

# THE ARLINGTON ROAD MEDICAL PRACTICE NEWSLETTER



July 2020

**D**ear Patients - it's time for another newsletter to keep you up to date with how we are operating, what services are available and share a bit of Practice news. We hope this finds you well but if not, we hope it is helpful by informing you about how you can best access our services.

## *How we are working at the Surgery*

**A**s in our previous newsletter, we continue to assess all patients requesting an appointment by telephone triage. Patients can contact the Surgery by telephone - on the usual number, or via Engage Consult – please see separate article on pages 2 & 3 specific to this service.

**W**hen you phone the Practice requesting an appointment or telephone advice, our receptionists will ask you to share with them some information regarding your request. This is so that we can ensure you speak to the right person first. Our receptionists may give you information about another service that may be more appropriate to your needs or they will forward your details on to one of our clinicians who will call you back. Our receptionists are not able to book you a face to face appointment at this time.

**O**ur clinicians are finding that the majority of requests can be dealt with over the telephone or by video consultation. There are obviously some conditions that require a face to face examination and if this is required, the clinician you speak to will arrange a time for you to attend the Surgery.

**H**ow we operate is not going to return to normal for some time whilst the NHS continues to assess the situation and 'lockdown' measures are gradually lifted. We need to continue to work in a way that means all patients have access to healthcare treatment and advice in a safe way, but not necessarily the usual way. We need to ensure that we focus on urgent care – including our vulnerable/high risk patients, those with long term conditions and ensuring we respond quickly to concerns regarding cancer and mental health.

### **What's in place for those who do need to attend the Surgery?**

**A** video call system has been installed at our front door. The door is locked and only patients with an appointment will be admitted via the video call system.

**P**atients who have entered the surgery wearing their own disposable gloves will be asked to remove them, dispose of them in a clinical bin and use the hand sanitiser available. If you wish to wear gloves when you leave the Surgery, please ensure you have a spare pair with you to put on as you leave.

**P**atients will be greeted by our reception staff in the usual manner, but they and you are now protected by a perspex screen at reception. You will be directed to where you should wait and will be called into your consultation by the clinician as usual.

**A**ppointments are timed to allow for our clinicians to change PPE and do essential cleaning between patients. Timings also ensure that numbers of patients in the Surgery at any one time are kept to a minimum. Please arrive on time, but not early, for your appointment to assist with this. If you arrive early, you may be asked to wait outside until your appointment time. Our waiting rooms have been set up to only accommodate a specified number of people to ensure social distancing is maintained. We would politely ask that patients attend alone unless they require a carer or parent to accompany them.

**A**ll patients attending pre-booked appointments are triaged, prior to attending, with a Covid Questionnaire. This is either sent by SMS message or a telephone call to their landline. These questions are repeated to them again at our door entry system by our receptionists.

**M**ost patients who attend are, in line with recent advice, now wearing face masks/coverings. Whilst we are unable to insist all patients wear masks when attending the surgery, it is preferable that they do – especially if they are going to have prolonged contact time with a clinician.

**O**ur clinicians seeing patients face to face are all wearing Level II PPE – this consists of disposable aprons, gloves and masks. For some procedures, where risk assessment indicates the need, they will also be wearing visors or eye protection.

**O**ur clinicians are following strict hand hygiene with each change of PPE and rooms and equipment are cleaned after each patient and at the start and finish of each shift. For the communal areas of the surgery such as stairwells, lifts, touch screens, handles etc. we have implemented increased cleaning schedules throughout the day.

**W**e have weekly Covid meetings to discuss any current issues and alerts and implement actions as appropriate. The team is working tirelessly to ensure that our staff and patients are kept as safe as possible.

**A** patient who visited the Surgery recently said *'Congratulations and thanks for all of the information you send to me. My warfarin INR appointment at 10.30 today was very impressive and I felt safe and secure. The receptionist and Nurse Wendy were brilliant. Well done.'*

## *Engage Consult*


**Y**ou may remember from our previous newsletter that we had just introduced a new service called 'Engage Consult'. Some patients are opting to use this service to contact the Practice instead of telephoning and this is working well.

