

Tonge Fold News

Winter 2024

- Welcome to our latest newsletter.
We are looking at:
- Staff News
- Medical Students
- Appointments
- Primary Care Network & Extended Out of Hours Prescribing
- Local Pharmacy Services
- Patient Participation Group (PPG)
- Thanks

Welcome

Welcome to our newsletter. We hope that it will update you on what has been happening in the practice.

You will no doubt be aware, from the news, media and your own experiences, the NHS has continued to be under great pressure, with hospital waiting times, clinic waiting times and operation waiting times become longer. These pressures have a knock on effect on general practice, for example, we have increased demand from patients asking for our help with referral waiting times and specialist clinic results, over which we have no control.

Throughout all of these difficulties, our staff continue to try to provide stable, consistent care for you.

Staff News

Doctors

It has been a longstanding ambition of some of our partners, to have **GP trainees** in the practice. These are doctors who have been working as a doctor for at least 3 years, in a mixture of hospital and GP jobs, who have decided to become a GP. You have probably heard about the shortage of GPs in the country, and this is one of the ways that we can help to increase the number of GPs.

From February 2024, we will be training two of these doctors. The doctors will be with us for either 6 or 12 months.

This is good for the trainees but also good for you, our patients, as these doctors will be able to provide additional appointments, in addition to those we currently have.

As with our other doctors, for routine appointments, you can opt for these doctors and for urgent appointments, such as those on the day, you may be allocated an appointment with one of them.

Dr Rothwell and Dr McLoughlin will be supervising these trainees.

Dr Faulkner stepped back from routine clinics in August 2021 and now only provides specialist clinics e.g. joint injections, minor operations and contraceptive implants. In time, Dr McLoughlin and Dr Durbar will be offering these services.

Our current doctors are: Dr Lowe(F) Dr Scott (M) Dr Rothwell (F) Dr McLoughlin (F) Dr Durbar (M) Dr Acomb(F) & Dr Faulkner (M).

Staff News (Cont)

Nurses

Kath Kerry, and Carol Molyneux continue as our nurses.

Healthcare Assistants

We are very pleased to welcome **Shahina**, whom some people will have met, if you have attended the surgery for an ultrasound scan.

From her blood test clinics and ECGs, we are very excited to develop her skills further.

Reception, Administration, Secretarial and Support Staff

Our Reception Staff do an incredibly important job and the surgery could not run without them. In addition to answering the phones and manning the front desk, they play an important role in your care e.g. by following up your letters and documents.

In general practice, we now have the support of some additional staff specialist staff.

Vanisa has become our health improvement practitioner (HIP). She can help with diet, smoking, diabetes and a range of other conditions, to reduce your need for medication and lead a healthier life. She has taken over from Natalie, who is now our social prescriber, who can help if you are feeling lonely, isolated or are having problems with social needs. Our receptionists, doctors and nurses may suggest getting Natalie and her colleagues to contact you, if they think you may be helped by her.

We have changed our Musculoskeletal Practitioner (known as MSK).

We currently have **Byron**. He can assess joint, muscle, back and bone problems including arranging tests and referrals as needed.

Our Mental Health Practitioner (MHP) **Damon**, is available to discuss mental health problems, including anxiety and depression.

Our Practice Pharmacist, **Ahmed** will be reviewing your medications with you and checking that these are all in order. Many prescription queries, especially regarding formulations and availability, can best be dealt with by him. Ahmed has been doing additional training at university, so that he can take a fuller role in these prescription problems.

Caretaking and Cleaning

A big thanks to Roland our caretaker, and the cleansers who help him out.

Practice Manager

Elaine Leatham continues, ably, as our practice manager.

Our staff are what makes your care what it is, so please treat them with respect at all times.



Medical Students

Many of you may remember that a few years ago, we had medical students in the practice. Coming to the surgery and seeing your appointment and talking to you, is an invaluable opportunity for them. Having good experiences during these times can change the course of their careers and make them think about becoming GPs.

We expect to have medical students again over the next few months. We really appreciate it when patients allow the medical student to sit in their consultation, or when patients are willing to spend a little time talking to them, especially those patients with interesting conditions. Of course, this is your choice.

We will let you know if we have a medical student with us, and you can tell the receptionist or doctor, if you do not want the medical student present.

Appointments

Following feedback from our patient participation group, we have now increased the number of directly bookable face to face appointments, with the GP. Our other GP appointments are telephone first and then a face to face appointment if needed. It is important to offer a mix of appointments, as some patients prefer telephone appointments whilst others prefer face to face.

Telephone appointments have allowed us to cope with the increased demand for services and have offered flexibility for many people who are at work or out and about. We will continually review our appointment makeup.

May we remind patients that when you request for our urgent/emergency on the day appointments, you must be available, both on the phone when the doctor rings and to come to the surgery at the time the doctors states, should you need to be seen. We cannot offer emergency/ urgent appointment timings, for patient convenience.

When you book an appointment, our reception staff will ask you the reason for your appointment. The doctors have asked them to do this as it is important to make sure that you see the right person at the right time. It also means that the doctors can look over the relevant parts of your medical history prior to your appointment, as we know that this can be frustrating for you.

Please remember to book in for your annual reviews with the Nurses and Healthcare Assistants, usually in the month of your birthday. This is especially important for Carer's checks, and patients who have Dementia, a Learning Disability, Asthma, COPD, Heart Disease or Stroke and Diabetes.



Primary Care Network (PCN) and Extended Out of Hours Service

Each GP practice in England is now part of a Primary Care Network (PCN). Our practice is part of the Brightmet and Little Lever PCN.

We host appointments in the evenings and at weekends, as part of this.

Local Pharmacy Services

GP practices are asked to remind you that your local Pharmacy Services are able to provide consultations and advice for a range of conditions, for example sore throats, coughs, colds and blood pressures. This is why you may be offered this option by our Receptionists, It may be a helpful alternative to waiting for GP appointment.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

If you are interested in joining this group, please contact our Practice Manager.

Thanks

Finally a big thank you to all of our patients for your patience and understanding. We do our best for you because you are important to us. We value good relationships with you, even when times are difficult.

