



Unity Healthcare Patient Newsletter

Dr David Brandon, Clinical Lead GP

Dear Patients,

It has now been nearly 2 years since my return to this practice and I would say that the practice is nearly unrecognisable. Not least a new name and a new website, but deeper entire system change has taken place in nearly every aspect of what we do. The pace of change has been relentless, and I can be so proud of the dedicated and talented team that work with me tirelessly to help you and your families in the face of all challenges thrown their way.

It is this dedication that has led to a whole-team nomination for a **NHS Parliamentary Award**, "Futures" category, for our outstanding work in the implementation of our eConsult platform, working with eConsult to develop this service and sharing this learning with other practices and commissioners across the nation.

I would not want you to underestimate the impact that the rapid development of this platform has had on the ability for General Practice to function effectively throughout the pandemic, including providing more consultations than ever before seen. We have been undertaking nearly 1000 consultations per week, between the media of eConsult, telephone, video and face-to-face consultations, and that does not even include the stellar efforts of our nursing team to keep essential services open.

This has only been possible through the willingness of our patient population to work collaboratively with us, to engage with the platform, and by providing so many words of kindness to my staff and colleagues who have appreciated every bit of positivity that you send their way. Thank you for this. Positive feedback positively motivates, and the horrible effect of previous problems we have faced with both in person and online abuse feels like it has been consigned to the dustbin of history.

This brings me on to update you about our recent CQC inspection.

Following a re-inspection of the practice in October 2020, the CQC have decided to remove the practice from "special measures" to reflect progress made. Whilst the overall rating remains "Required improvement", they now consider us to be "Good" in the majority of the domains, and have acknowledged the award nomination and eConsult work to be "Outstanding".

The thorny issue of the National patient survey results leads them to the overall conclusion. This patient survey was carried out before we had the opportunity to move our services to a fully demand led model and implemented eConsult and Total Triage. We are therefore hopeful that when next surveyed, you may be able to provide them with more positive feedback about us!

For those who have not had contact with us recently, and may have therefore not noticed the change, I wanted to explain that we have now completely overhauled our system to allow for provision of a "demand led" service. This means that if any patient contacts the practice by eConsult, we are able to respond to the problem by the end of the next working day at the latest. Often it is much sooner, particularly if the matter is urgent. **Anyone that needs to be seen in person as a result of their eConsult is offered this**, usually on the same day. For anyone that is not able to use the eConsult, we are able to provide telephone consultation in the first instance. **Thank you for embracing eConsult**, as this has made it much easier for those who are more vulnerable through disability, specific communication needs, those with emergencies, or those that are nearing the end of their lives to reach us by telephone without getting caught up in an interminable queue. This is a new and rapidly improving service, to which more and more functionality is added regularly.

Providing this demand led service is hard work, and my team are working very hard to provide this for you. Many of you noticed (a comment about this on Facebook was noticed and shared between the staff!) that we are often here late into the evening trying to keep on top of this demand and to help you, and are grateful for your kind acknowledgements of our efforts.

It is very frustrating to read reports in the mainstream print media about "General Practice being closed", but we have had lots of kindness from the people of Haverhill (and surrounding villages) who I think have been wise to see the benefits of the new ways of working. After reading the newspaper, my family rather wondered where I have been all this time! We are doing everything we can, within the limitations of our budget, to continue to expand the team so you will continue to regularly notice new names, voices and faces.

We have also found great reward in working as a training practice. Many of you will have encountered our current trainees in some capacity, and will have noticed how excellent they are. We have a vibrant learning community here, which stands us in good stead for facing new challenges.

Covid-19 has brought a fair few of them (to you all!), and we don't know what the future holds. What we do know, is that we will continue to do what we can to help, and to work with our integrated neighbourhood teams, partner organisations and other providers. We however do not have any details about forthcoming vaccines!

In the meantime, influenza vaccination remains a priority. We are calling in patients according to clinical risk and priority, in a coordinated manner to match our incoming supply of vaccines and NHE England instructions. When we do contact you, please do come for your flu vaccination, this is particularly important this year with the dual threat of coronavirus.

We have made great progress so far, and are miles ahead of where we would have been at this stage of any other year. This is due to the hard work of my nursing team and the administrative staff behind the scenes that help them, as well as your willing engagement for which I thank you.

We are also on track to improve our rates of cervical screening back to the national average (or above), as this was previously well below. This screening programme is really important for the early diagnosis of Cervical Cancer, and thank you so much for your ongoing engagement with our campaign to prioritise this. We hope that one day this cancer will become extinct, with the implementation of the HPV vaccination programme. In the mean time, cervical screening is the best tool we have.

Do get in touch with us if you might have symptoms of cancer; whilst NHS services in general are very disrupted by the pandemic, this really is a priority, and we are here to help.

I wish you all the best of luck with your own personal challenges that this pandemic has brought you, and we will continue to do what we can to help you.

Dr David Brandon, Clinical lead GP

Unity Healthcare Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Want to have a say in how your surgery is run? Why not become a member of the Unity Healthcare PPG?

We are always looking for new members as we need your help to ensure our surgery continues to improve.

As a PPG member, you can better understand how your practice is run, discuss areas of improvement and give your input on changes.

To register your interest, please ask at Reception or email:

If you require this newsletter in an alternative format, please contact Sarah Miller, Governance Manager, Suffolk GP Federation CIC

Tel: 07908 950194

NHS Email: sarah.miller29@nhs.net



Contact Us

If you have any questions or wish to share feedback with us, please email:

wsccg.unityhealthcare@nhs.net

Or call:

01440 841 300



To keep up to date with our news, please visit www.unityhealthhaverhill.org.uk or search for 'Unity Healthcare' on Facebook.

Patients can also join the Surgery's Patient Participation Group. To find out more, please email wsccg.unityhealthcare@nhs.net

Healthwatch Suffolk

You can also share feedback with Healthwatch Suffolk, an independent body set up to shape and influence local NHS and social care services.

Call **01449 703 949** or email info@healthwatchesuffolk.co.uk

