



NEWSLETTER

PRACTICE NEWS

The Practice is pleased to announce that Dr. Caitlin Longster and Dr. Richard Hills have joined the partnership as of 1st October 2020. This means that we now have five partners in our practice.

Dr. Stephen Foley has joined the practice for a year as a GP Registrar. He currently works three days a week at both Belford and Seahouses.

Students: The Practice continues to be a training practice, educating both final and third year students on their journey to qualifying as NHS Doctors. They are part of our clinical team and they carry out their clinical work under the supervision of one of the GP's.

Some of our patients will already have met Practice Nurse Shi Shi Ord who is here covering for Lynn Morton whilst she is off on maternity leave. We also have temporary cover by Nurse Maureen Birdsall and Nurse Lesley Harvey who are covering clinics on a Monday up until Christmas.

Jane Cannam joined the team in March 2020 as a Social Prescriber. (Please see Health and Wellbeing Section).

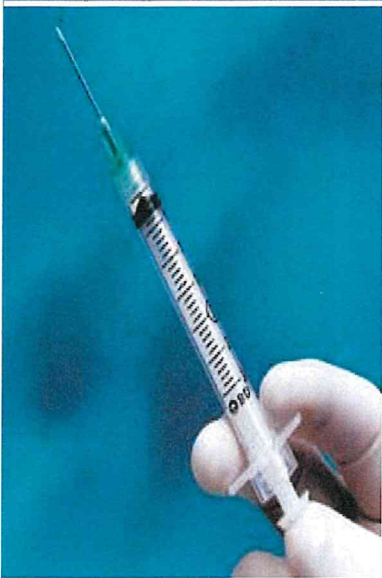
CHRISTMAS SURGERIES

Obviously with the current method of working within the surgery the Christmas surgery times could be a little different this year. As yet nothing has been decided with regard to times of surgeries or indeed opening times of the surgery itself both on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve. Once we have this finalised we will be informing our patients via our Facebook page, posters in the surgery and hopefully a short Christmas newsletter. We will also be able to advise on last medication delivery dates and deadlines for Christmas medication ordering.



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Covid 19
- Flu Clinics
- Operating Procedures
- Social Prescribing



FLU CLINICS

Those of you that have already attended a flu clinic this year will have noticed that we have changed the format for these sessions. We are now working on a booked appointment basis to allow minimum exposure time in the surgery for patients at risk and to ensure that we have as few patients in the building at any one time.

The ordering of the flu vaccinations is done at the beginning of the year and this year they were ordered in February which was before the Covid 19 pandemic reared its ugly head in the UK. There are two different vaccinations - one for the over 65 age group and one for the under 65 age group and they are supplied by different companies. Despite asking all the companies that we source our vaccinations from for an early delivery date, this was just not possible due to very high demand.

We are trying our very best to make sure that everyone who wants a vaccination will receive one and to this end are endeavouring to source additional stock so we can achieve this. Unfortunately due to the pandemic and the companies that we use for our supply the under 65 flu vaccines have got to be delivered in stages and this has made it very difficult to set up clinics as we are having to ensure that we have enough flu vaccinations for the clinics we organise. We are at present working our way through our lists of eligible patients in the under 65 group and those patients who are in an "at risk" group will be contacted as soon as possible and offered an appointment.

The 50-64 age category is not likely to start until the end of November/December and we are still waiting for confirmation of this.

As I am sure you can appreciate it has been a difficult year to organise the flu clinics with the additional problems of Covid 19 and a lot of work has gone on behind the scenes to make sure that everyone is kept safe during these clinics. We appreciate your patience and co-operation during this difficult time.

COVID -19

Unless you have been living on Planet Mars for the last seven months you will be familiar with the above dreaded phrase!

Covid 19 is a very serious infection. Whilst the majority may not notice any symptoms at all it can cause severe short term and long term health effects on those who are susceptible leading to a significant proportion of hospital admissions and unfortunately death in some cases.

In accordance with Government and Local Health Authority Guidelines the practice have had to change the way we operate which is very different to how we have run our surgery in the past. We as a practice continue to be grateful to everyone for their co-operation and understanding of the new systems to enable us to ensure the surgery can function as safely as possible both for patients and staff alike.

We have continued to work throughout the pandemic and patient contact was running around 150% over and above our normal workload at times despite not seeing as many patients face to face. We were still carrying out home visits, under strict Health Authority Guidelines, increased telephone consultations by both the GP's , Nurses, Healthcare and Social Prescribing staff.

As the Pandemic continues we expect this new way of working will be here to stay for the foreseeable future. Should a member of staff test positive for the virus and despite precautions this could spread through the team leading to the temporary closure of the surgery.

In order to minimise the amount of patients in the surgery at any given time we have tried to stagger our clinics so you may find telephone calls or face to face appointments with the Doctor or Nurse slightly different than usual. We also have a one way system in place within the surgery.

