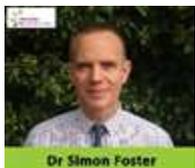


Christmas Newsletter

December 2020

Please order repeat medications by **Friday 18th December** to allow enough time for us to process them in time for the Christmas break.

A message from Dr Simon Foster, Senior Partner.



This has been an immensely difficult year for everyone in our community. It is though encouraging that infection numbers are coming down in our local area and a COVID vaccination programme has now begun.

Since the end of March we have been operating behind closed doors and with admission to the practice only for people with pre booked appointments. This is in line with NHS England's standard operating guidance and is to reduce the risk of spreading infection between patients and between patients and staff. We are pleased that throughout this period and with some significant challenges in staffing we haven't had any downtime when the surgery has had to close.

Operating in this way feels as strange for the practice team as it does for our patients. Working continuously in PPE is especially difficult for our team and can create communication barriers which are difficult to overcome. We all want our building to be open and busy with people again and , hopefully , that time will come back before too long.

In this newsletter we will be explaining about some changes to the way we will manage the flow of patients at the surgery to provide more shelter. There will also be some reflections on how the year has unfolded as well as the usual round up of surgery news and announcements.

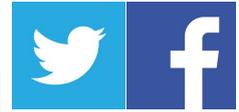
I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our patients a happy, peaceful and safe Christmas.

*** Our normal surgery opening hours are ***
Monday – Friday 8.00am to 6:30pm

We are closed on **Christmas Day (Fri), Bank Holiday (Mon) and New Year's Day (Fri)**

Call 111 or use 111 online for advice when the surgery is closed.
Always Call 999 in the case of a life-threatening emergency

Visit our website at www.ainsdalemedicalcentre.nhs.uk



And follow us on social media as **@ainsdaledocs**

COVID Vaccination Programme

The COVID vaccination programme is already being rolled out across the country and is likely to take many months.

It's a very fast moving situation and we will keep a dedicated page on our website with up to date information for patients.



Routine immunisations.

With so much emphasis on the COVID vaccination it is important to remember to keep up to date with routine vaccinations. All immunisations on the [NHS schedule](#) for babies, pre-school children and adults are continuing as normal and patients are encouraged to respond to invitations and keep their appointments.

Using the right service:



There is a helpful resource on the Southport and Formby CCG website that explains all the different ways of getting medical help and its particularly important to be aware of this during the holiday period.

You can access the CCG guidance page by typing :-

<https://www.southportandformbyccg.nhs.uk/your-health-and-services/> into your browser or by scanning the QR code with your phone camera.

SCAN ME

 Self Care Stock your medicine cabinet Minor cuts and grazes Bruises and minor sprains Coughs and colds	 Pharmacy No appointment required Minor illnesses Headache Stomach upsets Bites and stings	 NHS 111 24 hours a day Dial 111 for urgent medical concerns	 GP Advice Out of Hours call 111 Persistent symptoms Chronic pain Long term conditions	 A&E or 999 Emergencies only Choking Chest pain Blacking out Serious blood loss
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Behind Closed Doors.

We have been continuously adapting the way we work so that we can keep everyone here safe and carry on providing care to patients as the pandemic has evolved through its different phases.

