



NEWS ABOUT YOUR SURGERY

ISSUE 5 • CHRISTMAS 2017

Suffolk Primary Care:

Wishing all our patients a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Welcome to the latest Suffolk Primary Care newsletter. We would like to take this opportunity to wish all our patients a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We hope you've had an enjoyable 2017.

It's been a busy 12 months for Suffolk Primary Care. Since we launched in April we have introduced a number of changes to improve patient care across our 11 member practices.

This includes a new physiotherapy service (details of which can be found below) and recruiting new

paramedics to help reduce the workload of GPs and attend home visits.

We are planning more changes for 2018. In particular, we are looking at ways to improve telephone and computer systems in all our practices and introduce new services for patients.

We look forward to updating you all again in the New Year. In the meantime, have a safe and enjoyable Christmas.

The Suffolk Primary Care team

New physiotherapy service

Many of our practices are now running a dedicated physiotherapy service - offering patients a greater choice of appointments.

Musculoskeletal (MSK) health issues, such as back and neck pain and rheumatoid arthritis, account for 1 in 5 of all GP appointments. However, it is often more appropriate for patients to be seen by a physiotherapist who has specialist knowledge.

The new service is run by First Point Physiotherapy and early feedback has been very positive. Between 60-100% of available appointments were used across our sites. The majority of patients have been suitable for advice, exercises or onward referral.

Other services such as x-rays, orthopaedics, spinal specialists and podiatry referrals were also used - saving GPs' time so they could concentrate on the patients who need them most.

If you would like more information on how the physiotherapist might be able to help with your condition, please contact your practice reception.



Care navigators

A number of our practices are training reception and clerical staff to become care navigators.

They will act as a first point of contact for patients, directing them to the most appropriate healthcare professional. This could be a pharmacist, physiotherapist, practice paramedic, minor illness nurse or GP and ensures that patients are booked with the right clinician first time.

Care navigators are bound by the same rules of strict confidentiality as the rest of the clinicians at your practice.

They are now common in several practices across the UK and there is growing evidence that they make it easier for patients to get an appointment.



Suffolk Primary Care's core values

Suffolk Primary Care's core values are dedicated to improving patient care. As an organisation we are committed to:

1. Delivering compassionate high-quality care with patients at the heart of everything we do
2. Nurturing and supporting staff to ensure they thrive in their careers and can provide the highest level of care to our patients
3. A community focus that will see organisations and healthcare professionals working in partnership
4. Finding new ways of working to tackle some of the challenges currently faced by the NHS and to find new opportunities for our practices, employees and patients
5. Sharing resources so we can improve services and deliver high quality care
6. Using clinical data to provide evidence based care so we can better understand how to improve our services

Staying healthy this Christmas

At this time of year GP surgeries and other healthcare services can come under huge amounts of pressure. Below are some handy tips to make sure you stay safe and well over the festive period.

- **Flu jabs are still available.** The flu vaccine is offered free on the NHS to adults over the age of 18 at risk of flu (including everyone aged 65 and over), pregnant women and children aged six months to two years. Please ask your practice for more details.
- **Get your repeat prescriptions ordered early.** It will take longer to process repeat prescriptions over the festive period because some practices will be closed. Please make sure you place an order in plenty of time.
- **Use your local pharmacy.** For minor illnesses (e.g. coughs and colds) please visit your local pharmacy. They have years of training and can help quickly. The NHS Choices website (www.nhs.co.uk) is also a great source of advice.
- **Eat more fruit and veg.** When it's cold and dark outside, it can be tempting to fill up on unhealthy comfort food. However, it's important to ensure you still have a healthy diet and include five portions of fruit and veg a day. If you find yourself craving a sugary treat, try a juicy clementine or satsuma instead.
- **Drink more milk.** You are more likely to get a cold in winter, so make sure your immune system is in tip-top condition. Milk and dairy products such as cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais are great sources of protein, vitamins A and B12 and calcium.
- **Try new activities.** Don't use the cold winter months as an excuse to stay in and lounge around. Instead, get out with the whole family to try out a new activity – maybe taking a bracing winter walk on the beach or through the park.
- **Have a hearty breakfast.** Winter is the perfect season for porridge. Eating a warm bowlful on a cold morning helps boost your intake of starchy foods and fibre. Add a sliced banana, berries or other fruit for extra flavour and to help you hit your five a day target.

Stay up to date with news from Suffolk Primary Care

If you would like to stay up to date with our news please search for 'Suffolk Primary Care' on Facebook and 'Like' our page. You can also follow us on Twitter by searching for @Suffolk_PC. Alternatively, our website (www.suffolkprimarycare.co.uk) has lots of useful information.



What to do if you have any questions

We understand that patients may have a number of questions about the changes that we are making or the role of Suffolk Primary Care.

The first person to contact if you have any concerns is your local practice manager. Otherwise, please email suffolkprimarycare@nhs.net and we will respond as soon as we can.