After every patient the chairs, pillows, doors, will need to be wiped by staff and PPE changed so time between appointments may be slightly longer. Chairs in the reception area are also wiped after patient use. A sanitising station is located in the waiting area just inside the main door and patients are asked to sanitise their hands on entering.

HANDS-FACE-SPACE

Please continue to observe social distancing measures in order to prevent the spread of Covid 19. For up to date guidance please see the Government website

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

For local guidance please see the Northumberland County Council website:

<https://www.northumberland.ca/en/county-government/covid-19-updates.aspx#>

CURRENT OPERATING PROCEDURES

Current Opening Times

Belford Surgery

01668 213738

8.30-6.00 Monday to Friday

Prescription Ordering

9am-2pm

Blood/X-ray Results

12pm-3pm

Seahouses Surgery

01665 720917

Monday and Tuesday

8.30-6.00

Thursday

8.30-5.30

Friday

8.30-12.30

Wednesday

Closed

Prescription Ordering

9am-2pm

Blood/X-Ray Results

12pm-3pm

Website:

www.belfordmedicalpractice.nhs.uk

Facebook Page:

Belford Medical Practice

Appointments

Due to Covid regulations the surgery now uses a telephone triage system. This means that patients will initially be phoned by a Doctor and if they need to be seen the Doctor will organise a surgery time for a face to face consultation. When you attend the surgery we would ask for everyone to have a face covering. Before anyone is able to enter the surgery they will be asked a few questions, this is for their safety and the safety of the staff. We are grateful for your continued co-operation and ask you to bear with us in these extraordinary times.

Annual Reviews

During the first lockdown we were not able to carry out the usual annual reviews for conditions such as asthma, diabetes etc. We have now resumed these and are endeavouring to call in as many patients as possible to have these done.

Access to the Surgery

Access to the surgery is still restricted with the door buzzer system in operation. Upon arrival at the surgery please enter the porch and press the button located on the intercom which is situated on the wall to your left above the table. One of the reception staff will answer and you are then able to tell them why you have come to the surgery. It may be that the GP has requested you to attend the surgery for a face to face appointment or you have an appointment with one of the Nurses. You will be asked a few simple questions about your general health and if that is ok then you will be asked to push the door to enter the surgery. Face coverings must be worn and there is a hand sanitiser on the right as you come through the door which we ask you to use. Social distancing seating is provided and these chairs are sanitised after a patient has used them. We are currently operating a one way system so you will be

shown out of the back door by the clinician that you have been seeing.

Collecting Prescriptions

Please enter the porch and press the button on the intercom as described above. A receptionist will answer so just inform them that you have come to collect a prescription and give them the name of the person whose medication you wish to collect. You will be asked if you pay and if so then asked if cash or card (card is preferred at the moment). If you are paying then the payment machine will be brought to the booth and held up against the glass for contactless payment. Your medication will then be placed on the table in the porch. If you do not pay for your prescription then you will be asked to step back outside the porch and the medication will again be placed on the table in the porch. If CD's are being collected please remember that photo ID must be shown by the person collecting the medication.

Home Visits

Home visits by the GP's and District Nurses are still being undertaken as necessary. Full PPE will be worn by the clinician so they will look a little different than usual! If you feel you need a home visit we would ask you to contact the surgery as soon as possible in the morning so that you can be added to the visiting list for that day. You will be asked your name and address and the reason for the visit. As usual the request will be triaged by the GP's.

Telephone System

We are looking into whether it would be useful to have a menu system when someone contacts the surgery. This would allow you to be directed to the right telephone line. We are going to be releasing a short questionnaire to see if this is something patients feel would be useful and would be grateful for your opinion.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Social Prescribing

Many factors affect our health and wellbeing, like our housing, our employment, our social connections and our community activity. Social prescribing aims to take these wider determinants of health and support people who may be in social need. Through tailored one to one support, effective signposting to specialist organisations and a personalised care approach, social prescribing is a service that aims to boost health and wellbeing through non clinical means. Throughout the pandemic we have tackled issues of loneliness and isolation, offered low level mental health support, created community connections and much more.

We have set up a book club and a Knit and Natter Group online which is open to anyone across the primary care network and we are currently looking into a singing project. We are also keen to start a gardening project at Bell View when restrictions allow us to develop this.

Social prescribing is available to anyone over 18 with a particular focus on people living with long term conditions, young families, those experiencing low mood and isolation and the elderly.

Your GP Link Workers for the Belford Medical Practice are Jane Cannam and Anne Shilton and we would love to hear from you if you are interested in any of our projects or if you need support and someone to talk to to get some information or advice and guidance on a social, non clinical matter. You can self refer at the practice or speak to your GP and they can refer you. Jane and Anne work with Belford patients on a Monday.

Our emails are: jane.cannam@nhs.net and anne.shilton@nhs.net

Weight Management and Referrals

Sharon our Nurse will be seeing patients for weight management and onward referral. More details in the next newsletter.