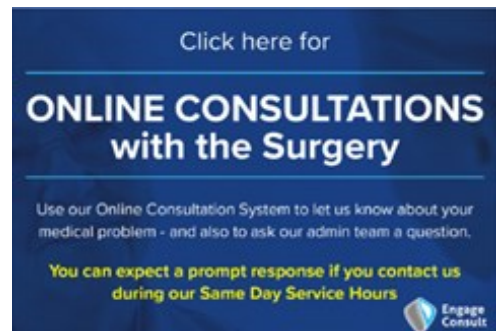
**I**t can be used to contact our admin team as well as our clinicians. If your call is non-urgent and you are comfortable with using online alternatives, you may like to give this a try next time you need to contact the Practice.

**I**t is particularly useful if you need to share an image with a clinician to help with diagnosing your condition. For example, a skin complaint, foot or leg swelling, post-operative wounds/scars, minor trauma, sore throats, eye infections etc. Please ensure the images are clear and a few different angles can be useful.



## How do I access it?

Simply click on the link on the front page of our website that looks like this 



The first time you use the service, you will need to register. The registration process is simple and there are guides on our website to aid you with this.

Each time you log in in future, the system will ask you if you have an administrative query or a medical problem. This will ensure the details you give are directed to the correct members of our team.

### The choices when selecting an administrative query are:

- Med 3 (sick note)
- Letter from Doctor
- Medical Information
- Prescription Request
- Travel Information
- Something else

After selecting one of these options, you will reach a free text screen which will allow you to type the details of your request.

### The choices when selecting a medical problem are:

- New problem
- Doctor asked me to get back in touch
- Problem with existing condition

Again after selecting one of these options, you will be able to give details of your condition. Giving details about your symptoms and how long you have had them will enable our clinicians to prioritise the requests we receive on a daily basis.

Sometimes people find, in the pressure of the moment on the telephone, they forget certain details when explaining their symptoms. Using this service gives you an opportunity to gather your thoughts and ensure you have documented everything before submitting your query.

Remember, if online services are not for you, then this isn't us becoming impersonal. On the contrary, it is an additional service which will be helpful to some people. Our receptionists are still at the end of the phone to talk to anyone who prefers to speak in person from the outset.



**livi** An alternative service, instead of contacting the Practice, which was recently launched prior to the Coronavirus outbreak and continues to be available is Livi.



You may have been sent information in the post about this Video Consultation Service. Using the service requires you to download an app on your smart phone or tablet and registering. The doctors running this service are not from Arlington Road Medical Practice, but your medical

record can be accessed and will be updated.

You can book an appointment using the app and the GP will phone you using the app to begin the appointment. This service is available to all and may be of particular help to those who are working and find it difficult to get through to the Practice when our telephones lines are busy and need to know what time the doctor will be calling them.



Public Health  
England

**S**hielding guidance for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable has changed. To find the latest government guidance for this group of people, please visit the link given below.

People who are clinically extremely vulnerable are at high risk of serious illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. They should have received a letter advising them to shield or have been told by their GP or hospital clinician.

This includes clinically extremely vulnerable people living in long-term care facilities for the elderly or people with special needs. If you have been told that you're clinically extremely vulnerable, you should:

- Follow the advice in the government guidance that can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>
- Register online at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable> or call 0800 028 8327 to get additional support if you need it, and before 17 July so that support can reach you in time.

## *Baby Immunisations*

We would encourage all parents to ensure that their child's routine immunisations are kept up to date at this time. We understand that you may have concerns about taking your child into a healthcare setting. However, we would like to reassure you that we are running our immunisation clinic as safely as possible. We are not holding our usual drop-in, sit and wait clinic that can result in a very busy waiting room. Instead parents are being sent letter invitations from Child Health, informing them when their child's vaccination is due, and asking them to contact the Surgery to make an appointment for the appropriate week.

Our immunisation clinic is still held on a **Wednesday but by timed appointments between 09:00 – 12:00**. The appointments are 20 minutes apart, ensuring that the previous patient has left before the next arrives and essential cleaning and PPE changes can be made between appointments.

There will be minimal patients in the Surgery when you attend, as we are seeing very few face to face appointments. Any patients who are in attendance will be waiting in other waiting areas and will have been screened for Covid-19 symptoms over the telephone before their appointment. The Surgery door is locked at all times and only patients with appointments can enter after using our video call at the door.



Continued overleaf...

