



Christmas Maltings & Clements Practice Patient Newsletter

Dr David Brandon, Clinical Lead GP

The beginning of the New Year is traditionally a time of reflection of times past, for thoughts and expressions of good intentions for the year to come.

I wanted to take this opportunity to write to patients and staff alike, to review the year gone past and our coming plans.

It is a very challenging time for General Practice across the UK, but this has been felt particularly sharply in Haverhill. I must confess therefore, that I returned to the Clements Surgery to take on this role as Clinical Lead from December 2018 with some trepidation! Nevertheless, I have been made to feel very welcome by a fantastic group of staff and, on the whole, a supportive and well-meaning patient population.

To put this further into context for you, I had left my previous role as a Salaried GP here in 2015/16 as it had started to feel rather helpless; the workload impossible, the demands unsustainable, and the future felt dismal and worrying. The practice was then very fortunate that in 2017, rather than facing closure, the Suffolk GP Federation stepped in and took over the management of the Surgery thus protecting its future. This was a fairly unprecedented move and somewhat understandably, a period of great flux and change has followed.

The Suffolk GP Federation are a not-for-profit company run by a co-operative of GPs across Suffolk, and have protecting the future of General Practice for patients as their main priority.

I was delighted to be asked to take on the responsibility of providing in-house leadership and to develop ways to improve the service for the future.

I believe that we still have a long way to go, but I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you all some of what we have done over the past year. Not all of it has been "visible" in the truest sense but has been vital towards the aim of achieving our objective to provide safe and high quality care.

The Long Term Medical Conditions Clinic

One of our key areas of concern was the lack of appropriate diagnosis and monitoring of long term conditions (e.g. diabetes, high blood pressure and heart failure), as well as medication reviews and clinical leadership oversight. We took on the rather ambitious task of completely overhauling the system, and the data is showing enormous improvements in both the quantity but also quality of reviews being undertaken.

We launched the new system in April 2019. Those patients with a long term condition are now invited in for an appointment with one of our excellent nursing assistants. At this appointment we undertake a review of all a patients long term conditions in one go (rather than separate appointments for separate conditions). These invites are spread out over the year rather than all our long term condition patients being asked to come in at the same time.

The nursing assistant then completes a detailed

health questionnaire with the patient, which is linked in electronically to match with the type of condition(s) that you have.

I have then personally undertaken to review nearly all of these results (I have had help from some fantastic colleagues when I have been away!). This means undertaking detailed medication reviews, providing a structured plan for any follow up appointments, and speaking to patients who need changes on the telephone.

Those that have a more complex medical problem such as Diabetes or COPD are seen in a follow up appointment with the nurse so that changes can be made and education offered.

This may sound simple, but given that we have many thousands of people with long term conditions, many of whom have not had a structured review for a long time and may be a long way off "well controlled," this has been an enormous task. I am so grateful for the support and patience of my excellent nursing team (as well as all the hard working back office staff) involved in this.

We are not by any means at "the finished result" but the improvement has been striking. A statistic that never fails to amaze me is the results of an audit we carried out last October. This demonstrated that with using the new system, we had (from April-October 2019) diagnosed nearly THREE TIMES as many people with a new diagnosis of diabetes than in a whole year in years gone past. And that was only a little over half way through the year! This means that we could then treat them and reduce their chances of long term health complications. I look forward to sharing all our improved statistics with you, which in real terms means improved quality and quantity of life for our patients with fewer heart attacks, strokes and suchlike.

e-Consult

In December 2019, we "soft launched" our e-Consult system.

This system allows patients to contact the surgery, ask questions or seek appointments through a high quality, safe and reliable online platform available on the practice website.

We have held patient consultation events (often at a rather larger scale than we had anticipated!) and have listened to concerns as well as explaining how we hope that this platform will make it easier to access appropriate services. Whilst at present, many patients are still making appointments by telephoning the practice, we have been having

growing numbers of patients completing the online consultation templates on our practice website.

We have a dedicated daily triage team of Doctors and other clinicians then looking at these and are endeavouring to respond as soon as possible, with the end of the next working day as the absolute deadline. The early data has been extremely promising.

