



Trescobeas Newsletter – Winter 2021

Important information about our services

Dear Patients,

We feel compelled to write this to try to dispel the myth being generated by the media and seemingly supported by the Government that we have been closed for the last 18 months and that we continue to refuse face to face appointments.

The fact is that we have never refused to see any of our patients face to face where there has been a clinical need to do so.

Despite the pandemic we have not changed the way we operate, other than introducing technology like eConsult and video consulting to keep our patients and staff as safe as possible – it would be irresponsible of us not to do so. Working this way means we can consult with more patients, and some patients find it much more convenient than having to leave work or home to come to the surgery.

The current media campaign is creating a belief that ‘lazy GPs’ have been sitting in their surgeries refusing to see patients, which is now causing frustration amongst patients who believe they are not being given the service they deserve. The GPs at Trescobeas Surgery (and we are sure in every other GP Practice around the country) are currently working up to 15 hours each day, consulting with at least 60 patients a day each and then working their way through 100s of test results, prescription requests (over 1,500 in a week), onward referrals and letters from other agencies which all demand their time and careful attention.

Our nursing and admin teams are working equally as hard, with the nurses providing nearly 600 appointments (mostly face to face) over the last 7 days alone. Our Admin team have dealt with more than 2,000 telephone calls in the last week and that is before they have looked at the 100s of emails and queries which come in via our website or assisted those patients attending the surgery. There were 64 appointments wasted categorised as “Did Not Attend”, which means that people did not attend their consultation, whether on the phone or face to face.

Have no doubt that we are still very much dealing with a pandemic, infection rates are high in our area and with the winter illnesses beginning to surface, we must ensure keeping our patients and staff safe is our priority. NHS staff, even though they are double jabbed, still have to stay away from work for 10 days if a household member tests positive, so we are trying to manage this ever-increasing workload with fluctuating manpower.

Things are tough for everyone at the moment, and we understand it can be frustrating when you feel your needs are not being met as quickly as you would like – believe us we are frustrated too, but please don’t believe everything you read or hear in the media.

We really are all just trying our very best to help you as quickly and as safely as we can. Thank you for your continued support.

Sue Uglow, Practice Manager



'We are still here for your care'

Domestic violence

The symptoms of domestic abuse include physical abuse, coercive control, verbal abuse, financial abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse.

It's important to recognise that domestic abuse can affect anyone regardless of their gender or sexuality.

Refuge has a domestic abuse helpline, including a British Sign Language service for those who are suffering from domestic abuse.

You might have heard of the term 'coercive control'. It's where one party in a relationship uses more subtle techniques to gain control. It's now formally recognised as a form of domestic abuse.

With people spending more time together than normal, and with unusual circumstances prevailing, more incidents of domestic violence have been reported. If you have been affected by this, you will find help and resources at any of the links below:

First Light is a charity supporting people in Cornwall, Devon and Wiltshire who have been affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence. If you do visit this website, as a viewer you can exit by pressing the exit button and then delete the cookies and browser settings so that you will not be at risk from perpetrators.

<https://www.firstlight.org.uk>

<https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/what-domestic-violence>

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse-resources-lgbt-people>

<https://www.mankind.org.uk/help-for-victims/types-of-domestic-abuse>

<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56491643>

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/coercive-control/>

Men's health

November is the month when lots of men grow a 'tache for charity. It's not just about raising money, although money is helpful; it's about giving men support for things like mental health and suicide prevention, prostate and testicular cancer.

Testicular cancer has a very fast onset. If undetected, tumours can double in size in just 10 to 30



days. If you have a lump in your testicles or feel pain or discomfort in your testicles or scrotum, you should speak to your GP surgery to have this checked. These can be symptoms of benign diseases, but it's better to be safe than sorry.

<https://uk.movember.com>

<https://www.testicularcancerawarenessfoundation.org/what-is-testicular-cancer>

<https://www.testicularcancerawarenessfoundation.org/signs-and-symptoms>

Child flu vaccinations

Flu symptoms come on rapidly and can include a high temperature, feeling exhausted, an aching body, and cold-like symptoms along with sickness or diarrhoea.

While flu is generally a mild illness, children can become unwell and need further treatment if their symptoms don't settle.

