**PARISH FIELDS PRACTICE**

**FEBRUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER**



**Introduction**

Welcome to our February 2025 newsletter.

The Practice has experienced an extremely busy January, with more than **5,900** appointments booked during the month.

Our Reception Team received **3,919** calls, along with **2,197** online requests.

**Along with requests received from our new automated telephone service, this took total requests for the month to over 6,200, the equivalent of over 270 requests per working day.**

Our Dispensary staff were equally busy, with almost **4,800** items dispensed in January alone.

**Staff News**

I am very saddened to report that Dr Thorneley was taken ill over Christmas, and he has decided that it is appropriate for him to take early retirement from the Practice. This has obviously been difficult for our staff to come to terms with, and Dr Thorneley and his family are in our thoughts every day.

I would like to thank all of the clinical staff who have taken on additional shifts to help cover Dr Thorneley’s appointments over the past 5 weeks.

If Dr Thorneley was your registered GP, then we will shortly be reallocating you to another GP at the Practice. If you need help from the Practice in the meantime, you should contact us in the usual way.

**Spring 2025 COVID-19 Vaccinations**



The Practice is planning to offer further Covid-19 vaccinations from April 2025.

The current qualifying criteria for the Spring 2025 Covid-19 vaccinations is for patients who:

* are aged 75 or over
* are aged 6 months to 74 years and have a weakened immune system because of a health condition or treatment
* live in a care home for older adults

**PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE PRACTICE AT THIS TIME – WE WILL COMMUNICATE WHEN APPOINTMENTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR COVID-19 VACCINATIONS, AND HOW PATIENTS CAN BOOK.**

In the meantime, further information is available via the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/#:~:text=You%20may%20be%20offered%20a,care%20home%20for%20older%20adults>

**Practice premises news**

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Patients will soon see scaffolding being installed around the Practice in preparation for a major project to install solar panels on the roof.

This project aims to reduce the energy costs of the Practice, and is a move to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly energy source.

The Practice will remain open as usual during the completion of this work.

**Feedback and Social Media**

We always welcome constructive feedback, as we appreciate that it is only by taking this feedback on board we can constantly improve the service we provide. We provide a number of feedback channels for patients, including text messages following appointments, paper feedback forms at the Practice, and online at our website ([www.parishfields.co.uk](http://www.parishfields.co.uk)).

We also have an active and supportive Patient Participation Group (PPG) which meets regularly to provide feedback to practice management.

Feedback from patients attending the Practice in January revealed that, of the 393 patients who replied**, 95.5%** rated the Practice “Very Good” or “Good”

We are most grateful for the patients who took the time to provide this feedback, all of which is reviewed and shared with our staff.

Given the volumes of patient requests detailed earlier in this newsletter, it is however very demoralising for our staff, all of whom work incredibly hard each day, often volunteer for additional shifts, and are passionate about providing the best possible care to our 8,250 patients, to read disparaging posts from a small minority of patients on social media sites.

Many GP practices continue to face demand that significantly exceeds capacity, even more so through the winter months.

Furthermore, our staff are not immune from being ill themselves, with our clinical staff of course exposed to far higher than average contact with viruses and contagious illnesses, and their absence in turn adversely impacts our appointment capacity.

We would respectfully request that patients consider carefully the potential damage caused by what may appear to them to be a harmless social media post, especially as some of the recent posts are factually incorrect.

**Practice Open Evening**



We are planning a Practice Open Evening for early April. At this evening, supported by a range of Practice staff and our Patient Participation Group (PPG) we will provide some background on how a GP practice operates, how it is funded, and the constraints faced. There will also be an explanation of the different roles (clinical and non-clinical) at the Practice, and an explanation on the range of services that the Practice provides, along with the medical conditions the Practice does not treat. There will also be the opportunity for patients to ask questions and provide feedback.

Please look out for separate communications from the Practice over the next few weeks regarding the date, time and venue for this Open Evening.



In the meantime, here are the answers to some common questions we are frequently asked:

**1.How can I request an appointment at the Practice?**

Following recent system upgrades to ensure that patients have parity of access to the Practice, regardless of whether they have online access or not, there are several channels open to patients on weekdays (excluding Bank Holidays):

* **Telephone the Practice (01379 642023) from 6.30am** and

select **option 1** for our automated telephone service. You will be asked to explain why you are seeking help from the Practice, this will be converted by our system to text and be forwarded to our Duty Triage Team, led by the Duty Doctor. You will then receive an update, usually on the same day.

* **Use our online form from 6.30am – 7.30am.** Again, this is reviewed by our Duty triage Team.
* **Telephone the Practice (01379 642023) from 8.30am to 6.30pm** to speak to a member of our Reception team. We would ask that you contact the Practice as early as possible if you are seeking same day assistance.
* **Visit in person** to speak to our Reception team from **8.30am to 6.30pm.**

1. **Do I have to hold on in a long telephone queue?**

**NO**. Following the recent upgrade to our telephone system, any caller who is more than 4th in the queue will automatically be offered the option for a callback from the Practice. This callback will be at the same time that the caller would have been answered if they had elected to stay on hold.

1. **Why can’t the online forms be left open 24/7?**

As detailed earlier in this Newsletter, the Practice received over 6,000 requests in January alone.

The Practice is not a 24 hour per day, 7 days per week facility, neither is it an emergency service and we have to be mindful of managing the demand on our clinicians to ensure patient safety and the wellbeing of our staff.

1. **Why do Receptionists stop me booking an appointment?**

Our receptionists are trained to accurately take the details of each patients request. This is NOT to prevent patients booking appointments, but it IS in order for that information to be reviewed by our triage team, led by a Duty Doctor to ensure that all requests are prioritised in order of clinical need, as opposed to a “first come, first served” basis.

1. **Why do your doctors only work 9am -5pm?**

**THEY DON’T!**

Firstly, our Duty Doctor and the triage team start early in the morning reviewing the patient requests, which we start receiving from 6.30am.

The Practice is open 8.30am-6.30pm on weekdays (excluding Bank Holidays)

We also offer an evening clinic to 8pm on 1 day each week.

Some of our appointments start at 7.30am.

The Practice also opens on some Saturdays, including for the administering of vaccinations.

When the Practice doors are closed, the work does not stop; our staff frequently work for many hours either side of these times. There are hundreds of documents and test results that our clinicians review each week, along with making onward referrals that result from volume of patient interactions that take place each day. Much of this work is done by clinicians late into the evening, and on their days off, including at weekends.

This is all in addition to the training on ongoing professional development time required of all registered clinicians, all of whom have of course studied and worked hard for many years.

**We know that these are challenging times, and we are very appreciative of the kindness shown by the vast majority of our patients. At Parish Fields we will always aim to be open and transparent about the issues we face.**

**We continue to work extremely hard to constantly enhance the service we provide to our patients, and we ask for your support as we navigate this difficult period.**

**Thank you for your understanding and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our Open Evening in April.**

Simon Round

Practice Manager

4th February 2025