PATIENT NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our bimonthly patient newsletter. Our aim is to keep you informed of services at Compass House and give you important insights into getting the most out of the practice.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Across England we are slowly easing out of lockdown and starting to return to a new normal, however we need to continue to follow the advice from NHSE regarding how we currently work. This means we still need to operate as a closed site, with patients only attending the practice after being invited to do so. All of the safety measures we have put in place will need to remain for the foreseeable future to try to prevent a further surge in Coronavirus cases. This also means that some of our services continue to be reduced or limited at this time.

We are working extra hard to deal with some of the back log of long term condition reviews, particularly Diabetes, COPD & Asthma patients by providing these by telephone where we can. Sometimes we will need to see patients to complete the review and you will be invited in when this is required. For your safety, we are conducting these reviews at our shielded site in Galmpton. If you are invited to an appointment for a review, please do attend and rest assured we are taking all the necessary precautions to keep you safe at this time.

Each patient we see at the practice currently takes twice as long as usual because the clinician needs to put on PPE and then clean down and change after every patient. Combined with the patient demand at this time it means we are busier than ever, so please do bear with the team if it takes longer than normal to get through to us. We are all working extremely hard to do the best we can in the current circumstances. Telephone call backs with a clinician are only 10 minutes long so please try to stick to one problem where possible. Unfortunately we are unable to guarantee the time or clinician that will call back.

You can avoid the telephone queue by using econsult and you will get a response within 24 hours, unless we receive a high demand on the day in which case we may respond within 48 hours but we will notify you if this is the case.

Over the past few months we are seeing increasing demand around COVID-19 related anxiety and low mood and also muscular problems. In these cases there is no need to contact and speak to us, you can self-refer direct to the services in this newsletter such as, TALKWORK, CAMHS or Torbay Physio for support in the first instance and it would be a great help if you can do this prior to contacting the GP surgery.
MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Covid-19 has affected a lot of us in many ways, often exaggerating feelings of anxiety, low mood or the ability to cope with daily life. Know that you are not alone!

If you are struggling to cope or feeling overwhelmed by your thoughts and feelings, TALKWORKS is available to help. TALKWORKS provides a service in Torbay, but also to most other parts of Devon. The service can help you to feel better and give you the tools and techniques to improve your mental and physical wellbeing.

If you feel you may benefit from some help you can self-refer to TALKWORKS by calling 0300 555 33 44 or via the online referral system on their website https://www.talkworks.dpt.nhs.uk/

There are also services available for children and young people up to the age of 18. Devon’s Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) covers Devon and Torbay and supports children and young people and their parents/carers who need mental health support.

During Covid-19 they have been carrying out consultations via video consultation or by phone and in some cases face-to-face consultations when this is deemed essential.

The service also continues to provide crisis support seven days a week, and this has been enhanced during the pandemic with more staff working during evenings and over the weekends to respond to urgent care as needed.

All children, young people and their parents/carers can self-refer to the service. This can be done by contacting Devon CAMHS on 03300 245 321 between 8am-5pm and in an emergency out of hours on 0300 555 5000 https://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/services/camhs/

PHYSIOTHERAPY

Torbay physio are now offering a limited telephone service for patients needing physio help. Patients can call the physiotherapy team on 0300 456 9987 between 8.30am – 12 noon.

As well as support directly from the physiotherapy team, there are lots of useful videos available to assist patients carrying out exercises at home. To view these please use the link below: https://videos.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/physiotherapy

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) also have a large amount of online resources including videos and leaflets about managing pain at home – https://www.csp.org.uk/conditions/managing-pain-home
FACE MASKS/COVERINGS

We are doing our best to protect both staff and patients from risks associated with COVID-19. We, like hospitals, require patients to wear a mask or face covering when attending the Practice.

Wearing a face covering is an added precaution that may have some benefit in reducing the likelihood that a person with the infection passes it on. Evidence has shown a face covering can help in reducing the spread of droplets; it stops them from leaving the mouth and nose area and reduces the size of area in which they spread.

A medical grade clinical mask is not necessary and we need to prioritise these to clinical staff working in high risk areas. Instead, for patients who are visiting healthcare sites, a face covering is sufficient and there is guidance for people to make these at home with items they may already own.

It is important that when wearing the face covering you wear this during your entire visit at the Practice, including in the clinicians room and during any treatments/procedures.

Guidance on how to make a facemask can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering

CERVICAL SCREENING

Five million women are invited for cervical screening every year in the UK, but over the last few months many tests have been postponed and invitations paused. We also know that cervical screening isn’t always easy and coronavirus might have made it more complicated.

