

Balmoral Surgery Newsletter

Summer 22

Current Pressures on Primary Care

Balmoral Surgery receive numerous communications on a daily basis both electronically and paper-based that arrive in the post and over the reception desk. We have protocols and procedures in place to ensure that everything is processed appropriately. Occasionally, as with any service, there will be a mistake or a human error that means something doesn't quite go as it should, and we are more than happy to investigate such an incident.

As our patients will doubtless know, General Practice nationally is in crisis with a shortage of GPs and here at Balmoral we are currently carrying 2 whole time equivalent vacancies for GPs. We have advertised and have been very fortunate to recruit one new whole time equivalent GP who starts mid-August but we will continue to carry the one vacancy until we are able to find another new recruit. The whole Balmoral team are all working as hard as we can to ensure we provide safe and appropriate care for our patient needs. Unfortunately at this time not all patients will get appointments or responses within the timeframe they want. Our provision and response has to be based on urgency and need rather than want. We will prioritise and respond as and when time allows. We are not an emergency service and if a patient has something that they feel cannot wait when the Practice has no more appointments for that day, they should contact 111 who have access to appointments at the Urgent Treatment Centre (which also provides a walk in service when capacity allows) and who can signpost to the most appropriate service to help with their problem.

We are providing telephone, face to face and online consultations and cannot promise a timeframe within which we will definitely respond to correspondence outside of these booked clinical encounters.

We will of course revisit this and turnaround times will improve once we are able to recruit and are fully staffed again. In the meantime we are very grateful for your patience and understanding.

In response to the crisis in General Practice, the British Medical Association, with support of the Local Medical Committees have launched a campaign to Rebuild General Practice. At the end of this newsletter, you will see a letter that has been written by the BMA and is supported by the GPs at Balmoral. Please read this letter and support your practice.

New Staff

We are pleased to announce that our Registrar, Dr Fikky Ogunleye has passed her final exam and has chosen to join the Practice as a Salaried GP from August. Dr Ogunleye is highly thought of by both patients and staff, and we are very pleased that she has decided to join us.

Covid 19 – How we have responded

Throughout the pandemic we have tried to communicate to our patients how we are responding as much as possible, so we thought it would be useful to give an update in this newsletter.

Despite restrictions being lifted for face coverings in General Practice, we have risk assessed this and have decided that we will still ask patients and staff to continue to wear masks. We have a responsibility to be able to provide a service to our patients, and as such as we would like to reduce the risk of staff being unable to work, as much as possible. Staff are also still lateral flow testing twice a week, we are using a separate entrance and exit for patients, and we are still trying to not overcrowd the waiting room at any point.

We have brought back online appointment booking for some appointments. We are offering patients a mixture of telephone and face to face appointments. For some patients telephone appointments is a much better option, and therefore we are trying to be flexible and give patients a choice, as much as possible.

We have brought the waiting room blood pressure machine back, however it is no longer be appropriate for patients aged over 80 years old to use this, or diabetic patients, as these groups now need to have a sitting and a standing BP done with a HCA.

Patient Forum Group

Balmoral Surgery has a Patient Forum which always welcomes new members. The Forum usually meets three times a year and aims to give our patients the opportunity to have their say about the services the surgery provides and to keep members up-to-date with new developments etc. The minutes of the forum meetings are available on our website and if you are interested in joining, please contact the Assistant Practice Manager. Our next meeting is on 17.10.22.

Prescription turnaround time

Please can we remind patients that we have a 72hr turnaround time (working hours) for prescription requests. Please ensure that you order your prescription in good time. If you are going on holiday and need your prescription early, please state this on the request and please state how long you will be away for.

Secondary Care Appointments

East Kent Hospitals (EKHUFT) Waiting Patients Support Service can access waiting lists and advise patients of their current prioritisation. Patients can use this new service instead of contacting their GP surgery.

Please visit <https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/news-centre/latest-news/coronavirus-latest-information-and-advice/information-for-patients-waiting-for-treatment/waiting-patients-support/> or telephone 01277 783145 Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm to access this service.

Social Prescribers – Facebook page

As part of the Deal and Sandwich Primary Care Network (PCN), patients of Balmoral Surgery have access to Social Prescribers. Social Prescribers are not clinical practitioners, instead they are link workers who empower patients to take control of their health and wellbeing. They focus on what matters to the patient and take a holistic approach, connecting people to community groups and statutory services for practical and emotional support. Link workers support existing groups and they ensure they are accessible and sustainable. They also help people start new community groups and work collaboratively with all local partners.

Our Social Prescribers have a Facebook page which has a huge amount of information on local groups and services. To find this page, search for **Deal & Sandwich PCN Social Prescribing** on Facebook. If you do not have access to Facebook and you think that the Social Prescribing Team could help you, please call 01304 744075 or email them via social.prescriberpcn@nhs.net

Influenza Vaccinations

We will be offering flu vaccinations in September. Please contact us in mid-August to book your vaccination.

Looking after your mental health

There are little things we can all do to help look after our mental health. Having good mental health helps us relax more, achieve more and enjoy our lives more.

Every Mind Matters (<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>) have expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing, so discover what works for you.

