

KNEBWORTH AND MARYMEAD MEDICAL PRACTICE

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP NEWSLETTER

June 2021

SHARING MEDICAL DATA

The Department of Health has recently announced that, through NHS Digital, it plans to transfer the GP medical records of all NHS patients, in an anonymised form, onto a database from where they would be available to academic and commercial firms for research and planning purposes.

Although the date for the initiation of this data collection has been pushed back from 21st June to 1st September, the Practice – in common with other Practices throughout the country – is extremely concerned to ensure that patients are aware the implications of the data collection process.

As it stands, NHS Digital's plan is that anyone who does not want their data collected in this way has to **opt out** by contacting the Practice and requesting this. The Practice will then mark your medical records so as not to be included in this data collection. **In essence, this means that if you do not opt out then you have effectively agreed to share your data without giving your explicit consent.**

Importantly, the data collected in this way will encompass the whole of the patient's medical record. It is important that everyone understands what this means.

Concerns have been expressed about how the data extraction/collection process is to be communicated to patients. The Practice plans to use text, Facebook, the website and notices in the surgeries to inform patients. However, it is appreciated that there are vast numbers of patients who are unable to access or use these means of communication. It would be very costly for the Practice to post letters to all patients and, at this stage, it would appear that part of the reason for the delay to 1st September is to allow NHS England to do more work on ensuring extensive public awareness and to provide Practices with more information to give to their patients.

We understand that any company or organisation that asks for access to the data will have to sign to and comply with very stringent conditions about the use of the data and will have to say what it will be used for.

The Practice and the PPG intend to keep patients updated on this very important issue.

EXTENDED ACCESS APPOINTMENTS

The Extended Access Service has remained operational through the Covid-19 pandemic and remains so. These out-of-hours routine appointments are at the King George Surgery at 135 High Street, Stevenage SG1 3HT and can be arranged through the Practice at both the Marymead and Knebworth reception desks by telephone on the usual surgery numbers. Extended Access appointments are available from 6.30 to 8.00 pm on weekdays and from 10.00 am to 2.30 pm on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

It is important to realise that these are for routine appointments and not for emergencies and they will be conducted as telephone or video consultations, and with face-to-face only when deemed necessary by the GP. The doctor at the Extended Access clinic can provide you with a prescription but any requests for tests or for referrals will be sent through to your usual doctor at our own Practice.

It should also be remembered that our own surgeries run out-of-hours clinics and these remain available for GP appointments, as telephone or video consultations. These are held on Tuesdays from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm and on Thursdays from 7.00 am to 8.30 am at one or other of our surgeries; check the location with our receptionists.

BLOOD TEST APPOINTMENTS

Blood test (phlebotomy) appointments that have been requested by your GP should now be booked online at Hertford County Hospital, the Lister Hospital or the New QEII Hospital. The purpose of this is to maximise the number of appointments that the East and North Herts Hospital Trust can offer to patients; it will also minimise queues and continue to maintain social distancing in the waiting areas.

Appointments can be made by visiting the website <https://www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk/changes-to-our-walk-in-blood-test-service/>. If you are unable to book online, please call the phlebotomy team on 01438 284044; this number is available Monday to Friday from 8.00 am to 9.00 am and 1.00 pm to 2.00pm.

When booking an appointment, you will need your NHS Number, your name, your postcode and your date of birth.

More information, including some of the frequently asked questions, is available on the website.

From mid-June, appointments for blood tests are also available at both Knebworth and Marymead surgeries.

STAFF MATTERS

Dan Taylor; Care Co-ordinator, Stevenage South Primary Care Network (PCN)

Dan's first job, back in 2010, was working for Cineworld Cinemas. He started as a team member and after discovering that he had a passion for people and improving the experiences of those around him, he started to move up the ranks and in 2015 he trained to be a Cinema Manager and specialised in HR and Payroll, looking after a team of up to 90 staff.

After 10 years, Dan felt that his Cinema journey had run its course and decided that he wanted to move into the NHS and recently joined the South Stevenage PCN as a Care Co-ordinator. He says that he has always thrived on helping others and believes that the Care Co-ordinator role will allow him to have a greater impact on a more personal level.



In his spare time, Dan loves to play basketball, and he used to play competitively in his younger days (before his back persuaded him that it wasn't a good idea to play at that level any more!).

Dan has a passion for getting tattoos - as those of you who have met him may probably have already noticed! He wonders if he might regret it when he's older, but he says he'll worry about that when he gets there!

Dan also enjoys making acoustic rock music. He is self-taught and records at home in his bedroom, and has managed to get a song distributed to Spotify and Apple Music.

We have persuaded Dan to talk to the PPG later in the year about his work as a Care Co-ordinator and we look forward to hearing what he has to say; in the meantime we wish him every success in his new career.

CAN YOU HELP?

The North Herts and Stevenage Community Transport Service helps less able residents of North Hertfordshire and Stevenage solve their transport problems. The scheme uses a dedicated team of volunteers who all use their own cars to transport passengers to healthcare appointments at hospitals, clinics and surgeries, in addition to dental appointments, day centres and exercise/therapy classes etc. The scheme is aimed at individuals who are unable to use other passenger transport due to age, frailty, impaired mobility, disabilities and special needs. Their need may also be due to no alternative transport being available.

The Volunteer Driver role is very flexible and you give the time that you want to give. You will meet new people and it's a great social role, and one where you are providing a vital service.

A mileage rate of 45p per mile is paid to the Volunteer Driver, with a minimum charge of £5.

The role requires an Enhanced, Adult Workforce DBS check, which the manager arranges.

John Brown will be happy to talk to anyone (**01462 689402**) about the driver role and would be happy to organise a Zoom session if several are interested.

Robert Sprigge, one of our PPG members is an active driver with the service and he is very happy to have a chat about it with anyone interested.

For more information about how this service can help you and your family, please visit their website: <https://www.nhcvstransport.org.uk/>

FORTHCOMING PPG MEETINGS

The next PPG Meeting is at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 20th July, which will again take place via Zoom. If you would like to join this online event, please notify one of the PPG Officers (contact details below) so that you can receive the Zoom joining details.

PPG CONTACTS

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Produced by The Knebworth and Marymead Patient Participation Group