**A**lthough Covid-19 is the virus at the forefront of all of our minds at this time, it is important to remember that the routine immunisations offered to our children, protect them from other potentially fatal illnesses that we see very little of - thanks to our fantastic immunisation programme. By not keeping these immunisations up to date at this time, we not only put our children at risk of contracting these other nasty illnesses, but we contribute to putting the wider community at risk if these diseases are allowed to begin to circulate. We would want to prevent this trend at the best of times, but it would be catastrophic if allowed to happen now.

**Be wise – immunise!**

**Cervical Screening** **H**ave you received a letter inviting you for Cervical Screening (a smear test)? If yes, please contact the Surgery to make an appointment. We are now holding a clinic every Wednesday morning.

**A**ll patients who had their smear test appointment cancelled at the beginning of lockdown have now been contacted and rebooked.

**W**e understand you may have some concerns about attending the Surgery at the current time, Jo's Trust have some helpful FAQ's on their website which may help you with your decision <https://www.jostrust.org.uk/information/coronavirus/faqs>



**Mental Wellbeing** **T**he current times continue to be anxious and stressful for people of all walks of life. Whether you are lonely and isolated or surrounded by your family 24/7 without a moment to call your own. Whether you are unemployed or your job is more demanding than normal. Whether you have friends/relatives you are continuously anxious about or you feel to have nobody who cares about *you*. Whether you have underlying medical conditions and fear to go out in public or whether you are usually as fit as a fiddle, but not being able to do all the things you usually do is making you feel low. Whatever your situation, help is available when everything feels too much.

**H**ealth in Mind provide courses and therapies to people who are registered with a GP in East Sussex, over 18 and struggling with mild to moderate stress, anxiety and or low mood. Their services, are still running but they do have less capacity than normal and are not able to offer some of their courses currently. However, if you make a self-referral via their website at [www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/service-health-mind](http://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/service-health-mind), they will contact you and let you know what they can offer.

**P**lease note they are not a crisis helpline. If you feel you need urgent help, please call the **Sussex Mental Health Line on 0300 5000 101**. This is a 24/7 service run by registered clinicians who can provide help, support and advice to anyone at any time of day or night.



## *Availability of Sexual Health Services during the Coronavirus Pandemic*

**T**he following information is taken from [www.eastsussexsexualhealth.co.uk](http://www.eastsussexsexualhealth.co.uk)  
The specialist Sexual Health Services are still available to all. We will continue to offer a self-referral service, however, our drop in and wait services are still suspended so please do not visit unless you have a pre-arranged appointment. In line with national guidance, we continue to limit face to face appointments to protect the public that use our services and the

people who work in our team. However, the picture is changing and our services are expanding in line with government guidance. We are starting to re-introduce limited Coil and Implant appointments so please keep an eye on our website as our services gradually increase.

**M**onday to Friday 8.30am-5.45pm our telephone and video link assessment service is in operation from our sexual health hubs in Station Plaza Hastings and Avenue House Eastbourne where you will speak to a trained clinician who will triage your needs and make a face to face appointment with you if necessary.

**P**lease be assured that if you need to be seen we will arrange for you to come into one of our clinics. If you attend our clinics you will be asked to wear facial covering. Please call the service on Freephone 0808 168 1282 OR Avenue House Eastbourne on 0300 131 4537 OR Station Plaza Hastings on 01424 464 750.

We may be able to meet some of your needs by

- Posting medication including contraception
- Sexual health screen home testing kits
- Free condoms available via post
- Emergency Contraception for all via the sexual health clinics on 0808 168 1282

**I**f you're over 16 you can also order emergency hormonal contraception (the morning after pill) online at [https://sh24.or.uk/ec\\_now\\_order/age\\_and\\_postcode/new](https://sh24.or.uk/ec_now_order/age_and_postcode/new)

**U**ckfield, Hailsham and St Leonard's sessions remain closed. If you would have used these services then please call the hubs and we will assess the best way to meet your sexual health need.



**S**truggling with your weight, the motivation to exercise, giving up smoking, missing the gym? One You East Sussex are still OPEN! They have changed the way they work to ensure we can all still access their services and stay healthy at this time. They are delivering all of their support services in a safe way, with guidance and sessions being provided via telephone, Skype, Zoom and Facebook. Their Stop Smoking Services are still posting out NRT to clients who need them.

You can refer yourself to their services by visiting their website at [oneyoueastsussex.org.uk](http://oneyoueastsussex.org.uk)

*"I downloaded their Couch to 5K Programme and can recommend it – after 9 weeks I have built up to running 30 mins without stopping" Alison, our Contract Manager.*

## Prescription Requests

**P**lease remember we cannot take prescription requests over the telephone, please do not phone the Surgery expecting our receptionists to do this for you. Please use one of the alternative methods...

