

Welcome to the Long Furlong Newsletter

Please tell us if you have any feedback about this newsletter or ideas for content in the next issue by emailing debbie.major@nhs.net

New Appointment System

We have changed the way in which all requests for an appointment are dealt with:

The benefits are:

- **Every request for an appointment will be reviewed/triaged by a GP or Nurse**
- You will then be offered either:
 - **a face-to-face appointment**
 - **or a telephone appointment**
 - or if appropriate we may recommend that you use **another healthcare service better suited to your needs.**
- Although still limited in number, and some weeks ahead, we have re-introduced the ability to make **online non-urgent/review appointments both Face to Face and Telephone**
- We are highlighting the **other healthcare services now available to help you** and which many patients are unaware of.

This necessarily gives a lot of information, some of which will be new to you, but not all of which will be relevant to every patient.

Background

We are constantly seeking to provide high levels of medical care in the most effective and efficient way. Like many organisations in the UK, we are experiencing unprecedented staffing shortages and General Practice appointment demand has risen over the past 2 years by at least 30% across the County. This means that we need to be particularly careful to use the system in the most appropriate manner. We have been actively seeking to recruit more staff for six months already and are continuing to do so. In the meantime, all members of staff are going above and beyond their usual work levels to care for our patients, so please be patient with us all.

When you need an appointment, please consider the alternatives shown below.

If you still need to speak to us, please:

- **Do not Email, unless asked to.** Emails are not continually monitored, and it may take 48hrs or more for the email to be brought to the attention of a medical professional.
- **Telephone:** Please be prepared to give information to the Patient Services team who answer the phone as this will help us meet your needs effectively. Although these team members are not clinically trained, they do have training in signposting and they are bound by medical confidentiality, so your details are safe with them.

- **When to Call.** The mornings are very busy, with a high level of calls. It may well be quicker to call in the afternoon.
- **On Calling.** On calling the surgery you will be asked to provide information about your health care needs which will help us to assess the most appropriate way to provide your care:
 - A telephone call appointment with the GP or other healthcare professional (such as a clinical pharmacist, a nurse practitioner or paramedic), which can avoid you from having to travel to the surgery.
 - A Face-to-Face appointment may be appropriate with a healthcare professional, this could be a GP or other team member as most suitable.
 - Or we might direct you to other healthcare services that can meet your needs. See below for further information.
- **Requests for urgent same day review will be triaged** by a duty doctor or nurse, so it is important that we have a full clinical picture to enable them to make suitable recommendations for you. We are not able to give you a planned time for this feedback, which might involve:
 - a telephone call from one of the doctors or other healthcare staff,
 - you might be offered an in-person appointment,
 - or you may be signposted to alternative more appropriate services.

We may contact you by phone or by SMS text message where you have indicated that this is acceptable to you. Please make sure that you are contactable.







- **Non-Urgent Appointments** at the surgery can be **booked in advance**, both telephone calls and face-to-face, with all members of the team now and you can also now once again book online through the website. If you are phoning the surgery we would recommend doing so in the afternoon when the phone lines tend to be quieter. We strongly recommend that you book appointments for ongoing conditions or problems with your **usual GP or clinician**, as we can care for you more effectively and efficiently when we already know you.
- **Repeat prescription requests** ideally should be made by using the online requesting service through the website, the NHS app, or through your pharmacy. Alternatively, you can drop in your paper repeat prescription request to the surgery. Please allow four full working days for turnaround from making the request to collecting from the pharmacy. From August 1, 2022 we will no longer be taking any repeat prescription requests via email.
- Please **do not make requests for clinical review via email** as it is not a safe way of ensuring your request is seen in a timely fashion. Emails are not checked throughout the day and we would not want to overlook an important clinical query. At times a doctor or other member of the team may ask you to provide further information or photographs via email, which is acceptable as then we will be looking out for it and make sure to include it in your record.
- **Urinary tract infections (UTIs) in women aged 16-64** Please see below
- **Urine samples** should not be dropped off at the surgery **unless a doctor or other clinician has asked you to do so**, and should then be clearly labelled, contained in a bag, and details of the reason why you have been asked to provide it should be included.

Other Healthcare Services now available to you

Before you contact the surgery please consider the following services, which may better meet your needs:

- **On-line Advice** Self-help advice is available online including the [NHS Website](#)
- **Pharmacy** A Pharmacy can provide face to face 'drop in advice'
 - **Urinary tract infections (UTIs) in women aged 16-64.** There are guidelines that mean these people can be prescribed antibiotics for urinary tract infection **in most cases directly by a suitably qualified pharmacist** without the need to provide a sample or contact the surgery. Most local pharmacies offer this service
- **Physiotherapy and Podiatry** Healthshare Oxfordshire provides musculoskeletal physiotherapy and podiatry services. There is also a great deal of useful self-help information, including exercises for specific problems, on their website, which you can use to refer yourself if needed <https://healthshareoxfordshire.org.uk/> or call them on 01865 238 108
- **Hearing problems** Patients aged 55 or over are now able to refer themselves to the age-related hearing loss service without the need for a GP referral.
If you are aged 55 or over and are experiencing hearing and communication difficulties and feel you might benefit from a hearing assessment and rehabilitation including the option of trying hearing aids, please complete the self-referral form below and give this to your chosen provider. Details of the providers available are included within the [form](#).
- **Earwax** If you suffer from blocked ears with wax, or suspect that you may have a build-up of earwax, please perform 2 weeks of self-management as set out in the following information [leaflet](#):
If you are over 55 and having hearing problems then referring yourself for hearing assessment as above means that you may be offered wax removal under the NHS, if needed.
- **Minor Injuries** In the case of 'a minor injury' the **Minor Injury Unit** in Abingdon is there to offer treatment for issues such as broken bones, deep cuts and other minor injuries. They are based at the [Abingdon Community Hospital - Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust](#) and you can call them on (01865) 903476, 10 am to 10:30 pm, 7 days a week.
- **Minor Eye Conditions** Oxfordshire has a Minor Eye Conditions Service which is an NHS service provided by experienced opticians. You do not need a GP referral and it is suitable for everyone who is age 6 or over, offering help for conditions such as red eye or eyelids, eye discomfort or irritation, recent and sudden loss of vision, pain or a foreign body in the eye. In Abingdon, the service is offered by several local opticians please see the list in the link below. Please call them directly to make your appointment. You can read more about this here: [Oxfordshire Minor Eye Conditions Service \(MECS\)](#)
- **Mental health issues** There is useful advice and self-help online here for all ages: <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/> ; and here for children: <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/camhs/> . If you would like some professional support then look here for NHS provision of a number of services that you can self-refer to, including counselling, small groups and courses, and online therapy <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus/>

If you do contact the surgery then you may be recommended to seek one of these options if you have not already done so, or we are able to refer you to an **experienced community pharmacist** who has had extra training, for a consultation if this is appropriate, and they will treat you and let us know the outcome.

	Minor cuts and grazes	Colds Bruises, Minor Sprains	Self care Stock up on medicines
	Minor illnesses Headaches	Bites and stings Stomach upsets	Pharmacy
	Feeling unwell? Anxious?	Unsure? Need help?	NHS 111 You can call us 24/7
	Long term conditions	Chronic pain Persistent symptoms	GP Advice
	Dislocated fingers and toes	Minor scalds and burns Nose bleeds	Minor Injuries Unit Contact 111
	Serious bleeding	Blacking out Choking, Chest pain	A&E or 999 Emergencies only

This leaflet gives further information about these services and other community options available to you <https://www.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk/documents/patient-info/health-advice/advice-for-an-illness-or-injury-leaflet.pdf>

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