



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 vaccine update

Over the last 4 months our teams, along with other Practices in Torbay, have worked tirelessly to vaccinate over 50,000 Torbay residents, which equates to 86% of the over 60's population. This includes over 3,000 care home residents and staff and over 1,300 bedbound patients in their homes this has been on top of our usual workloads.

We are extremely proud of our teams and as a Practice to be part of such an amazing achievement and hopefully a pivotal part in seeing us out of the pandemic.

According to our records we have now invited all of cohort 1-9, so if you are in cohorts 1-9 and you haven't received a text, this may be because you have changed your mobile number recently and not updated us or we don't hold a number on your record. If you are 50+ and haven't received a text, or been vaccinated then please call the practice after 11AM and we can update your record and book an appointment for you.

As soon as we are given the go ahead from central Government and NHSE we will move onto cohorts 10-12. We will be inviting patients using text invites in the first instance, so please ensure we have your correct mobile number on our system.

Covid-19 vaccine queries

We are now only receiving the Oxford Astra Zeneca vaccine for the foreseeable future, with the Pfizer vaccine only being provided for those patients that received this vaccine for their first dose.

We understand there has been a lot of bad press regarding the Astra Zeneca vaccine and this can cause concern amongst people still needing to be vaccinated. The latest guidance from the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is that the vaccine is safe to use and any minimal risks far outweigh the effects of catching COVID.

If patients have any concerns or queries relating to the vaccine the Devon CCG have set up an email and telephone line dedicated to vaccine queries this can be accessed by emailing d-ccg.devonvaccinationsupport@nhs.net or by calling 01752 398836 and leaving a voicemail – the telephone number to be monitored 8.30am-4pm Monday to Friday.



Accessing the Practice

Lately our phone lines have been busy and wait times slightly longer than our usual standard, this has been largely due to the volume of calls we have been making to arrange all the COVID vaccinations and having less staff in the practice as we are also working at the Riviera Centre delivering the vaccination programme.

We wanted to remind patients about our eConsult service available 24/7 on our website. Once you submit your eConsult you can expect a response by the end of the next working day. This may help to reduce a longer than usual wait on the phone lines.

Feedback from patients who have used the service has been largely positive, with 90% in February saying they would recommend the service to friends and family, some comments include –

“Myself and my husband find eConsult extremely useful. It saves long holding times on the telephone, reduces time waiting in the surgery and potentially reduces the need to attend the surgery at all. Between us we have used it several times and have consistently received professional and helpful advice”

“I’ve used it a few times and always had a quick and efficient response.”

We understand not all patients are able to access online services, but for those who can, this will help reduce the wait times for those who do not have online access. We kindly ask that patients do not email us medical related queries as our email volume is extremely high and we are unable to answer your queries via email. Please use either the eConsult service or telephone us using the normal surgery number.



Workload

We recently carried out an audit to see how the pandemic has affected our workload. Below are the results of the audit, as you can see we are busier than ever and continue to support patients in even higher volumes than before, as well as working at the vaccination centre and managing the other constraints COVID-19 has placed on the Practice such as social distancing.

Work carried out in February 2020		Work carried out in February 2021	
Telephone clinical consultations	2256	Telephone clinical consultations	4150
GP consultations	3602	GP consultations	3994
Nurse consultations	2545	Nurse consultations	2899
Pharmacist consultations	394	Pharmacist consultations	434
Electronic prescriptions issued	31643	Electronic prescriptions issued	43034
Lab reports processed	2549	Lab reports processed	4080
Referrals processed	873	Referrals processed	881
eConsults processed	70	eConsults processed	214

Private GP work

Along with the NHS work we do, we often receive requests for private GP work such as medicals, insurance claims, insurance reports and GP letters and our usual turnaround for such requests is 10 working days.

Unfortunately due to staff being redeployed to support the vaccine centre, we are unable to complete these requests in our usual timely manner and we kindly ask that you give sufficient notice to such requests as we are unable to complete these with only a few days' notice. This work can sometimes now take up to 4 weeks.

We appreciate not all patients have this notice and where possible we will try our best to complete the request. It is up to individual GP practices whether they do this work or not as it is a private service, but we do try to complete it where we can to support our patients as much as possible, but we can only complete this if our NHS work commitments are completed first.

All private work is chargeable and a list of our fees is available on our website www.compasshousemedical.com

Payment for private work will be asked for upfront. Requests can be submitted via the admin section on eConsult or in writing to the Practice.



Healthy New You!

The Covid pandemic has affected lots of us in many ways, if you are inspired to make positive lifestyle changes when lockdown eases then there are a few options available to support you.

For weight loss-

Weight management support is now available through Torbay Healthy Lifestyles team. Patients can get up to 12 weeks free or subsidised support from slimming world, Weight Watchers or the 1:1 diet (Cambridge weight plan). Patients can self-refer by calling the service on 0300 456 1006.

For quitting smoking-

If you are looking to quit smoking then why not take the first step and book an appointment with one of our nurses who can support you in giving up.

For a general health check -

Patients aged 40-74 without any pre-existing medical conditions are eligible for a free NHS health check, these can be booked in with one of our nursing team and any lifestyle advice following the health check will be provided to patients.



Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

April is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month. Every 15 minutes someone is diagnosed with bowel cancer and it is the UK's second biggest cancer killer but it shouldn't be. It is treatable and curable especially if diagnosed early. Nearly everyone survives bowel cancer if diagnosed at the earliest stage however this drops significantly as the disease develops. Early diagnosis really does save lives. Being aware of the key symptoms and visiting a clinician if things don't feel right can help increase chances of an early diagnosis.

The symptoms of bowel cancer can include:

- Bleeding from your bottom and/or blood in your poo
- A persistent and unexplained change in bowel habit
- Unexplained weight loss
- Extreme tiredness for no obvious reason
- A pain or lump in your tummy

Most people with these symptoms don't have bowel cancer. Other health problems can cause similar symptoms. But if you have one or more of these, or if things just don't feel right, speak to one of our clinicians who can discuss your symptoms.



Dates for the Diary

We will be closed on the following dates for the Easter bank holiday

2nd April - Good Friday
5th April - Easter Monday

If you require medical attention while we are closed please call NHS 111 or for a life threatening emergency dial 999.

Please ensure you order your prescriptions in plenty of time to cover you over the bank holiday period.

