**Balsall Common and Meriden Group Practice**

**May 2019 Newsletter**

**Practice Telephone System – An Apology**

We recently had a number of issues with the telephone systems at both the Balsall Common and Meriden Surgeries when our telephone platform was updated on 11/12th April 2019. Please see below an apology letter from Purecloud Solutions:

Joanne Hope

Balsall Common & Meriden Group Practice

3rd May 2019

Dear Joanne,

I write to you in regard the recent issues experienced with the telephony at both the Balsall Common & Meriden practices. These issues were the result of an upgrade to the practice telephony solution that will in the long term improve the call handling and productivity of the practices and in turn give the patients a better experience and call journey.

Unfortunately, the planned upgrade did not go in as smoothly as anticipated resulting in a number of issues and patient complaints. Pure Cloud Solutions are conducting a full internal investigation to understand the reasons for this and to make changes to internal processes where necessary to mitigate the risk of this happening again in the future.

I want to reassure you that Pure Cloud Solutions take matters such as this extremely seriously and that all shareholders and employees understand the potential impact that any issue with telephony can have not only to staff but also patients.

To that end I would like to offer the staff and patients at both Balsall Common & Meriden practices our sincere apologies on behalf of all from Pure Cloud Solutions and to reiterate that we are committed to doing everything within our power to make sure the practice does not have a repeat of this incident for the remainder of their contract with PCS.

Yours Sincerely,

Jamie Lake

Commercial Director

Pure Cloud Solutions

**General Practice Forward View: Dr Richard Horsley**

General practice is changing. Over the next 5 years primary care will undergo possibly the most important GP contract changes since the NHS foundation in 1948. This process began in 2016 with the publication of the General Practice Forward View <https://www.england.nhs.uk/gp/gpfv/> (GPFV)

**Working at scale**

The practice recognises that some patients find it hard to attend when they have work commitments. Since 2018 we offer appointments via ‘extended access’ which means Balsall Common and Meriden patients now can book GP and nurse appointments Monday to Friday from 18.30 until 20.00 and weekend mornings in our extended access ‘hub’ at GPS Knowle. We are also now working closely with Hampton, Dorridge and Arden practices in a grouping called the rural Solihull Primary Care Network. We also aim to continue local services by working with a GP service provider called Solihealth. We can then continue to offer patients services such as blood thinning medication in the practice as we have the skilled staff rather than referring to hospital.

**Online Access and services**

The GP Forward View sets out a vision for changes to modernise general practice. If you haven’t done so already then please sign up to book appointments and view results online. The practice expects to enhance your online access to have over 25% of directly bookable appointments available online. Soon 111 will also have access to book appointments directly. We are keenly awaiting the development of NHS Apps to further improve access and communication with the practice. Your referrals will move to be 100% electronic so you can have increased choice and control on your hospital care. Balsall Common and Meriden Group Practice has been recognised by NHS Digital for having over 75% of electronic prescriptions. The practice is utilising text messaging for reminders, communication and feedback.

**Contract changes: \* IMPORTANT CHANGE\* MINOR INJURIES TO A+E**

We have accepted the Birmingham and Solihull Universal Offer contract which recognises many of the services we already provide. We already offer many in-house enhanced services in comparison to practices in Birmingham such as phlebotomy, COPD nurses, ECGs and walking blood pressure monitoring. However, the CCG changes mandate we must now signpost patients with minor injuries such as falls and cuts to a minor injury unit or A+E. This is to focus GPs on long term conditions, frailty, elderly, palliative care, enhancing self-care, preventing deterioration early to keep patients at home and preventing illness. For instance if you are over 40 and eligible please book for an NHS check. Other practice services are likely to change but we will strive with the support of our Patient Participation Group to keep services locally.

**New practice team members/services**

We have a new salaried GP Dr. Lisa Broom who is covering for Dr. Whitehead. The practice recognises that the population number is increasing and patient needs are increasing. Each patient is experiencing more complex medical conditions and takes more medication. Our new ‘Primary Care Network’ will soon hope to deliver extra new staff, improved access and services over the next 5 years. This year we hope to have a pharmacist and social prescriber in the network. The nursing team will continue to deliver (enhanced) hub services because we have the skills locally. Our advanced nurse practitioner offers minor illness clinics for new onset ‘acute’ illness. For instance a condition that needs a prescription and perhaps 111 or the pharmacist has signposted you to the practice.