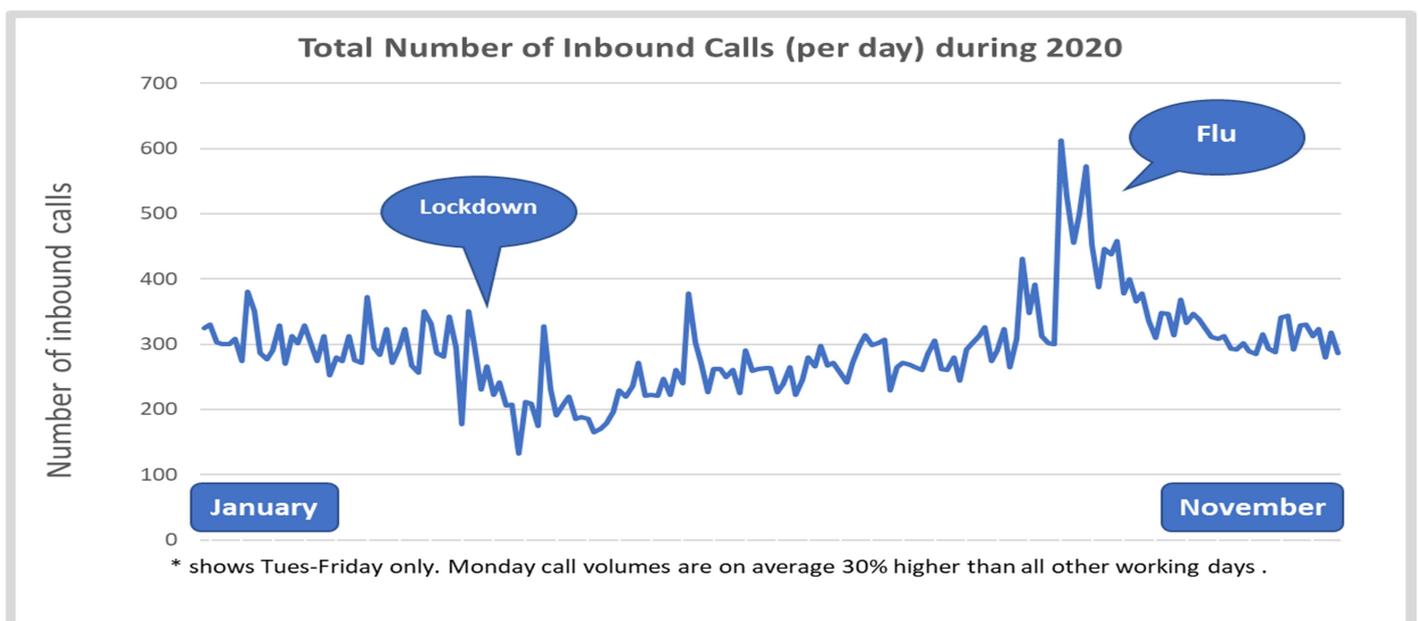
Initial contact will always be via a telephone call with a GP or other healthcare professional. We often refer to this as telephone triage. The clinicians are able to use a variety of digital tools to support them in these remote telephone consultations and in the vast majority of cases they can treat the patient safely without having to see them in person.

Face-to-face appointments will always be provided if the GP feels they are clinically necessary. It is appreciated that certain patients might have specific access requirements that might require face-to-face contact and their needs will always be accommodated safely.

There is a helpful [short film](#) on our website and published by NHS which explains the changes.

Hanging on the Telephone

The way that appointments are organised has changed so profoundly since the end of March that it is difficult to track and understand changes in patient demand. The number of incoming phone calls we receive each day is a simple but helpful 'pulse-check' on demand levels. The graph below shows how after the relatively quiet weeks in April and May, demand gradually built up again. The summer months are typically quieter than the winter months in any year and the impact of running the flu vaccination programme in September and October is clear to see.



Manic Monday

The graph above doesn't show Mondays to make it easier to understand the trend through the year across the other working days. We consistently receive **30%** more phone calls on a Monday than we do on any other day. If your call isn't urgent then please wait till another day. It will mean a shorter wait for you and it will enable us to dedicate more time to the patients whose calls can't wait.

The Green Door

In the near future we will be making an important change to how patients access the surgery for pre-booked appointments. This will reduce crowding at the entrance, improve patient flow and provide more shelter from the weather for people waiting to enter the building.

When you book your appointment you will be assigned a colour – amber or green - which denotes the type of appointment you are coming for and which door to check-in at.

AMBER	Acutely unwell people attending for the first time or for a follow up for a previous episode. These appointments are with a GP or other prescribing clinician and will have been consulted first on a telephone call. This would normally exclude people with acute respiratory conditions that could potentially be Coronavirus. 'Amber' patients will be directed to the front door which is the one visible from the front path.
GREEN	Otherwise well patients attending for proactive/preventative treatments and reviews. These appointments are usually with the nursing team. 'Green' patients will be directed to check-in at the side door (off the patient car park behind the surgery building) We generally have many more green patients than amber patients on any given day and the side door provides more space and protection from the weather for them.

'Red' patients are those who are acutely unwell with symptoms that could indicate Coronavirus. If, after a phone consultation, the GP feels a physical examination is required then the patient will be booked into the GP Contact Centre at Freshfield surgery. This centre is run on behalf of all practices in Southport and Formby and helps reduce the risk of infection in our GP surgeries.

