

Message from Dr. Sharples

Well, it has been quite a summer at the surgery as we move into the autumn and the Flu season (more later). Never has General Practice been as busy and challenging as the current time. The Covid pandemic continues to place huge restrictions upon the working capabilities we can offer, most recently a shortage of blood bottles meaning all but urgent blood tests needed to be cancelled or postponed. The guidance remains ever changing and the staff and practice continue to work tirelessly to provide the greatest service they can. We still require patients to wear face masks and hand sanitising at all times and we thank those of you who have worn a mask when you attended the surgery and for maintaining Hands-Face-Space – but this as you can imagine adds additional pressures on time and appointments for the staff.

We have tried to provide the option to have both face to face and telephone consults to suit the needs of our patients, but the demand is the greatest we have ever seen and on top of the backlog, this may mean you have to wait longer than usual to see a clinician.

Please do take this into consideration when calling the surgery. Only yesterday, there were 25 people waiting in the phone queue to get through to the surgery despite having 3 staff members answering calls. There are things you can do to help:

- If your call is non urgent please try and call after 10:30 am – this allows any urgent calls and appointments to be managed initially when the phone lines open.
- Please try and remember one appointment, one problem. This allows the clinicians to keep to time and get through all the patients who have appointments that day. If you have multiple things you wish to discuss prioritise and consider booking a follow up appointment.
- The surgery has no control over hospital appointments and waiting times. We are also frustrated at the back log in hospitals and the delays to your appointments but would suggest contacting the hospital/booking system/ or consultant secretaries as we cannot influence the hospital waiting times.
- Please ensure you have your telephone nearby if you are awaiting a call back. We know it is difficult when the Dr cannot give a specific time and you have busy lives too, but they will try their best to call roughly around the time reception book you (this sadly can be as wide as morning or afternoon).
- Continue being the wonderful patient population you are. We have had so many kind words and comments about the staff and the practice and how hard everyone is working to maintain our services. You help that too by being patient with us and understanding the challenges we are facing. In spite of everything, during the entire pandemic, on only one occasion have we have limit our services and that was to close the dispensary at Shenington for one morning (Fenny dispensary remained open at this point). I cannot speak highly enough of the team and the extraordinary lengths they go to in order to open every day and support the needs of the community.

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Staff Update

There have been a few changes in our team recently. We have been sad to say goodbye to 2 members of staff—Pam & Liv. Pam was a receptionist and Liv was a dispenser. They will be missed very much by the team and our patients. We have welcomed a new receptionist, Linda. She is a welcome addition to the team and we look forward to getting to know her. Please do give her your support as it is likely it will take her a little longer to help you.

COVID/Flu Vaccines

We continue to wait for clear guidance on future COVID boosters and would encourage you to visit our website regularly for the latest updates.

<https://fennycomptonandsheningtonsurgery.nhs.uk/>

You can also keep up to date with COVID information at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

The possibility of COVID boosters being given alongside flu vaccines is still unknown and awaiting an official government decision. As a result, we have taken the decision to administer all the flu vaccinations ourselves despite offers from other providers. We feel we know our patients best and can arrange these in a timely manner to ensure the most vulnerable patients are vaccinated as soon as possible.

You may have seen in the news that there is an issue with the delivery of flu vaccines and our own delivery has been delayed by 1-2 weeks. Thankfully we had not invited patients—some practices have over 1000 patients to call and re-book! As soon as the vaccines are onsite, we will be inviting eligible patients to specific flu clinics—safely of course!

Our first 2 clinics will be held on Saturdays, one at each surgery, which helps us to vaccinate a lot of patients in one day. We call them Super Saturdays and it gets our flu season off to a great start. Please be aware that no other services are available on these days, we are open just for flu clinics.



Patient Survey Results

The 2021 practice survey results are in and we are really proud of the results, particularly given the situation with the pandemic. Thank you to everyone who completed a survey.

The full results can be found at <https://gp-patient.co.uk/report?practicecode=M84009>

- 94% of respondents find it easy to get through on the phone
- 91% were satisfied with the appointment offered
- 95% said the healthcare professional they spoke to was good at listening to them
- 99% had confidence and trust in the healthcare professional they saw and spoke to

In all responses, we exceed the local CCG average. We do not take these results for granted and continue to work hard to provide a high level of service for our patients.



Surgery Connect Goes Live!

Our new telephone system was launched in March 2021 and is already making a real difference to the practice and its patients. Like any new IT system, there have been glitches and we thank all those patients who reported issues in the early days. As a result of your feedback, we found an error which only allowed callers to be on hold for 20 minutes and they would then be cut off. This has now been fixed.

The system allows staff to 'jump in' to help out when the queue of calls increases and we can see how long patients are waiting in the queue. From June to August 2021, the average time for your call to be answered was 1 minute 50 seconds. We also received 14674 calls in that time.

The new system is also helping us to monitor peak times when we need additional support to answer calls.

We hope you like the new system and we welcome your feedback.



Cases of abuse towards staff

Sadly, there have been a number of cases recently of patients being abusive towards practice staff. We understand that longer waiting times for appointments and prescriptions can be frustrating, but it isn't the fault of the team and they don't deserve to be the target of aggressive and abusive behaviour. We have a zero tolerance against this kind of behaviour and anyone who treats staff like this will be removed. The team have worked very hard during the pandemic and try their very best to provide an excellent service under difficult circumstances. I'm happy to say that the vast majority of our patients are respectful and supportive and we are truly grateful for this. Thank you.

The loss of our colleague and friend, Samantha Jesson



It is with great sadness that we announce the loss of our friend and colleague, Samantha Jesson.

Sam passed away recently after a brave fight against illness and will be sorely missed by everyone at Fenny Compton and Shenington surgery. Sam was highly respected by both patients and colleagues and will be missed immensely by all those who had the pleasure of knowing her.

Sam worked at the practice for many years and will be well known to many of the patients for going above and beyond in order to provide the best possible service. Her caring, helpful nature was a huge asset to the practice and her contribution was considerable.

Sam will be remembered with great affection and admiration by all of the team at the surgery.