged, and try and get all of those medications switched much quicker. We are learning as we go along; these roles are changing the face of general practice and we are working closely with the PCN (Davenport/Elms/Village Surgeries) to recruit more people in the future.

Future Practices

I lastly want to talk a little bit about the future, and how general practice is going to change. You may have noticed the practice is open for longer; the government has made a change to working hours for general practice/PCNs. These hours are now called '**standard network hours**' and they will come into full effect in the not too distant future.

Summary

We've actually made a lot of changes in the last year, hopefully moving us in the right direction, into a position where we can maximise capacity. We want to choose methods that will allow patients to book in a variety of ways, but also to allow enough flexibility, so if someone is really ill on the day there are enough appointments free, as well as the right balance between the different types of appointment.

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2. Luton & Dunstable NHS Trust election of Trustees

We were prompted to advise you by Malcolm Rainbow at the recent AGM that there will be an election for another Governor at the Bedfordshire Hospital Trust that includes the services that are received by Harpenden residents from Luton and Dunstable Hospital. Do we have any members who would be interested in standing for election beyond Malcolm? Malcolm has represented Harpenden before and has a wealth of experience and is passionate about representing Harpenden residents. There are currently only two positions in the Board and one up for re-nomination. Nominations are required by the end of June 2023.

We encourage all Friends to become members of the Trust through a simple joining up at <https://www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk/get-involved/ft-membership/>. There are no fees and this enables you to vote and have your say to potentially influence the direction and decisions at the Trust in respect of Harpenden Services.

To see what is involved with the Council of Governors please see <https://www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk/get-involved/ft-membership/council-of-governors/>

3. Recent Closures at the Surgery

We have had a few enquiries about closures at the surgery. There have been no unauthorised recent surgery closures. The closures we have had are explained below.

Training Closures

These are compulsory staff Target days run by The Harpenden Health PCN for all three surgeries within Harpenden. These Target days are usually approximately 4 hours and patients are sent a text a few days before advising them of this along with advice on whom to call if they have a medical concern or a genuine medical emergency. During the Target training hours phone lines are taken over by Herts Urgent Care.

Nationwide Issues with EMIS System

Egton Medical Information Systems (EMIS) came from an idea shared by two clinicians from Yorkshire in the 1980s which kickstarted its creation. The idea is that technology can be used to give clinicians access to complete and shared medical records, no matter where patients present for care.

Our surgery, alongside all other surgeries across the UK who use EMIS, experienced disruption caused by some technical issues which the team at EMIS have been working hard to rectify and avoid a repeat of the issue in the future which includes a large platform upgrade with Microsoft technology. The provider was extremely apologetic for any distress or disturbance caused.

4. Upcoming Webinars (subject to change)

These webinars are largely on hold as the availability of Consultants is currently constrained.

You can access previous webinars by clicking on this link. <https://www.stalbanspodcast.com/category/healthmatters/webinars/>

However, a **Dealing with Depression** webinar will be launching in August and a range of days and times are available to suit all needs. The first webinar will take place on Tuesday August at 11am. Register online using the registration form: www.hpft-iapt.nhs.uk/resources-and-self-help/webinars/dealing-depression

Additional webinars and self-help videos are available on a range of topics including mindfulness, worry and sleep. These webinars have been designed to support your well-being, for more information please visit the services website: www.hpft-iapt.nhs.uk

Local residents can register for the webinar online using our registration form: www.hpft-iapt.nhs.uk/

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