



Newsletter 14 Autumn 2019

31 ORWELL ROAD, FELIXSTOWE, SUFFOLK, IP11 7DD

Howard House Surgery



October 2019

Welcome to the Autumn 2019 edition of our Practice Newsletter. We hope you find it useful. Do tell us if you would like something specific and appropriate to be included in the future.

The transition of the town's Minor Injuries Clinic at Felixstowe Hospital continues to generate some controversy, but we are keeping pressure on our MP and the NHS to make it work as smoothly and effectively as possible. After more feedback from patients/users, the commitment has been strengthened to ensure more effective 'on the day' booking through the surgeries and the NHS 111 Service, plus improvements to the signage in the town and on site. Also, most importantly, to continually review the 'Directory of Services', which is safety-based and determines with what conditions the Clinic is 'allowed' to assist.

The Chief Executive of the Commissioners, is putting in writing the NHS's commitment to keeping Felixstowe Hospital open and providing a range of services. This is being reinforced, by

the gradual piloting of a local "Frailty Service" there, which aims to reduce the number of falls in our local population and also the number of visits to Ipswich Hospital's Emergency Dept. and Frailty Assessment Base.

This Autumn we say farewell to Vanda Clarke, our long-serving Practice Manager. Vanda has been at the heart of ensuring Howard House provides the best possible service and care and of maintaining its 'Good' Care Quality Commission rating. Vanda has always supported our Patient Group and we wish her a healthy and happy retirement. Thank you Vanda.

Overleaf, we introduce our incoming Practice Operations Manager, Mark Deer. Welcome Mark. If you are interested in observing or joining our Patient Group, the next meeting, (upstairs at the Surgery), is at 6.05pm on November 19th. For more information please contact me on 07986-714186, or via the letterbox in the surgery lobby or via email at: HHcomments@gmx.us.

Alan Rose Patient Group Chair

A Reminder of How Our Appointment System Works:

For a GP or Nurse Practitioner consultation there are just 3 simple steps:

1. Phone the surgery – all our doctors are qualified to help but if you want a particular one please call on a day they are working. Their working days are posted on the website and in reception (for the current week).
2. The GP or Nurse Practitioner calls you back as soon as possible but you can ask them to call at a time to suit you if you have to go out in the meantime.
3. You are always seen if needed, usually on the same day.

To help the GP/Nurse Practitioner prepare for the call, the Care Navigator will ask for a few words about the problem. The GP/Nurse Practitioner will discuss your problem with you and agree what to do. You may only need advice or a prescription, or you may need or ask to see your GP/ Nurse Practitioner. The doctor will offer you an appointment the same day (or exceptionally a later day if you cannot be available). If you are at work and timing is an issue, please tell the Care Navigator. You can be called on a mobile or landline. The Care Navigator will check that they have the correct number. The service is exactly the same up until 3 pm but because there is a rush at the start of the day you may get a quicker response later. If your request is not for a doctor, e.g. you need a repeat prescription, please call after mid-morning when the lines are quieter.

After 3 pm, urgent calls which need attention that day will be put onto a shared list with Haven Health and Walton Surgery. The on-call doctor from whichever surgery is providing the service that day will call you back and invite you in for a face-to-face consultation if deemed necessary. If the need is not urgent, please call the following day.

If you require an appointment with one of our nursing team, please call the surgery and inform the Care Navigator of the reason for the appointment to ensure adequate time is allocated.

Following some recent changes to our phone system, a number of you have reported that that you are having to wait longer for the telephone to be answered. We are currently investigating this issue and will provide an update in the next edition along with some data on the average waiting times for the phone to be answered.

Results from the National GP Patient Survey for 2018/2019

On 17 September the local press ran an article revealing the patient ratings of every GP surgery in Suffolk. For those of you who didn't see the article, we are extremely proud to announce that Howard House was rated joint 7th highest practice in Suffolk for patient satisfaction out of a total of 64 practices. This is an annual patient satisfaction survey that has been running nationally for many years.

The survey looked at a number of areas including:

- the percentage of patients who describe their overall experience as good – 95%
- the percentage of patients who describe their experience of making an appointment as good – 81% and
- the percentage of patients who waited 15 minutes or less after their appointment time – 80%

Of course we are always aiming to improve on what we do so if you wish to provide feedback at any time you can do so via the 'Friends and Family' survey forms that are always available in our waiting room or you can ask at reception to speak with Mark Deer (our Practice Operations Manager).

Medication Shortages at Pharmacies

The surgery is aware of a large number of drugs currently unavailable at pharmacies.

Unfortunately, the surgery is unable to do anything to assist in sourcing these items if the pharmacy cannot.

Drugs currently affected include HRT, some anti-inflammatories, inhalers and drugs for raised blood pressure. If your dispensing pharmacy tells you that your usual medication is not available, please let our prescription clerk know.

You do not need to make a doctor or nurse appointment for this. Our prescription clerk will liaise with the GP and pharmacy on your behalf to find the nearest alternative for you and will arrange a new prescription.

Seasonal Flu 2019 Update

This season has once again come with some challenges! We had an excellent attendance for our first 'Over 65s' walk in flu clinic on 23 September with over 1,200 patients receiving their annual vaccination.

The 2nd clinic on 30 September was significantly slower with less patients arriving. We are currently working on vaccinating our patients in care homes and also those who are house bound.

Vaccines for those under 65 and in the "at risk" groups have been delayed due to manufacturing issues resulting in us having to cancel the clinic scheduled for 28 October. All patients that had booked for that clinic have now been contacted and re-scheduled.

We have three further dates available on an 'appointment only' basis, i.e. 11, 12 & 25 November 2019. Please contact us to make an appointment if you are eligible and want to be vaccinated, or let us know if you wish to decline your free vaccination this season.

Meet the Team - Mark Deer

Our interviewee in this edition is Mark Deer, our newly appointed Practice Operations Manager. Mark started his new role on 2 September, and is working alongside Vanda before she leaves us at the end of October. Mark was attracted to his new role for various reasons. He wanted to work for a primary care organisation, he knew of the high reputation that our surgery has and the variety of his new role appealed to him. Also, as he and his wife live near Woodbridge, the shorter commute to work was an attraction.

Mark initially worked in Local Government in Waste and Recycling Services for many years. However, a friend suggested he go along to see the work of a medical charity and, perhaps, volunteer for them. Twenty-seven years later he had moved into paid employment with that charity. He was regional lead for Community First Responders, ran the charity's commercial ambulance service in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire. Oh, and he also met his wife there. Fate has certainly taken a hand in Mark's career and personal life thanks to that friend's suggestion.

Mark went into healthcare management with various organisations within the NHS, being Involved with Dermatology, Neurology and ENT Services. For a time, he was based at Addenbrookes Hospital dealing with orthotics and prosthetics' services, in this role he covered a large part of East Anglia.

Mark still does voluntary work with a local medical organisation, based in Manningtree, which involves providing medical cover for outside events and festivals around the county. He said he now knows Ed Sheeran's set list very well! Mark has had a lifelong love of motorsport. His particular favourite is touring cars and he is a big fan of Ipswich Speedway Team. He told us that although he plays golf very badly, he still very much enjoys it. We wish Mark all the very best in his new role at Howard House.