Right from the start, this system has been popular, and even on week one, we received 5 times as many e-Consults sent into the practice than the next highest users anywhere in Suffolk. Now it is even higher, and the average week has seen us processing more than 650 e-Consults per week.

EVERYONE who has needed an appointment as a result of their e-Consult has been able to book one within the time window that their triage code has identified a need for.

Without this system, we would need 5 ADDITIONAL full time doctors in order to meet this same demand, an aspiration that is impossible to achieve!

Staffing

None of this would be possible without the hard work and dedication of the excellent staff at Clements Surgery and the support of the staff from the Suffolk GP Federation. The intensity of the work is often relentless and exhausting, so it is a testament to my team that these two major implementations have been such a success. We have been successful at recruiting a number of new high quality staff, as well as a number of new doctors who are joining us in the first few months of 2020.

I would like to thank you all so much for everything that you do, every last one of you.

Other areas of progress in the last 12 months

- Clearing a backlog of more than 8000 overdue medication reviews and 1400 overdue medical records summarised (Converting paper records into electronic records)
- Development and implementation of a high quality medication review procedure
- An improved CQC rating of "Required improvement" (now "Good" for Safety, which has been an early priority)
- Rescuing the Steeple Bumpstead surgery from closure (and the chaotic unfunded reallocation of their patients)
- Working with Haverhill Family Practice to develop the foundations of a local Primary Care

Network

- Securing agreements that will ensure health services will continue to be available from the Christmas Maltings site
- Development and training of a wide range of excellent practitioners with varied roles to improve the quality of the care we are able to offer and improve patient access
- Development of the electronic practice Safeguarding and Palliative Care registers which are linked into the main clinical system
- Development and implementation of a robust and reliable process for the monitoring of patients prescribed high-risk medications
- Relocation of the Dispensary to the Clements site as well as upgrades and improvements, including the roll out of the home delivery service. If you are eligible for medicines to be dispensed from the practice (if you live more than 1 mile away from a pharmacy), please consider using the dispensary for your medications. Any profits made from the dispensary can then be directly re-invested into the practice for the purposes of improving patient care, and towards recruiting additional clinical staff.
- A clampdown on abusive or antisocial behaviour towards the staff of the practice
- The growth and empowerment of the Patient Participation Group (more information about how to join can be found at the end of the newsletter)
- Working collaboratively with partner practices in the Suffolk GP Federation and Suffolk Primary Care for the purposes of idea sharing, the sharing of resources and intellectual property

What happens next?

After a period of great change, there needs to be a period of stability for the changes to embed, so 2020 is going to be more a year for refinement rather than revolution. We look forward to the improved data expected following the changes made with the Long Term Conditions clinic, but for 100% achievement this will probably take a further year of fine tuning. I also look forward to training several colleagues to be able to provide the comprehensive medication reviews and structured plan that I have been undertaking to do myself, so that this system is robust and sustainable in the long term.

e-Consult will continue to be available, and it should become clearer that this is available following the update to the phone message as well as further publicity. We continue to have appointments available for telephone booking, but we will be encouraging those that can use the e-Consult system, to do so. We will continue to consult with our patients and PPG for feedback on this implementation.

I would also like to make 2020 a year of improved communication between the practice and the community, and I will do my best to keep you updated with developments. Over the course of the year, I hope to have improvements made to the practice website including better information regarding practice services and more information about clinical staff. An area of feedback that we hear all too often is that patients do not know their doctor, or the staff that they are seeing. Many patients report that they cannot see their regular GP, even though that regular GP may have long since left the practice! I also hope that the improved flexibility provided by the e-Consult system will allow for patients to have more say about who they see if there is no time priority to do so.

As mentioned above, we continue to work hard to recruit additional staff, and have been making really good progress on that front, which you should notice as they join our numbers. This is set against a national trend of shrinking GP numbers and resignations.

Continuous learning and staff development is ongoing, and we are working towards expanding our training provision of both clinical and non-clinical staff. Continuing to promote an organisational culture of supporting one another and offering high quality "customer service" is an utmost priority.

I pledge that I will work as hard as I can to continue to drive forward improvements, to provide safe patient care, to treat staff and patients alike with dignity and respect, and to do everything in my power to ensure that your access to healthcare is safe and fair.

What can you as patients do to help?