- In writing – by post or in person to our external post-box
- Via your regular Pharmacy
- Via our website
- Via E-consult – link on our website
- Patient Online Services – link on our website



## Contact Details

**I**t is always important, and now more than ever, to ensure we have up to date contact details for you and your family. If you have moved address or changed your landline or mobile number, please let us know as soon as possible. You do not need to contact us by telephone to do this, please use our website where possible. You can either use the link at the bottom of the home page or contact us via Engage consult.



## Two New Partners

**D**r Grace Castronovo has spent the past year completing her GP Training at the Practice. She has now passed her final exams and we are delighted to announce that, when she completes her placement at the beginning of August, she will be joining the Practice as a Partner. See Page 8 to read Dr Castronovo's Staff Profile.



**O**nce again, being a Training Practice, has given us a fantastic opportunity to recruit another Partner who we know will fit in well with the team and Surgery ethos.



**W**e are also delighted to announce that Dr Rose Moore-Moffatt, who has been a Salaried GP at the Practice since December 2019, will also join the Partnership in August this year.

**F**rom August 2020 the Practice Partners will be **Dr Peter Williams, Dr Paul Frisby, Dr Mark Jones, Dr Iftikhar Ahmad, Dr Ben McFadden, Dr Laure Berthelot-Cabaret, Dr Adam Zacks, Dr Rose Moore-Moffatt and Dr Grace Castronovo.**

## Congratulations Dr Jenani

**C**ongratulations to Dr Jenani, who has recently given birth to a beautiful baby girl named Jaanavi. Mother and baby are both doing well.

**D**r Jenani, completed her GP Training with the Practice and remained with us, after her training, in a Salaried GP role. She is currently taking a break to enjoy time with Jaanavi and we wish them both well.



## A Heartfelt Thank You from the Reception Team



Reception Team



**A** big thank you goes to all the patients who have taken time to ask how we are and wishing us well. Simple messages along those lines have meant a lot. Thank you too to the patients who have sent in gifts during the last few difficult months - chocolates, cakes, fruit, biscuits etc.

**I**t is very uplifting knowing that patients have been thinking about us and have appreciated all we are doing/trying to do.

## Staff Profiles

**I**t has been a number of years since we included a staff profile in our Practice Newsletter. We are beginning again this month with an insight into the career and interests of Dr Grace Castronovo on pages 8 and 9.

HM Government

NHS

**CORONAVIRUS**  
**STAY ALERT**  
**TO STAY SAFE**

- ✓ Keep a safe distance from others
- ✓ Stay home as much as possible
- ✓ Keep washing your hands regularly

**STAY ALERT ▶ CONTROL THE VIRUS ▶ SAVE LIVES**



# Dr Grace Castronovo

GP Registrar (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

As of August 2020: GP Partner at Arlington Road Medical Practice

## How long did you train for?

- 10 years altogether:
- 5 years at medical school (Brighton and Sussex Medical School)
  - 2 years as a foundation doctor (Bury St Edmunds)
  - 3 years GP training (East Sussex)

## What were your favourite rotations?

- Outside of General Practice, I really enjoyed:
- St Wilfrid's Hospice
  - Psychiatry
  - Elderly Care

## What are your favourite parts of being a GP?

- The variety in General Practice.
- The continuity of being able to see patients again and again over several years.
- The wonderful team at Arlington Road who are always supportive and make me feel valued as a member of the team.
- Being in a community setting, with the privilege to visit patients at home, and work with other healthcare organisations.

## What are your least favourite parts of being a GP?

The lack of time I am able to give my patients because of pressures within the healthcare system. Prior to the pandemic, my colleagues were doing 10 minutes consultations, with myself as a registrar seeing patients every 15 minutes. Now we are doing telephone/video consultations which bring their own challenges. I always endeavour to ensure patients feel listened to and satisfied that I've addressed their concerns. I hope we can find the right balance of providing care following the pandemic.

## What are your daily tasks and responsibilities?

Prior to the Coronavirus Pandemic I was reviewing patients every 15 minutes from 08:30-18:00 with a one hour lunch break. I was also doing home visits and telephone calls, as well as checking blood test results, correspondence from other healthcare providers and completing tasks from the admin team. Currently, we are reviewing the majority of our patients via telephone or video consultations, with face to face appointments reserved for specific cases.

