

It has been some time since the last PPG newsletter, and this is due to the ongoing unprecedented situation with COVID-19.

However, our CCG's AGM was held recently, and it seemed useful to relay some snippets from this meeting, on the basis that a little more information might help people to understand some of the ongoing issues with GPs, and healthcare generally. Please see page 2.

But firstly... Flu Clinics

With all the focus on COVID-19 it may be that you have forgotten about flu. However, even in these pandemic times it is still important to get your flu jab. Flu may not be as risky as COVID-19 but it is not to be trivialised. Flu is not a good thing.

Get your jab!

Many people can have a flu vaccination free. See here for more information:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/>

The Cottons will be doing flu vaccinations. There will be clinics on 9th and 16th of October, 8am-12pm, or you can get your jab by way of a regular appointment. All vaccinations should be pre-booked.

The car park will be closed during the clinics, except for mobility access.

Flu vaccinations are also available at pharmacies.

The NHS Web site advises that you can have both the Flu and COVID-19 vaccinations, at the same time if required.



The Cottons Medical Centre : 01933 623327
Open 8:00am to 6:30pm, or 7:30pm on Thursday
Telephone lines are closed from 12:30 to 1:30pm



CCG AGM (*extracts from....*)



Firstly a few points about the status of healthcare and what the CCG have been doing:

- The CCG covers hospitals, GPs, mental health, ambulance and services.
- Our CCG's budget is £1.2bn
- 186,000 people are registered with GPs in Northamptonshire.

As well as their normal work, during the pandemic the CCG have....

- Brought together volunteers
- Brought together public services and regional/national partners
- Launched a COVID Support line
- Volunteer service for support
- Set up local test centres
- Set up test and trace locally
- Distributed lateral flow tests
- Set up datashare across healthcare system (GPs and Hospitals)

Here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktDdSWrHOTU>) are some presentations of things the CCG do or support.

COVID-19 stats for Northamptonshire, as presented at the AGM, were:

- 75,000 people have tested positive for COVID-19
(but that may be the tip of an iceberg).
- 5,270 people have required hospital care.
- 1,500 have lost their lives.
- More than a million vaccinations have been delivered in Northants.

Appointments can be made & repeat prescriptions
can be ordered via the practice Website.

www.thecottonsmedicalcentre.co.uk



GP matters

- 17,000 appointments per day, in GP surgeries.
- 10,500 of these were face to face
- 157,000 telephone calls per month
- 48,000 video consultations during 2020/21

We can see that the numbers are quite high, but the NHS should be geared up to handle these numbers, yes?

However, these numbers also reflect a 25% increase in calls to GP practices compared to numbers for the same period 2 years ago. Clearly practices haven't acquired 25% more staff (and even if the money was there, you can't just go and get more doctors 'off the shelf') so there are bound to be some consequences of this, such as difficulty in getting appointments.

Doctors and nurses have also been succumbing to COVID-19, with the inevitable effect on appointment availability.

The RCGP (Royal College of General Practitioners) has called for a 'rescue package' for general practice - warning that the profession is in crisis, with the workforce left 'at breaking point' by intense demand from a growing and ageing population, with added pressure on top from the historic NHS backlog, and of course COVID-19 issues.

In the meantime, Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard, Chair of the RCGP and a GP herself, has said "If you do have difficulty getting an appointment with your surgery, please understand that it's not personal and your surgery will be doing everything they can to see you and help you. Don't be afraid to give online or phone consultations a go - you may be pleasantly surprised."

COVID-19 precautions

Let in fresh air if you meet indoors. Meeting outside is safer.

Wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces where you come into contact with people you don't normally meet.

Limit close contact with other people.

Wash hands regularly.

Cover face if you cough or sneeze.

Try to stay at home if you feel unwell.

Get tested

Lateral Flow if not showing symptoms

PCR if you are showing symptoms

.... and self-isolate if required.

Get vaccinated!

More information on testing:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/get-tested-for-coronavirus/>

More information on staying safe:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/how-to-avoid-catching-and-spreading-coronavirus-covid-19/>