Planned Closures

Please note that Balmoral Surgery is closed from 1pm on some days once a month to allow the doctors and staff to have protected learning time. These sessions are arranged by the Kent & Medway Clinical Commissioning Group and offer the

opportunity for the Surgery teams in our locality to get together for training purposes. These sessions are on a Wednesday or Thursday afternoon once a month and at present are scheduled to take place as follows:

20th July, 25th August, 22nd September & 19th October

ICON

What does ICON Stand For?


ICON is all about helping people who care for babies to cope with crying.
ICON stands for...

I – Infant crying is normal






C – Comforting methods can help

O – It's OK to walk away

N – Never, ever shake a baby



Babies Cry, You Can Cope!


			
<p>Infant crying is normal and it will stop! Babies start to cry more frequently from around 2 weeks of age. The crying may get more frequent and last longer. After about 8 weeks of age babies start to cry less each week.</p>	<p>Comfort methods can sometimes soothe the baby and the crying will stop. Think about are they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• hungry• tired• in need of a nappy change <p>Try simple calming techniques such as singing to the baby or going for a walk.</p>	<p>It's k to walk away if you have checked the baby is safe and the crying is getting to you. After a few minutes when you are feeling calm, go back and check on the baby.</p>	<p>Never, ever shake or hurt a baby. It can cause lasting brain damage or death. If you are worried that your baby is unwell contact your GP or call NHS 111.</p>

Speak to someone if you need support such as your family, friends, Midwife, Health Visitor or GP.

*Version 5 updated 19/02/2018

National Data Opt Out

There are changes planned with regards to how primary care data is extracted and used for training and research. Please read the leaflet below, which has details on how to obtain further information on this.





Your Data Matters to the NHS

Information about your health and care helps us to improve your individual care, speed up diagnosis, plan your local services and research new treatments.

In May 2018, the strict rules about how this data can and cannot be used were strengthened. The NHS is committed to keeping patient information safe and always being clear about how it is used.

You can choose whether your confidential patient information is used for research and planning.

To find out more visit: nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters



For more information about your data rights please visit the Your Data Matters campaign at ico.org.uk

You can choose whether your confidential patient information is used for research and planning.

How your data is used

Your health and care information is used to improve your individual care. It is also used to help us research new treatments, decide where to put GP clinics and plan for the number of doctors and nurses in your local hospital. Wherever possible we try to use data that does not identify you, but sometimes it is necessary to use your confidential patient information.

What is confidential patient information?

Confidential patient information identifies you and says something about your health, care or treatment. You would expect this information to be kept private. Information that only identifies you, like your name and address, is not considered confidential patient information and may still be used: for example, to contact you if your GP practice is merging with another.

Who can use your confidential patient information for research and planning?

It is used by the NHS, local authorities, university and hospital researchers, medical colleges and pharmaceutical companies researching new treatments.

Making your data opt-out choice

You can choose to opt out of sharing your confidential patient information for research and planning. There may still be times when your confidential patient information is used: for example, during an epidemic where there might be a risk to you or to other people's health. You can also still consent to take part in a specific research project.

Will choosing this opt-out affect your care and treatment?

No, your confidential patient information will still be used for your individual care. Choosing to opt out will not affect your care and treatment. You will still be invited for screening services, such as screenings for bowel cancer.

What should you do next?

You do not need to do anything if you are happy about how your confidential patient information is used.

If you do not want your confidential patient information to be used for research and planning, you can choose to opt out securely online or through a telephone service.

You can change your choice at any time.

To find out more or to make your choice visit nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters
or call **0300 303 5678**

To our Patients,

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Before we tell you anything else, let us tell you why we became GPs. To care for people. To care for you. We want to give great care, to meet you, to listen to you, and to look after you and your families. It may not feel this way right now, but all we can say is the truth.

And the truth is – general practice is in crisis. Not because of us, or the staff who work with us. It is because of decades of underfunding and neglect, broken government promises and political contempt for you – our patients – that the system is fractured.

This crisis is putting you – and us – at an increased risk.

- There are now 2,200 patients for every GP in England
- Nearly 9 in 10 GPs fear patients aren't always safe at their surgeries
- 1 in 4 (24%) GPs know colleagues who've taken their own lives due to work pressures.
- GPs now see more patients each day than is safe for you or them

This isn't your fault. But it isn't ours either. We can't sit by and let our leaders destroy the general practice we all need. In 2019, the UK Government promised to deliver a workforce plan for General Practice and the NHS including attracting '6,000 more doctors into General Practice'. In 2022, we are still waiting.

GPs from across England, Scotland, and Wales are calling for more support to Rebuild General Practice. This must include:

Recruitment: The UK Government delivering on its commitment of an additional 6,000 GPs in England by 2024.

Retention: Tackling the factors driving GPs out of the profession such as burn out.

Safety: A plan to reduce GP workload and in turn improve patient safety.

That's why we're writing to you. We want you to know what is really happening. And we'd be honoured to receive your support.

- Follow @RebuildGP
- Visit our website and find out more at RebuildGP.co.uk
- Write to your MP to insist that THEY tackle the workforce and workload crisis in general practice

*Thank you for reading,
Your local GPs*