

May 2024

Voyager Family Health News



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www.voyagerfamilyhealth.co.uk Facebook: [voyager family health](#) Instagram: [voyagerfh](#)

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Thank you to all our wonderful patients

We appreciate the NHS is far from perfect and getting to see a clinician is not always straight forward. However, we are all working really hard to ensure that our poorly patients get seen and that we can signpost you to local services where you may get seen more quickly. We cannot fix all the problems in the NHS, but we are always striving to offer you the best service we can within the resources and remit available to us. We really appreciate your support ... *Thank you*

The Bigger NHS Picture

The NHS is under extraordinary pressure, including General Practice. We cannot keep blaming covid, although, it really did cause a huge backlog in the national system which we are all still dealing with. In secondary care, hospital waiting times for appointments and treatments are still at an all time high. This has a big impact on primary care (GP services) as we are looking after many more people to manage their care/pain/anxiety as they wait to see a specialist or undergo an operation.

Mental health is sadly a big issue requiring time, care and support but with limited national resources to cope with the need.

We all face political uncertainty and increased and unrealistic expectations from our government at a time when funding has gone down year on yearas well as the number of GPs.

We have lost team members who just don't enjoy the NHS anymore, but we cant afford to replace them because our budgets have been cut and our premises costs, utilities and medical supplies have increased.

HoweverThe VFH team are a committed bunch who want the best for you, so please take a read of our newsletter to help us help you



We have a large clinical team of GPs, Nurse Practitioners and Prescribers, Physician Associate, Practice Nurses, Clinical Pharmacists and Technicians, Health Care Assistants, Phlebotomists, Social Prescriber, Physiotherapists, and a Mental Health Support Worker. We also share a building with Community Midwives and the Integrated Care Team, including Paramedics and District Nurses.

Our administration/secretarial team support the clinicians with referrals, recalls, coding, prescriptions, registrations, enquiries, correspondence, training and patient liaison and our Care Navigators are trained to follow a strict protocol when signposting patients to the correct clinician or local service.

We are also a large training practice and support the professional development of medical students, doctors and nurses.

Upcoming changes in our appointment system ..

In light of the current pressures on appointments and following patient feedback, the team at Voyager Family Health have made the decision to revise the appointments system and indeed the way in which we ask patients to contact the surgery with regards to the booking of urgent appointments. We plan to go live with the new system as of **3rd June 2024**.

We plan to have an increased offering of routine appointments to facilitate shorter waiting times and increased continuity of care, which will enable us to better manage patients with long term health conditions and allow patients better access to their usual doctor.

We will be using a tool called AccuRx and the Healthier Together App to help triage requests for more urgent appointments. You will be able to access this via the surgery website. Our Patient Services team will be available to assist those who are unable to access AccuRx in this way. You will be asked to provide information as to the nature of your health problem and based on these answers, you may be asked to provide additional information or photographs if these are relevant and required. With this information we will be able to ensure that our patients can be seen by the most appropriate member of the clinical team to address their issue. It may be that another local service such as the Pharmacy First scheme (see information later in this newsletter) would be better placed to help with your problem or that a different appointment may be more appropriate for you .. in which case, arrangements will be made to allow you to access this care.

Please be aware that we only have limited routine appointments (including follow ups) available up to the 31st May. Any routine appointments beyond this date will not be able to be booked until the 3rd June onwards when our new system will be fully operational. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.

The current eConsult system will be replaced with AccuRx from 3rd June. Requests for sick notes and other routine administration issues can be submitted via the new system in a similar manner to before.

In the words of the GPC England chair in a recent newsletter ... Patients want access to their family doctor in a surgery that feels safe, with a well-resourced team ready to meet the needs of our communities ... and that's what we want too. All the Voyager staff continue to work hard to offer the best possible service to our patients. We shall review the new system and make changes as needed to adjust and improve this further over the coming weeks and months. Please bear with us as we make these changes.

How we can help you to self care ...