## What does a typical day look like?

- Arrive at 08:00.
- Telephone/video consultations from 08:30-13:00 (prior to the pandemic, these were 15 minute face-to-face appointments).
- Lunch 13:00-14:00.
- Telephone/video consultations from 14:00-18:00 (prior to the pandemic, these were 15 minute face-to-face appointments).
- Home visits, when I am designated 'visit doctor'.
- Admin time between phone calls (prior to the pandemic, as a registrar I had one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon as designated admin time).

Continued overleaf...



## How will your role change in the future?

4th August - finish GP training

5th August - Become a partner at Arlington Road Surgery which means:

- Taking on my own patient list.
- Taking responsibility, alongside the other partners for the running of the surgery.
- Investing in the building as a business partner.
- The structured timetable of 08:00-18:00 with a lunch break and admin time is protected for registrars who are learning. As a partner, I will be expected to see more patients and perform admin tasks without protected time. This means coming in earlier, leaving later, and using lunch breaks to catch up.

## Outside of General Practice, what other careers interest you?

**As a doctor:** Hospice Work - loved working with the inpatient and community team at St Wilfrid's Hospice; they do a fantastic job.

**Not as a doctor:** All things promoting a healthy lifestyle, including nutrition, exercise and meditation.

I am also interested in aesthetics and am currently doing a skin diploma to offer skin rejuvenation treatments to boost body confidence.

## To you, what is the most important part of your role?

To do the best for my patients.

## Do you find your job rewarding/enjoyable/hard? How do you practice self-care, and what activities do you engage in to wind down from work and prepare for the next week?

Overall, I really love my job, I feel General Practice is the right environment for me. Yes, it can be tiring and emotionally exhausting at times, but I feel I am able to make a big impact for my patients and that brings me great satisfaction. Also, with experience I have become better able to recognise when I need support and to recharge. At those times, I lean on my family, my colleagues and I practice self-care measures, which for me involves exercising, journaling, listening to music, and going for long walks.

I exercise often to de-stress. I will change my routine to keep it interesting and challenging. I also love going for long walks in the Sussex countryside and visiting National Trust properties. Other interests include socialising with family/friends and baking.

## At the end of the day, do you leave work feeling stressed, or invigorated?

Honestly, this can be so variable day to day. It is a busy job which can feel stressful and exhausting at times, but on the whole, I leave work feeling satisfied that I've done my best which is all I can ask for.

## What do you wish patients knew about your role?

A GP registrar is already a doctor! It can be really confusing for patients who perhaps are not familiar with the career pathway of doctors, but GP registrars are qualified doctors who have typically been working in the hospital setting, prior to deciding to train as a GP.

# **THE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP NEWSLETTER**



**July 2020**

**This newsletter is prepared by the Arlington Road Patient Participation Group (PPG). The PPG consists of a group of patients whose aim is to make a positive contribution to the services offered to patients at the Surgery. The PPG meets every 6 weeks; every other meeting they are joined by representatives of the Practice Staff.**

**Items in this newsletter are of personal interest to members of the PPG who feel the information contained therein may be of benefit to other patients. The content is not necessarily endorsed by the Practice.**

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## **WE URGENTLY NEED YOUR HELP!**

The PPG is a group of volunteer patients from the Arlington Road Medical Practice, who together with the practice staff, make a positive contribution to the services offered at the surgery.

The Arlington Road Medical Practice is a large practice with over 12,000 patients, and we are now hoping to find *some more volunteers* who would like to join our group. We meet every 6 weeks, and at alternate meetings we are joined by a member of the medical staff. In this way, we can act as a sort of communication bridge between patients and the practice.

If you think this might interest you and would like to find out more about the PPG, please write your name, address, telephone number and email address on a piece of paper, put this in an envelope and address it to Shirley Moth, Practice Manager at Arlington Road Medical Practice.

You can either place your envelope in the Practice external letterbox or send it by post to Shirley Moth, Practice Manager, 1 Arlington Road, Eastbourne BN21 1DH, if that is more convenient for you.

**We do hope to hear from some of you soon.**

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### **A quote from one of our members about the Practice...**

*"If I have needed to contact the practice any time since lockdown, my queries and appointments have been dealt with efficiently, punctually and in a friendly manner. So very reassuring during these unpleasant times." CS*