**Training practice**

The practice wants to increase the primary care team and maintain the future workforce for the growing patient needs. We have two GP trainers who mentor qualified medical doctors who are completing GP rotation attachments to become GPs. For many years we have hosted medical students from Imperial College (London) but now we also offer placements to our local Warwick Medical School student doctors.

**The next five years…**

We are already prepared for these changes and all the staff are motivated to deliver improved access to high quality local patient care.

**Nick Mortimer – Pharmacist Lloyds Pharmacy Balsall Common**

Nick Mortimer has left Lloyds Pharmacy at Balsall Common, we would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all the support he has given to both the practice and patients during his time at Lloyds Pharmacy

**Medical Students**

This practice is involved in teaching medical students from the University of Warwick.

Part of this teaching involves students either observing consultations and/or actively participating in the consultations, including examination. When medical students are in the practice you will be made aware of this prior to your appointment. If you would prefer that a student is not present during your consultation please inform the receptionist before seeing your doctor.

Both the doctor and the student will understand if you prefer that a student is not present during your consultation. Thank you for assisting with the training of medical students.

**Practice Appointments**

**LOST APPOINTMENTS**

In January / February / March 2019 we lost the following appointments because patients did not attend and failed to cancel their appointment:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Appointments** | **Time Lost Minutes** |
| **Blood Tests** | **37** | **219** |
| **Asthma** | **13** | **260** |
| **Minor Op** | **3** | **60** |
| **Diabetic** | **3** | **120** |
| **COPD** | **4** | **120** |
| **Urgent** | **62** | **650** |
| **Travel** | **0** | **0** |
| **Pre Book** | **89** | **880** |
| **Nurses** | **58** | **450** |
| **24 Hour BP Monitor** | **4** | **60** |

If you are unable to attend your appointment please help the surgery reduce wasted appointments by cancelling your appointment

You can cancel your appointment by using the following methods;

* By telephoning Balsall Common Surgery 01676 935000 or Meriden Surgery 01676 522706
* By secure email to solccg.bccancelappointments @nhs.net
* Face to Face at Reception
* In Writing
* Via our website [www.balsallcommongrouppractice.co.uk](http://www.balsallcommongrouppractice.co.uk) using the on line services or practice message

Please give other patients the opportunity to use your appointment if you cannot attend

**Evening and weekend appointments**

GP, nurse and healthcare appointments are now available at Knowle Surgery Hub for patients at the Balsall Common and Meriden Surgeries.

Knowle Surgery is situated 1500 Warwick Road, Knowle, Solihull, B93 9LE

The Knowle Surgery has parking and is on bus routes 88 and S3.

Appointments for this service can be made through our own GP surgery reception

Extended hours:

Monday-Friday: 6.30-8pm

Saturday and Sunday: 8-11am

# SHINGLES VACCINE

The shingles virus is caused by the same virus as chicken pox and about one in five people who have had chickenpox develop shingles. You cannot catch Shingles but if you have shingles blisters, the virus in the fluid can infect someone who has not had chickenpox and they may develop chickenpox. It is more common in people over 70 years old.

The rash usually appears a few days after the initial pain and tingling and lasts for about a week. However for some people this can be very painful and can continue on for several months or even years – this is called post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN).

Shingles Vaccine

The vaccine significantly reduces your chances of developing shingles and, if you do go on to have shingles, the symptoms are likely to be milder and the illness shorter than if you had not had the vaccination.

You become eligible for shingles vaccine as you turn 70 or 78 years.

If you are 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75 or 78 or 79 and have not yet had the shingles vaccine, you can also have it now (It is not available for 80 year olds or above).

