



## Medway South Primary Care Network

The collective name for our practices is:- The Medway South Primary Care Network (PCN), and comprises the following practices: Stonecross & West Drive Surgery - King George Road Surgery - Maidstone Road Surgery - Reach Healthcare Surgeries - Churchill Clinic - Matrix Surgeries

Website address: <https://www.medwaysouthpcn.com>

### **NEWSLETTER NUMBER 1 - FEBRUARY 2022**

We are very pleased to welcome you to this, the first Newsletter from the **Medway South Primary Care Network**. Its aim is to bring you news and information from the surgeries in your area. It has been written with our patients, focusing on the information they want to hear.

Since January 2021, the Medway PCN, has been working alongside the Rochester PCN in delivering well over **101,000** Covid vaccinations! At the time of writing, (end January) we continue with this never ending demand on our surgeries, much of which continues and obviously includes the vital Booster injections.

Obviously, the 'Covid emergency' has resulted in even more pressure on your doctors, nurses, and the surgeries in general. General Practice is currently working hard to expand its workforce in order to improve access to even more appointments. Throughout the pandemic, your surgeries have needed to work differently, by providing more appointments over the phone and online, whilst continuing with a number of face-to-face visits.

We also appreciate that, because the surgery phone lines have been extremely busy, patients continue to find it difficult to get through. We acknowledge that this has been frustrating for patients. Please be reassured that the GP teams are working very hard to help as many people as possible. The overall number of appointments across Kent and Medway are now much higher than they were before the pandemic.

General practice teams now include newly recruited health practitioners by whom you may be offered an appointment. The information provided below explains just some of the ways GP services are now working. Please visit your own GP practice website to check how your surgery is operating.

**What is triage?....**This is undertaken by a trained health professional who is therefore suitably qualified to assess your needs and to decide how best to support you. They will consider:-

- Who could be best to help you? - A doctor, nurse, or other healthcare professional.
- What kind of appointment is best? - To be seen in person or via a phone or video consultation.
- Whether help from another health service is appropriate, for example by pharmacy or urgent treatment centre.

**Why am I seeing someone who is not my GP?....**Many GP practice teams include different healthcare professionals e.g. nurses, physiotherapists, pharmacists and mental health workers. They are suitably equipped to diagnose and treat a range of health conditions. This also ensures that you can get to see the best person for your current needs more quickly.



## General practice appointments: November 2021

The latest general practice appointment figures from NHS England show that 908,737 appointments were carried out in Kent and Medway in November 2021. This is in addition to Kent and Medway GP teams giving over 300,000 vaccinations/boosters in the same month.

We expect that General Practice will remain very busy during the colder months. There are some things we can all do to help:-

- If you have a smart phone: Download the NHS app. You may be able to use this (practice dependant) to book and cancel appointments, and order repeat prescriptions. You can get health advice, view your Covid pass, see your health record and more. You can download the NHS app from the app store or Google Play.
- Again, if you are able to, visit your practice website before you call to see the most up-to-date practice information.
- What about emergencies?.....Always dial 999 in a life-threatening emergency. If you need help with minor injuries at any time, or urgent care when your GP practice or community pharmacy is closed, visit [www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk) or call 111.

**So how can you help us to help you?.....**It's a fact that health services generally continue to be under extreme pressure and that, at times, it's difficult for us all! We would therefore very much appreciate everyone's support and understanding. So please continue to help by:-

- Wearing a face mask in all healthcare settings.
- Washing/sanitising your hands.
- Not coming into a healthcare setting if you have Covid-19 or Norovirus symptoms.
- Being kind and patient with practice staff.....**they are all working extremely hard!**

This certainly remains to be a genuinely challenging time and, to help protect everyone, we are required to continue to maintain safe infection control and minimise unnecessary physical contact. GP practices are working hard to provide more appointments than ever before as well as delivering essential vaccinations.

*For additional information, please also watch our video to see and hear from GP teams in Kent and Medway. The site can be found at the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group website focussing on general practice services <https://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/your-health/local-services/general-practice-services>*