The flu vaccine for children is safe and effective. Children can catch and spread flu easily, so vaccinating them helps to protect them and others. If your child is aged 2-3, or is aged 6 months to 17 years of age and at increased risk from flu, please contact the surgery to discuss this.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/child-flu-vaccine/>

Stay well in winter

Those who are pregnant, aged under 5, or over 65, on limited incomes, who have a long-term health condition or who have a disability may be more vulnerable to the effects of cold weather.

From 1st November to 31st March each year, the Met Office runs a system for cold weather alerts to ensure that people are advised in advance if the weather is likely to be adverse.

If you have elderly or vulnerable neighbours, why not keep an eye out to make sure they're OK. If you notice that curtains are closed during the daytime, or milk bottles are left out, why not knock on the door and check your neighbours are alright. If the weather is very cold, icy or slippery, why not check to see if your neighbours need anything before you pop to the shops. Most of all, if neighbours are elderly or housebound, they may not get a chance to talk to others very often, so a chat and a cuppa might be just what's needed.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/keep-warm-keep-well/>

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/cold-weather-alert/?tab=coldWeatherAlert&season=normal>

<https://www.thenationalcareline.org/SafetyAtHome/CheckOnYourNeighbour>



Flu vaccination

Flu vaccines are safe and effective and can help to protect you against influenza. You may be offered a COVID-19 vaccination at the same time as your influenza if you're due to have one as it's safe to administer both at the same time.

Most people who contract influenza will recover within a week, but for some people the complications can be severe, leading to hospitalisation, disability and even death. If you're offered a vaccination for flu, please consider having it. It could save your or someone else's life.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-flu-vaccination-who-should-have-it-and-why>

Lung Cancer Awareness Month

Lung cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in the UK, and it's rare in those aged under 40. Around 72% of cases can be attributed to smoking. There are few early signs of lung cancer, but many sufferers will eventually develop such symptoms as a persistent cough, coughing up blood, breathlessness and unexplained weight loss or aches and pains when coughing or breathing.

Finger clubbing and back or shoulder pain are some of the less frequently recognised symptoms of lung cancer. While they do not occur in every patient, they're symptoms that might not be recognised.

The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation was set up by cardiothoracic surgeon Professor Ray Donnelly who was hugely concerned about the challenge posed by lung cancer. Since then, the charity has helped fund research, improve access to treatments and support all those affected by lung cancer.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lung-cancer/>

<https://roycastle.org/campaigns/spot-the-difference/spot-the-symptoms/>

<https://roycastle.org/about-us/our-mission/>

App of the month

My House of Memories is an app designed for and with those living with dementia and their carers. It has links to pictures and sounds to evoke memories and prompt discussion.

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/my-house-memories/>

Alcohol awareness (15th – 21st November)

The theme of this year's Alcohol Awareness Week is 'alcohol and relationships'. Alcohol can put an intense strain on family, personal and work relationships.

After a long period of lockdowns and social isolation, some people have found their relationship with alcohol, and with others, has changed.



If you're drinking too much, it's not necessarily sensible to stop drinking immediately, even if you feel ready. Long-term or heavy use of alcohol can leave you vulnerable to some severe side effects if you stop abruptly. Whether you think you need to seek help yourself, or you're hoping to support a friend or family member, the links below should help:

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/alcohol-awareness-week-1>

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help-now/family-and-friends>

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help-now>

COPD awareness (17th November)

Wednesday 17th November is COPD Awareness Day. If you or someone you care about has been diagnosed with COPD, the British Lung Foundation has a wealth of resources and information to help and support you.

You can see the 'Keeping Well with COPD' site, hosted by the British Lung Foundation, here:

<https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/copd/world-copd-day>

<https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/copd>

Assignment of named GP for all new and existing patients

As you may be aware, Dr Clark has now left Trescobeas Surgery. With her departure, we have had to look at our patient list, and re-assign her patients to a new named GP. At the same time, we have taken the time to review the assignment of patients to GPs in line with the number of sessions that each GP works within the Practice.

If you have any queries or concerns about this, please can you contact us here to discuss in person.

COVID Exemption Certificates

We have received information from NHS England about COVID Exemption Certificates: once the decision to either confirm or reject your exemption request has been made, there is nothing further that the Practice can do. You will receive a letter of confirmation / rejection from HH Global. If you need assistance, you need to call 119 – the Surgery is not able to help in this matter.