We are due to be re-inspected by CQC and need to demonstrate the continued improvements we have been making.

One of the key areas of concern from CQC is the poor regard in which we are held by our patients when surveyed, or when looking at NHS Choices online. Whilst I wholeheartedly recognise that we have a long way to go before we can be considered to be offering a perfect service, I would ask that you consider the work we have been doing and the progress we have been making over the past 12 months before you cast your judgement on us online.

I would also ask you to consider very carefully what impact that the feedback that you write online may have on our ability to recruit new staff to the practice. People want to work somewhere they feel wanted.

I know how easy it is to express frustration, but equally, if you have had a good experience of the care you have been provided please consider writing something nice online.

You can of course do so anonymously if you wish. You will find links to [Healthwatch](#) and the Friends and Family test on the practice website. Positive feedback on [NHS choices](#) is also appreciated.

The cliché of "positivity breeds positivity" has never been so true and you would also be amazed to see how much of a difference positive feedback makes to the whole team.

I wish you all a Happy New Year, and a healthy and positive 2020.

Dr David Brandon
Clinical Lead GP



**If you require this newsletter
in an alternative format
please contact Sarah Miller,
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NHS Email:

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Contact us

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

WSCCG.christmas-clements@nhs.net or call 01440 841300.



To keep up to date with our news visit www.christmasandclements.co.uk or search for 'Christmas Maltings and Clements Practice' on Facebook.

Patients can also join the Surgery's Patient Participation Group. To find out more please email **WSCCG.christmas-clements@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 703949** or email **info@healthwatchesuffolk.co.uk**.



Christmas Maltings & Clements Practice

Patient Newsletter

Dr David Brandon, Clinical Lead GP

Who could have foreseen what 2020 had in store when I last put digital pen to paper to you all in my new-year newsletter?

I will try to avoid using the word 'unprecedented', but the way we have all had to change our ways of life and respond to this new threat has been felt in every sector of our society. I would like to thank you all for the support you have given to us and to one another, and would like to reassure you that we will continue to do everything we can to provide you high quality, accessible and compassionate healthcare at this time.

Just as we had started to settle into what felt like a period of stability, we have once again had to re-invent so many of our systems and ways of working. I am grateful that you have accepted this with such good grace, and would ask that you continue to bear with us as we become used to 'the new normal'.

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure you that if you do have any persistent or worrying symptoms, please do contact us. **We are here to help**; you do not need to delay getting in touch out of concern for the impact of coronavirus on health services.

eConsult

History tells us that adversity is often the birthplace of innovation, and I'm glad to report that our

eConsult system has proved to be a fantastic asset and has enabled us to provide accessible and responsive healthcare despite the restrictions.

Before the pandemic, we were given the accolade of being the practice providing the **most** access to online consultations, by processing more eConsults than any other surgery in the entirety of the United Kingdom. That goes to show how hard my team have been working to support you.

We have also now got access to some fantastic video consulting software, meaning many people who would have historically required a face to face consultation can be managed with this medium instead. You can also send us photographs via eConsult or on this system when we need you to.

I know that not everyone is able to use eConsult, but I'm so grateful that those that can use it are now mostly doing so. This has relieved pressure from the phone lines meaning it is now possible for those that are less able and more vulnerable to be able to get through. The success of this project in improving and providing fairer access has been recognised nationally, and our expertise has been sought by NHS England Digital Transformation Teams and other commissioning groups.

You may have read about this in the Haverhill Echo: www.haverhillecho.co.uk/news/gp-surgery-shows-others-how-online-access-can-benefit-9110345/

I would also like to reassure you that we are working hard to open up as many of our services as we can within the guidelines set to us from NHS England. When needed, we are able to see patients face to face in the surgery, but for reasons of safety, we will continue to triage all patients who contact the practice to ensure that every step is taken to protect you from Coronavirus. Where possible, your query will be handled without you needing to attend. This is so that we can help as many people as possible whilst respecting social distancing. You may still then be asked to attend the practice, but I can reassure you that we are doing everything we can to make it safe for you to do so.

You will find that some aspects of the surgery appear unfamiliar, and the staff member you see will be wearing protective equipment.