Although your cervical screening test will be the same, your experience at the Practice may seem a little different at the moment. But please be assured we have put a lot of steps in place to ensure your safety during your visit to us. Our nurses are more than happy to talk through any concerns you may have about visiting and there is also a great FAQs section on the ‘Jo’s Trust’ website to help put your mind at ease https://www.jostrust.org.uk/information/coronavirus/faqs

It is important women continue to be screened to prevent the development of cervical cancer.
BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORING

A blood pressure test is a simple way of checking if your blood pressure is too high or too low. We usually perform many blood pressure tests in the practice, but due to the limited number of face to face appointments we are able to offer at the moment, we are aware many patients requiring blood pressure testing may experience a longer than usual wait for an appointment.

Blood pressure tests can also be carried out at home using your own digital blood pressure monitor and the results can be sent to us for review. This can give a better reflection of your blood pressure, as testing in an environment like a GP surgery can make you feel anxious which can affect the result. It can also allow you to monitor your condition more easily in the long term.

You can buy a variety of low-cost monitors to test your blood pressure at home or while you're out and about. The British Hypertension Society (BHS) has information about validated blood pressure monitors you can buy. [https://bihsoc.org/bp-monitors/for-home-use/](https://bihsoc.org/bp-monitors/for-home-use/)

How to record your blood pressure at home

1. Take the blood pressure at the same time every day for a week (7 consecutive days). Sit down at a table (if able), in a quiet environment with both feet on the floor. Rest your arm on the table so the blood pressure cuff is about the same height as your heart.

2. Take two consecutive measurements at least 2 minutes apart. Record the second reading only.

3. Record the Systolic (1st reading), Diastolic (2nd reading) and Heart Rate/ Pulse (3rd reading)

4. Once completed the 7 days recording please return this to the surgery either by phone call, email to compasshouse@nhs.net or by using the online form available on our website [https://www.compassshousemedical.com/home-bp-form](https://www.compassshousemedical.com/home-bp-form)
SOCIAL PRESCRIBER

Do you know that you can talk to a Social Prescribing Link Worker at Compass House Medical Centre? Your GP is not the only person that can help you, Social Prescribing is a service aimed at devoting more time to what matters to you!

Social prescribing is about empowering you to better help yourself and can support you with social concerns such as: housing, finances, anxiety, managing health conditions, employment, activities, isolation, lifestyle and more. Social prescribing can work really well for you if you:
- Have one or more long-term conditions,
- Need support with your mental health,
- Would like to make some lifestyle changes,
- Feel lonely or isolated,
- Live in poor or unsuitable housing,
- Have financial worries or debt,
- Have complex social needs which affect your well-being

Your Social Prescriber will actively listen to you and co-produce a well-being plan that includes signposting information to specialist services in your community, enabling you to begin your journey to a better well-being. If you feel you would benefit from this please ask to speak to our Social Prescriber, Katrina.

FLU

It is more important than ever that we have effective plans in place for the 2020/21 flu season to protect those at risk, prevent ill-health and minimise further impact on the NHS and social care.

We have already ordered flu vaccines for our patients that fall into the “at risk” category and are currently making plans for the upcoming flu season that will start in September 2020. The groups eligible for the NHS funded flu vaccination programme are the same as last year, although this may change if the programme is expanded by NHS England.

The immunisation process will look different this year as we need to look at ways to maintain social distancing whilst delivering the vaccine. Once confirmed we will share these plans and start booking patient appointments ready to commence in September.
PRACTICE NEWS

Sadly after 32 years at Compass House, Dr McConnell will be retiring in October. She would like to pass on this message to all the families she has looked after over her years as a GP here.

“After 32 years working as a GP at Compass House Medical Centres, I have, with much thought and deliberation decided to retire in October this year. I started work here in May 1988 and as an Irish immigrant (during the troubles) have been welcomed and accepted by you all, thank you. It has been a great privilege for me to look after you, your families, children and now grandchildren and I have formed a special bond with many of you over the years.

I am proud of Compass House Medical Centres and what it has achieved over the years, through many many changes. The hard work, commitment and dedication of all staff towards your medical care will continue. While I am sad to be leaving a job I love, I know you are in the safe hands of the Doctors and Medical Team who will take great care of you all in the future.”

Although we are sad to see Dr McConnell leave, we are very pleased to announce we have a new GP joining the Practice, Dr Vicky Nute. Dr Nute will join us from July and has been working as a GP for many years. She has a specialist interest in Healthy Lifestyles & Wellbeing.

Along with Dr Nute, we continue to have the support of Dr Clare Delany, who is working with us for the rest of this year covering Dr Janet Lurie’s maternity leave.

ADVANCED CLINICAL PRACTITIONER TEAM

Our Advanced Clinical Practitioner Team is growing. In March we welcomed Ray who joined the team. As well as being an Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Ray is also a qualified paramedic and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from his work in the Out of Hours service, DVT clinics & his time in the Territorial Army.

We are also pleased to welcome Aly who joined the team in June. Aly has recently moved to the area from Kent and has been working for many years as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner and has a specialist interest in Women’s Health.

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