People who have weakened immune systems, for example due to cancer treatment, should not have the vaccine but should speak to your consultant or GP if you are unsure to check if it is safe or not

Appointments are available every day with the nurse

For more information about the Shingles vaccine Zostavax®, visit www.medicines.org.uk/ emc/product/6101/pil or you can also visit the NHS Choices website at www.nhs.uk/shingles

# PRACTICE POLICY INFORMATION

# MEDICATION REVIEW DATES

Patients are often not aware of the date their repeat medication review is due. This can be found on the right hand side of their prescription or on the counterfoil that is included with their medication when they collect this from the pharmacy. The date is detailed at the end of each medication shown on the counterfoil.

It important that patient’s check their counterfoils when collecting their medication as messages can often be left on these counterfoils from their doctor or reminders that medication reviews are overdue.

# RESULTS AVAILABLE

# Results will be available from 11am at both the Balsall Common and Meriden Surgeries.

# VACCINATIONS FOR HOLIDAYS ABROAD

Are you or a member of your family considering travelling abroad?

Travelling abroad continues to increase for a variety of reasons these includes visiting friends and family, business trips and holidays. It is important to remember that however short your trip may be there will always be some travel associated risks. These risks can be significantly reduced by taking a few simple precautions prior to your trip and whilst you are away.

All our nurses have experience with travel health and are on hand to given you up to date advise.

You may require a course of vaccinations, which can sometimes take several weeks to complete. Therefore it is important to book you travel health appointment at least 6-8 weeks prior to your trip.

**Some Vaccinations are not available free of charge and therefore it is advised that patients bring either a minimum of £60.00 cash or a cheque book in anticipation of any charges.**

Please print off the attached travel health risk assessment forms (See at the end of the newsletter). These forms enable us to collect detailed information about the type of trip you have planned, including location, length of stay, specific itinerary, and other health care needs. This will enable us to deliver accurate, relevant information and prevention advice in order to minimize travel-associated risks. Please complete these forms and bring them with you to your appointment. It is also important to be aware that vaccines play only a small part in the prevention of ill health associated with travel.

Our nurse’s will give advice on all aspects of travel health so that you are familiar with any specific health risks in the country you are planning to visit. Remember we are here to help you so if you have any travel plans, please feel free to book an appointment with us.  When contacting the surgery please advise the reception staff that your appointment is regarding travel.

Here’s to you having a happy and healthy trip!

For further information regarding travel please visit the following web sites: [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk)

**CLINICAL QUESTIONS OR ENQUIRIES VIA EMAIL**

We are unable to respond to clinical questions / enquiries via email. Please make a telephone consultation with a doctor to discuss your question / enquiry.

**SICK NOTE REQUESTS**

 If you require a sick note please make a telephone consultation appointment with your usual doctor to discuss this. If you have recently attended hospital (which is the reason for the sick note to be issued) the hospital should give you a sick note for the expected duration you will be away from work following the procedure, on this occasion you should contact the hospital for your sick note.

**SECRETARY ANSWERPHONE**

**Prescription and Sick Note Enquiries or Requests**

Prescription and Sick Note enquiries or requests should not be left of the secretaries answerphone. Any requests left on the secretaries answerphone will NOT be actioned. This is also detailed on the secretaries answerphone message.

**TEXT MESSAGING - MOBILE NUMBERS**

We are now operating a text message reminder service; please ensure your mobile number is correct and up to date on your medical records. Please speak to Reception or email [balsallcommon.practice@nhs.net](mailto:a.ibbetson@nhs.net) with your name, date of birth and mobile number to add it to your records.

**NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION**

If you would like to be added to the distribution list please contact Joanne Hope, Practice Manager in writing or by email to [joanne.hope@nhs.net](mailto:joanne.hope@nhs.net). We will then automatically send you the new newsletter by email, or by post if you do not have an email facility.

**PRACTICE WEBSITE**

Please visit our website at [www.balsallcommongrouppractice.co.uk](http://www.balsallcommongrouppractice.co.uk) for more information regarding the Balsall Common and Meriden Group Practice

**EVENTS AT BALSALL COMMON LIBRARY**

Balsall Common Library, 283 Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common, Coventry, CV7 7EL

Tel: 01676 532590

**Tales and Time to Play, Mondays, 2.15-3.00pm**

June 3, 10, 17, 24

July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

August 5, 12, 19

These sessions include a story, followed by a chance to play, chat and relax with other young families. Suitable for preschool children.