New signage will be put up outside the building to help you find the right door when you arrive.

Please wear a face-covering when you come to the surgery.

When you book your appointment we will send you an SMS (if we can) with more details on how to find your way to the correct entrance. If you don't use a mobile phone the reception will explain the arrangements over the phone.

We are continuing to monitor updates in NHS guidance and will make things easier for patients and staff when we can do so safely.

All patients entering the surgery will be screened for the key symptoms of Coronavirus: new persistent cough, fever or loss of sense of taste and/or smell. Do not come to the surgery if you are experiencing any of these symptoms.

Practice News



After a 40 year nursing career in the NHS and 22 year's service to Ainsdale Medical Centre, Sr Alison Roberts has decided to retire from her role at the practice. We are so thankful to Alison for her hard work and contribution over the years and wish her a very happy and well deserved retirement. She is known by a great many of our patients who she has looked after at the surgery and , in her previous career as a midwife she delivered many of them safely into the world too.

September saw the arrival of two new members of the reception team – **Trisha** and **Hannah**. Neither has worked in general practice before but they have hit the ground running in a very busy and demanding environment and absorbed so much information in a short space of time.

Elizabeth left the reception team in September after four years in order to pursue a career in teaching.

Dr **Rebecca Bainton** recently left the surgery after a four month stay as part of her Foundation Stage 2 training. Her place at the surgery has been taken by **Dr Amelia Sodeau** who will be with us until April 2021.

In August we were joined by **Dr Abi Oduwole** and Dr **Zanub Yaqoob** who are currently at the Speciality Training stage of their journey to be General Practitioners.

A warm welcome to all our new team members and our best wishes to those who have moved on.

We were saddened to hear of the recent death of **Dr Brian Garston** who was a Partner at the practice between 1967 and 1996. He is fondly remembered by many of the current practice team who worked with him during that time.



This year our Lead Nurse , Sr Stephanie O'Connor, was awarded the prestigious title of Queen's Nurse by The Queen's Nursing Institute. Given in recognition of her commitment to high standards of patient care and continually improving practice, we are really very proud of her.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Our PPG has gone from strength to strength despite the restrictions of Coronavirus. Our meetings moved seamlessly onto Microsoft Teams and we enjoyed some constructive meetings and informative talks. A big thank you is due to the members of the group who gave up their time to help steward the flu clinics in the Autumn. We really appreciate the support of the whole group. If you would like to know more about our PPG you can make initial contact with our Chair, Helen Graham via email - ainsdale.patients@gmail.com



During the summer, 25 staff members completed a 91-day virtual tour of Europe in an effort to raise much needed funds for Queenscourt Hospice.

The team members added up all the kilometres they completed on their daily exercises to move them along a 13,700km journey connecting the 25 destinations that they had each chosen as the place they wanted to visit when the easing of travel restrictions make it possible. It was a great team effort that kept everyone motivated to keep active outside of work.

The initiative was centred around the [5 steps to mental well-being](#) which is promoted by the NHS and is helpful for everyone at this time. The 5 steps include keeping active, giving, connecting with others, learning new skills and mindfulness. Our activities included open water swimming , paddle boarding, climbing yoga and hula hooping as well as the more traditional pursuits like running walking and cycling.

Many of our team have a personal reason to be grateful for the amazing work that the hospice do and feel good knowing our donation, of **£2449.38** will make a real difference to local people.

Thank you to everyone who supported us with their generous donations.

We are proud to have continued our support of Southport Foodbank this year with our food collection point at the surgery.

If you are in financial crisis, please call **0808 2082138** for free (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm) to talk confidentially with a trained Citizens Advice adviser.

If needed, they can issue you with a voucher so you can get an emergency food parcel from your local foodbank.



The winter months can be hard and Christmas this year will certainly be difficult for a great many people.

If you are worried about a relative or elderly neighbour you contact Sefton Council on **0345 140 0845** or call the Age UK helpline on **0800 678 1602** (8am to 7pm every day).

If you need to talk right now, whatever you're going through, there are people you can talk to any time. Anyone can call the Samaritans on 116 123 (UK-wide) or text SHOUT to 85258 (UK-wide)