



# NewsWATCH

## The Watlington & Chalgrove GP Practice Newsletter



Issue 030

Email us at: [watchalppg@btinternet.com](mailto:watchalppg@btinternet.com) - Website [www.watlington-surgeries.nhs.uk](http://www.watlington-surgeries.nhs.uk)

January 2023



### Members

#### Watlington

- Doreen Hobbs
- Marian Davis
- Josephine Carrington
- Ellen Collins
- George Bruce
- Nicky Smallbone
- Marie Colquhoun

#### Chalgrove

- Alison Franklin
- Caron Cox
- Lynn Baker
- Neil Topping
- David Lee

New members are always welcome. Come along for a no obligation "look see" at our next meeting. If you have any issue that you would like raised at a PPG Meeting, please contact any of the above or email us.

### Special points of interest:

- An Update from the Practice

**Contact Us**  
**By Email**

[watchalppg@btinternet.com](mailto:watchalppg@btinternet.com)

## A Letter From Your Practice

We are aware that many patients, locally and nationally, are experiencing difficulties in getting the care and treatment they feel they need and we do understand the frustrations felt by patients accessing our services. We are working hard to accommodate the increased, unprecedented level of demand.

All our GPs have a close working relationship and regularly meet to discuss local issues. Both Surgeries are experiencing a challenging and growing strain with declining GP numbers, a significant rise in demand, a struggle to recruit and retain staff and a huge increase in new registrations from local housing developments.

We have never been busier. The latest figures available representing the national picture are as follows.

- 32.9 million appointments were estimated to have happened in November 2022, 2022 which is nearly 6 million more than in November 2019 during pre-pandemic levels.
- GP appointment bookings reached record highs over the winter of 2021/22, and numbers during the current winter season are significantly higher.

Whilst these national figures may be difficult to relate to with regards to the personal experiences of patients in Watlington and Chalgrove, they do demonstrate how demand has hugely increased with little or no extra resources to cope with that demand.

Nationally, General Practice is also experiencing more personalised attacks on social media. Practice staff appreciate that illness brings anxiety and fear and therefore understand the frustration caused by the delays in accessing care. The majority of people who need support from NHS staff do so in a respectful way that helps us create a safe environment for all. Sadly, there is a very small minority who are abusive towards NHS staff. The NHS has a zero tolerance policy towards this. Abuse and intimidation are never acceptable and has led to the loss of vital members of staff.

There is a perception amongst some that the hours GPs work are limited to those when they are in a Surgery dealing with patient appointments, either face to face or via telephone consultations. The diagram overleaf tries to demonstrate that patient consultations are just "the tip of the iceberg" and there is a host of additional tasks that need to be undertaken before and after the actual Surgery consultation period which make for very long days for all Surgery staff.

We are grateful for your patience and understanding of the pressures facing the NHS as we continue to tackle the enormous health challenges put forth by the Covid Pandemic. Please remember you can help us in many ways by using online options like AskFirst (an online consultation facility) or the NHS App to view test results, order prescriptions, obtain lifestyle advice and cancel appointments.

Whilst it is easy to focus on negative aspects, we are always working to improve services available wherever we can.

- Whilst we no longer offer covid vaccinations as these are undertaken at central hubs such as the Kassam Stadium, we have been able to administer flu vaccinations to over 2000 of our eligible patients during the current season
- Across both Surgeries, we are answering, on average, nearly 300 telephone calls daily.
- Sharon Toone is our First Contact Physio (FCP) who works Mondays at Watlington and Thursdays at Chalgrove. The vast majority of musculoskeletal FCPs are physiotherapists with enhanced skills. They can help patients with musculoskeletal issues such as back, neck and joint pain by:
  - ◆ assessing and diagnosing issues
  - ◆ giving expert advice on how best to manage their conditions
  - ◆ referring them onto specialist services if necessary

*(Continued overleaf)*

- Patients with back and joint pain, including conditions such as arthritis, will now be able to contact their local physiotherapist directly, rather than waiting to see a GP or being referred to hospital. Patients can also see a physiotherapist by speaking to the GP Practice Receptionist or by being referred by their GP.
- We also now have Rosie Darby, our resident Primary Care Network (PCN) Pharmacist, who does medication reviews, amends prescriptions/medication queries etc.
  - ◊ A PCN pharmacist works alongside a multidisciplinary diverse team of health care professionals in general practice and within the primary care network, providing primary support for prescription and medication queries.



If you feel strongly enough to contact our local MP, please email John Howell at [john.howell.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:john.howell.mp@parliament.uk) to let him know of the issues you are experiencing.

The crisis facing General Practice is bigger than just our local Practice, it a national issue affecting everyone.

Thank you for your support

**The Chiltern & The Brook Surgeries**