Long Term Medical Conditions

The introduction of the LTMC clinic last year was a huge success and led to a 'QOF' (the score that our performance is judged by) score of 99% for 2019/20. A year is aligned to the tax year of April-April. This has moved us from historically some of the lowest scores in the UK to now comfortably being into the top quartile.

What this means is that the vast majority of patients with these conditions have had a detailed, high quality, comprehensive review within the last 12 months and have been provided the best possible treatment.

Unfortunately, due to Coronavirus, it will not be possible for this to look exactly the same this year. We have lost several months due to the lockdown restrictions and even now, due to social distancing, we are only permitted to have a limited number of patients through our doors and in front of our staff.

What we are doing this year is to risk-stratify all our patients using a **Red-Amber-Green score** based on the medication you have been taking, the conditions you have and how well controlled your condition has been in the recent past.

We will then be recalling patients for review starting with 'Red' and working our way down.

If it is logistically possible, we will aim to inform you of your rating, although we are still working through the logistics right now. For those that are

able to, when you are recalled we will request that you submit a pre-appointment questionnaire via eConsult; you will be sent links to make this straightforward.

It is possible that if you are triaged as 'Green' you may not get invited to a scheduled LTMC review this year. However please be reassured that if you have any specific issue of concern, you are welcome to contact the practice via the usual platforms for help from the duty team. We hope that 2021 will allow a little more normality.

We are also looking at a longer-term option for an outdoor Mobile Phlebotomy Unit, which is a proposal that will take some time to turn into reality but would potentially be able to really open up our capacity.

Staffing and future development

You will be pleased to discover that we have continued to make progress regarding recruitment and now have a full complement of GP staff. We have been approved as a training practice, which means that we will be able to be training the GPs of Haverhill's future right here, and help some excellent doctors on their journey towards qualification as specialist GPs will be joining us very soon.

We are lucky to be the early adopter site for the new mental health services model, and currently have **four** excellent mental health specialist practitioners working within the practice. They will be your first point of call for mental health concerns, and can be accessed via eConsult.

I'm however sad to be announcing the departure of Andy Cutting, our much liked Service Manager. He is moving onwards to his next project in Norwich but wanted to express his gratitude for the relationships he has built with you, and for the support and encouragement you have given him.

He will be much missed, but we can reassure you that the changes made over the past few years have set the practice to be in a much more resilient position from which to face the future.

Coming soon... rebranding and a new website. Watch this space.

Dr David Brandon, Clinical Lead GP

Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Want to have a say in how your surgery is run? Why not become a member of the Christmas Maltings and Clements 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: WSCCG.christmas-clements@nhs.net

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



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Hall Grove Group Practice Newsletter



www.hallgrovesurgery.co.uk

September 2019

If you cannot attend your appointment please cancel it as it can be used by someone else

Please use the eConsult via the practice website for all admin related questions and requests

A member of staff will contact you by the end of the next working day

Useful Telephone Numbers

Appointments 01707 328528

Appointments 01707 332233

Emergency House Call Line 01707 323355

'111' out of hours advice and GP line 111

Lister Hospital 01438 314333

Patient Transport (QEII, Lister & 0345605 1208

CCG 01707 685000

E-Consults are here!

We have been selected as one of the practices in Herts to trial 'eConsults' and the system goes live on 10th September. This will become the main way to ask about admin related issues/requests (eg sick notes), and non-emergency requests for doctor/nurse advice and appointments.

There is a link via our new look website at www.hallgrovesurgery.co.uk, taking you into the eConsult. The new website is now **mobile friendly** so you can access and submit an eConsult from your phone or tablet, **24 hours a day**. The eConsult is received by the practice as a document that is processed by a member of staff.

Different options to use within the eConsult system:

- Obtain **reliable self help advice** regarding a condition or symptom, and links to self referral services
- **Request admin support** for your situation, including sick notes, doctor letters, medication issues, and referral problems
- Ask for Doctor or Nurse **advice and appointments**

There are many **benefits** of using this system, including:

- You can send your request to the surgery **any time**, day or night
- There will be **no waiting** in a queue on the phone to speak to a receptionist
- You will be able to give a **full description** of the issue so that we obtain as much information as possible
- We will reply to the eConsult submission by the end of the next working day (usually faster)
- Appointments, if required, are more likely to be with the **most appropriate person**

Requesting 'Fit Notes' using eConsult

From September **all on-going Fit (sick) note requests** will need to be submitted via an eConsult. The first note can only be issued if a medical professional has seen you, either here at the surgery or we have received documented evidence, usually from hospital or the out of hours service. The note can also only be dated from the date first seen for that problem.

