

# Unity Healthcare Patient Newsletter

**Dr David Brandon, Clinical Lead GP**

**Dear Patients,**

As Coronavirus restrictions continue to ease, and life steadily heads back towards "normal", I'm grateful for the support that you continue to provide us by continuing to wear face coverings in the surgery. Healthcare organisations have been advised to continue to maintain this requirement, as a number of our patients remain vulnerable to the threat of coronavirus. Those people undergoing treatments for cancer, taking medicines that suppress the immune system, or for whatever reason they may have that leaves them less protected by immunisation are often the same that have the greatest need for healthcare. Thank you for your continued patience in this matter.

The NHS has been suffering a great deal of disruption and I'm sure that even if you are not at present personally affected by being sat on a waiting list, you will have seen news and articles about the pressures facing hospitals across the UK. This disruption has an obvious knock on effect, and many of you will have seen the joint publication that has been released by the Haverhill Primary Care Network about the pressures facing us currently in primary care. I know that disruption and stress are not uniquely seen in healthcare, and recognise that it has been an extremely challenging time for many of you as well. We can only rebuild and progress by supporting one another. If you have not seen this letter, it is accessible on our practice website and Facebook page, as well as a summary that was published in the Haverhill Echo.

We made the difficult decision to disable to facility to contact the practice via eConsult when we are closed. We hope that this will be a temporary measure, and we appreciate that for many of you this was a very useful feature that our service provided. We were finding that we were spending far too much time on a Monday consulting with people who contacted us over the weekend with problems that had since resolved already, and then were essentially running behind for the rest of the week. The out-of-hours service is commissioned to help with medical problems when the practice is closed, and is available via 111.

I am most grateful for your support, and would like to offer

reassurance that whilst we are facing difficulties, these challenges are not specifically a "Haverhill problem", and we are committed to continue our forward progress and drive to offer high quality and accessible healthcare.

The progress we have made is not going un-noticed, and we continue to successfully recruit staff keen to join our team despite the national shortages of clinical staff. Whilst we have said goodbye to our experienced Nurse Jodie Hammond (who has gone onwards and upwards to head up an ambitious regional project to improve screening for Cervical Cancer), we welcome Amanda Webb and Angela Edwards into our nursing team. They bring a huge amount of experience and expertise and are a most welcome addition to Unity Healthcare. We have also welcomed Dr Matt Piccaver as another full time GP and practice lead for education, and are in the process of further GP recruitment right now (with further updates to follow). We have hosted a succession of excellent GP trainees, and would also like to congratulate our International GP Dr Adana Bodean for her success in passing all her examinations.

You now have no fewer than 9 regular GPs, 4 locum GPs and 3 Trainee GPs (not to mention the host of other clinicians that support them) working here at Unity Healthcare. Let's continue to build on this.

We are also pleased to discover that our National Patient Survey results are demonstrating significant improvement, and are glad to hear that you are now finding it much easier to contact the practice and access help from us when you need it. My team are working extremely hard to help you, so positive feedback is always very gratefully received. Other than a continued influx of high quality new staff, the other change that is afoot is the forthcoming patient consultation regarding the future of the Steeple Bumpstead branch. This was closed during the pandemic, with services delivered primarily from the Clements site. The Steeple Bumpstead branch does not really have the facilities required for a modern health centre, and the vast benefits that have come from having the clinical team working more closely together at the Clements branch should not be underestimated when considering our future viability. There will be patient consultation events about this, and the views of the population will be listened to.

We have a close knit and supportive community here in Haverhill (some online keyboard commentators notwithstanding); let's continue to make new staff welcome, and to demonstrate compassion, kindness and Unity!

**Dr David Brandon, Clinical Lead GP**

# Unity Healthcare Patient Participation Group (PPG)

## Want to have a say in how your surgery is run? Why not become a member of the Unity Healthcare PPG?

We are always looking for new members as we need your help to ensure our surgery continues to improve.

As a PPG member, you can better understand how your practice is run, discuss areas of improvement and give your input on changes.

To register your interest, please ask at Reception or email:

## Contact Us

If you have any questions or wish to share feedback with us, please email:

[wsccg.unityhealthcare@nhs.net](mailto:wsccg.unityhealthcare@nhs.net)

Or call:

**01440 841 300**



To keep up to date with our news, please visit [www.unityhealthhaverhill.org.uk](http://www.unityhealthhaverhill.org.uk) or search for 'Unity Healthcare' on Facebook.

Patients can also join the Surgery's Patient Participation Group. To find out more, please email

[wsccg.unityhealthcare@nhs.net](mailto:wsccg.unityhealthcare@nhs.net)

## Healthwatch Suffolk

You can also share feedback with Healthwatch Suffolk, an independent body set up to shape and influence local NHS and social care services.

Call **01449 703 949** or email [info@healthwatchesuffolk.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchesuffolk.co.uk)