Before you contact the surgery for a GP appointment, it's important to think about whether there is anything you can do to care for yourself at home first. Please use our website and consider using the resources below if you think they may be more appropriate to your needs.

Pharmacy First Service

You can now seek help from your local pharmacy for a range of medical problems and the pharmacist can prescribe antibiotics and treatments if medically needed.

- **Urinary Infections in women** - Uncomplicated Urinary Tract Infection (For women aged 16 to 64 years with suspected lower UTIs)
- **Shingles** - for adults aged 18 years and over.
- **Impetigo** - non-bullous (crusted) impetigo, for adults and children aged 1 year plus
- **Infected Insect Bites** - For adults and children aged 1 year and over.
- **Acute Sore Throat** - For adults and children aged 5 years and over.
- **Acute Sinusitis** - For adults and children aged 12 years and over.
- **Ear Infections** – for children aged 1 to 17 years.

In addition to this your local pharmacy can give advice on a range of health conditions to people of all ages. This includes coughs, colds, sore throat, congestion, earache, conjunctivitis, irritable eyes, constipation, diarrhoea, hay fever, indigestion, cystitis, minor limb/joint pain, skin conditions, nappy rash, warts & verrucae, teething and many other ailments. Pharmacists are highly trained people and can offer guidance and over the counter medication.

Self Care

Frimley Health and Care



Healthier Together

Local advice and support to help manage and improve the health and wellbeing of babies, children, and young people

ASCOT | BRACKNELL | FARNHAM | MAIDENHEAD | NORTH EAST HAMPSHIRE | SLOUGH | SURREY HEATH | WINDSOR

frimley-healthiertogether.nhs.uk

Use this website or download the app onto your phone as an excellent tool for advice and support on children, babies and young people

Mental Health Resources

Self refer to:

TalkPlus, MIND, Mental Wellbeing Hampshire, Aldershot Safe Haven, Youth Counselling 121, the Crisis Line and The Samaritans

Children in mental health crisis – www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk



#Think111First

Go online 111.nhs.uk or call 111

Self Care Forum

useful fact sheets to help with self-care.

www.selfcareforum.org

Minor Injuries

Avoid long waits in A&E and visit the Bracknell Minor Injuries Unit – www.frimleyhealthandcare.org.uk

Know where to go for minor injuries



Open 365 days a year, 8am-8pm, the Minor Injuries Unit can help with:

- Sprains and strains
- Suspected broken limb (x-ray available all days excluding Saturdays)
- Minor head injuries
- Cuts and grazes
- Bites and stings
- Minor scalds and burns
- Wound infections

Bracknell Minor Injuries Unit, Brants Bridge, Bracknell RG12 9RT

Please check our website for up to date information:

www.voyagerfamilyhealth.co.uk

Our website contains valuable information and advice on how to join the practice, book and cancel appointments or get repeat prescriptions, sick/fit notes & test results.

It also features health and wellbeing advice and gives more information on clinics and services, carer support, the practice team, bereavement advice, safeguarding and feedback and complaints.

You can also join our social media channels for regular updates and local news:

Facebook - voyager family health

Instagram - voyagerfh

Our excellent Patient Services Care Navigators (formerly medical receptionists) are highly trained to be able to triage certain conditions and find you the correct clinician in the practice or direct you to an alternative service which may be quicker and more appropriate to your needs. **We ask you to please be kind and respectful to them.**

In April 2024, we undertook:

- **8107 telephone calls into the practice**
- **4437 face to face consultations**
- **2448 telephone consultations**
- **325 e-consults online**

In addition to this, we had 141 DNA's (people that did not attend their allocated appointment). Please let us know if you no longer need your appointment as they are very valuable slots that other patients are waiting for.

We value your opinions via our 'friends and family' feedback questionnaire, and we report to NHS England every month with the results. We don't always get it right and are always looking for ways to improve our service, so we take your responses seriously and discuss ideas at our quality meetings. Complaints are dealt with by the management team and clinicians as appropriate and learning points are presented to the team monthly.

We also love hearing all the positive feedback we receive and share these with our team. Thank you 😊