If you have **already seen someone** about the condition go to eConsults and select the **admin option**. Submit information required for issuing the sick note, the system will guide you through this. We will be expecting the note to be issued the **next working day** (it may be issued the following day if the most appropriate GP to sign the note is not working that day, as is the case currently).

Other Admin requests

We are expecting from September that the **majority of all administration enquiries** will be submitted through the eConsults. This would include questions about **appointments**, pharmacy issues, requesting doctor support **letters**, and support with hospital appointments/**referrals**. Along with the ease of using the system compared to calling the surgery, the other major benefit is that you can write **all the information** you need rather than speaking to someone on the phone and hoping they write it down exactly as you have said it. We will expect to respond by the end of the next working.

Medication requests will continue **unchanged**, do not use eConsults for this (please ask for an on-line password if do not have one already).

Doctor/Nurse advice and appointments

We are hoping that a high proportion of the requests for **medical advice and appointments** will be submitted using eConsults. We will have a doctor dedicated **every morning** to assessing the eConsult submissions from the **previous 24 hours**. This will enable more people to obtain a more appropriate appointment - examples would include:

- Many conditions are **better dealt with** by a member of our nursing team, eg Contraception advice, HRT advice/prescriptions, Wounds, and Asthma reviews
- Try and see the **same Doctor** especially if for the same condition. This can be difficult if calling for a same day appointment but would be easier to organise via eConsults
- Booking you with a doctor or nurse who **specialises** in the condition described

Great for patients... and great for the practice

The **GPs and nurses** at The Wilson Practice believe they can offer **all patients a better service** if **those who have internet access** contact us via **eConsult** before seeking an appointment or feedback from the practice in other ways. The exceptions are minor injuries and bookings for routine blood tests, injections, immunisations and dressing appointments.

What is eConsult?

It is an NHS-approved 'digital triage and patient history-taking tool' designed to enhance patient access, improve practice efficiency and signpost patients to the right place at the right time for their care. Find it on the home page of our website: www.wilsonpractice.co.uk and for more information, see www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbg1AhkmZkU

Why eConsult is great for any patient with internet access

Saves you time

- save a trip to the surgery – your query may be resolved with a phone or video call, a text or email
- you avoid the need to get through on our very busy phone lines; simply click on the link – you don't need special login details

Quicker response

- you get a response by the end of the next working day (often much sooner)

More convenient

- you can access eConsult wherever and whenever you want: at home, at work, on holiday or on the move.
- you can access it via a PC, laptop, tablet or smartphone. It is also available via the NHS App
- you complete an eConsult form at a pace that suits you. It asks the same questions that a doctor would in a consultation, but you have more time to think about your answers. You can also add pictures if appropriate.
- you can complete an eConsult query for a child in your care

Examples of where eConsult can make your life easier:

- requests for letters and sick notes
- diagnosis and advice about treatment without the need for a face-to-face appointment
- opportunity for you and your doctor to plan investigations before seeing a GP – meaning one appointment rather than two
- when (after lockdown!) you are planning a trip and want advice on travel health and vaccinations
- contraceptive pill checks and some other long-term condition reviews

Supports self-care

- medical advice is available via eConsult at any time. It includes NHS self-help information, pharmacy advice, signposting to other services and an on-line symptom checker

Clinically-supported and digitally safe

- eConsult was created by NHS GPs for NHS patients and is under constant review
- the robust 'red flagging' system applied to every eConsult enquiry ensures that patients with urgently worrying symptoms are directed immediately to a person-based service
- eConsult uses the highest security standards to ensure patient information is always secure

Why eConsult is great for The Wilson Practice team?

- knowing a patient's symptoms upfront helps the practice get you the help you need from the right person straight away
- gathering information in a standard format helps doctors address patient needs efficiently
- admin queries get filtered direct to the team that handles them

**And, because it saves clinician time,
there is the possibility of longer appointments for patients who need them**