**Rhyme Time, Tuesdays, 2.15-2.45pm**

June 4, 11, 18, 25

July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

August 6, 13, 20, 27

An interactive session sharing rhymes and songs for babies and very young children.

**Self-run Coffee Morning, 1st Thursday of the month 10.30 – 12 noon**

June 6

July 4

August 1

Join us for good conversation over a cup of tea or coffee and a slice of cake.

**Readers Circle, 2nd Thursday of the month, 10.15-11.30am**

June 13

July 11

August No Meeting

Come along and have a natter with fellow book lovers. Exchange recommendations, discuss books and share your thoughts on authors. Contact the library for details.

**Self-run Family History Support Group, 3rd Thursday of the month, 1.15 -3.00pm**

June 20

July 18

August 15

Join our experienced and friendly Family History Group for advice on tracing your family tree, with the opportunity to learn the techniques of using Ancestry and Find My Past.

**Self-run Striders and Strollers, Tuesdays, every Fortnight 10.15-12 noon**

June 4, 18

July 2, 16, 30

August 13, 27

Meet for free walks in the Balsall Common area led by a trained walk leader and enjoy a cuppa afterwards.

The routes are mostly flat, even and accessible to all participants regardless of physical ability. If you are unsure, please come along and talk to the walk leader, who will be available to answer any questions or concerns.

All ages are welcome, no need to book, just turn up.

**Pop Up Creatives, Fridays, 2.00-4.00pm**

June 7, 14, 21, 28

July 5, 12, 19, 26

August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

These drop ins are for anyone interested in learning craft techniques, sharing their expertise of arts and crafts or for those wanting company on a Friday afternoon.

A small charge applies for refreshments.

These drop in sessions are run by Pop Up Creatives.

**U3A Photographic Exhibition, July 1st – 13th**

The latest work of the U3As Balsall Common Photography Group

**Learn My Way Computer Courses**

Do you find computers and the internet a little scary? You’re not alone. Why not build your confidence with a free Learn My Way course? You can work through modules at your own pace, covering basics including; online safety, using your computer, internet skills and managing your money online. For more info or to book a place call 01676 532590. Booking is essential.

**ReCOM Computer Tablet Courses -6-week courses**

No matter what type of tablet you have, we can show you how to use it with confidence. For more information, or to register your interest, call ReCOM on 0121 663 0335.

Courses run by ReCOM: Bridging the IT gap in the community. Registered charity no.1091315

**Spring Crafts Family Drop In, Thursday 30 May 10.30am – 3.00pm**

Get creative this half term with a selection of fun crafts. This activity is free and there is no need to book. For ages 4 – 11 years.

Sponsored by Balsall Parish Council.

**Pyjamarama Storytime, Friday 7 June 3.45pm**

Come and celebrate Pyjamarama Day with a special Pyjamarama Bedtime Storytime! Enjoy an interactive story and chocolate milkshake (milk and non-dairy alternatives available), and a craft activity. Everyone who wants to can wear their pyjamas or nighties! For ages 4-7 (younger siblings and grown-ups welcome too).Free and no need to book.

**Summer Reading Challenge, Saturday July 13th – September 7th**

This year’s theme is Space Chase, an out-of-this-world adventure inspired by the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing. Register at the library and read six books across the summer, collecting themed goodies along the way. For ages 3 – 12 years

**Drama Tots Space Adventure, Monday July 29th 2.30-3.00pm**

Blast off with Drama Tots and their fun activities for ages 18 months to 5 years. Siblings welcome, call Clairissa for more information on 07980992776. This activity is free. Please register your interest with the library on 01676 532590.

**Summer Family Craft Drop- In Sessions, Tuesday 6th August 1pm – 5pm and Monday 19th August 10.30am – 2.30pm**

Get creative with a selection of fun crafts. These activities are free and there is no need to book. For ages 4 – 11 years.

Sponsored by Balsall Parish Council.

**Solihull Connect Local**

During library opening hours, free use of computers to access services provided by Solihull Council online. There is also a free telephone to enable you to speak directly to a Customer Service Advisor. If you’re not confident using a computer, library staff are on hand to help guide you.