

# Bloxham & Hook Norton Surgeries

Bloxham Surgery  
Godswell Lodge, Church Street, Bloxham, Banbury, OX15 4ES  
Tel: 01295 722788 email: bloxham.reception@nhs.net

Hook Norton Surgery  
The Bourne, Hook Norton, Banbury, OX15 5PB  
Tel: 01608 737302

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July 2021

Dear Patients of Bloxham & Hook Norton Surgeries

We and the staff have, for the past 16 months, worked together to continue to provide primary care services to all of our registered patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. At times we have been required to make changes to our guidance and systems on a daily basis. We have all had to learn to do things in new, safer and modified ways and to make changes to the ways we were trained or used to work in the past.

It may seem to some of you that we are not offering the level of service that you have been used to receiving prior to the pandemic. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our consultations rates have increased by 26% from the period of January – March 2020 to the same three months in 2021.

To give you a bit of an insight in to the increase in workload we have encountered, here are just a few of the examples:-

- Assessment of possible Covid 19 patients;
- Follow up to patients recovering from Covid 19;
- Supporting patients who have been diagnosed with Long Covid;
- Vaccine programme queries;
- Post-operative patient support which was previously provided by hospitals;
- Increase in patients suffering from Mental Health, Anxiety and Depression;
- Complex needs patients who would have been seen by hospitals prior to Covid-19 are now being reviewed by general practice.

The Practice is governed by NHS England guidelines regarding the details given on our telephone messages, together with the requirement by doctors to telephone triage all patient requests for an appointment in order to ascertain if a face to face consultation is necessary. We are still operating an "on site" separate zone in which to see patients who may be infected. This is in order to reduce the risk to other patients and to our staff. With this in mind we have also had to install a door entry system for our Bloxham site to control of the number of patients we have in the waiting room at any one time in order to adhere to the requirements of social and safe distancing.

We have increased the size of our clinical team in order to assist with the ever increasing demands on our services and time. Dr Lorraine Gray, who has worked at the practice as a locum, has joined us on a permanent basis and will be working two days per week. We also have Rachel Greene, a Physician Associate, who has joined us and will be working one and a half days per week, together with Dawn Beedon who is a Health Care Assistant and has also joined us for one and a half days per week. All three clinicians will be available at both the Bloxham and Hook Norton surgeries. In addition we are employing Rumbi Muzenda who is a Clinical Pharmacist. Her role is to carry out telephone medication reviews on behalf of the doctors and to update patient medication records following any changes resulting from hospital admissions. The appointment of these clinicians is a significant increase in our clinical resource at both surgeries.

Partners:- Dr Tim Hurst ❖ Dr Sanjay Ramani ❖ Dr Catherine Rose  
Dr Jenny McGillivray ❖ Dr Jonathan Williams ❖ Dr Neil Golder ❖ Dr Lorraine Gray

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Members of our clinical team are still wearing full PPE for any patient facing consultation, and following each consultation the room must be deep cleaned and the clinician must have a complete change of PPE. This takes at least 10 minutes and results in a significant decrease in the number of patients who can be seen each day. Therefore in order to try and maintain the best possible service for our patients in these circumstances we are trying to complete as many consultations as possible by telephone.

We have updated our telephone system and the new system allows you to join our "queue buster" if we are busy and your call is in a queue. Follow the instructions and you will not lose your place in the queue, but you do not need to hang on the line. Once you reach number 2 in the queue you will be called back automatically.

There has been a 15% increase in demand for prescriptions and our dispensary team will, on average, dispense in excess of 9000 items each month. These figures do not take into account the prescription forms that we provide to local chemists for those patients for whom we are no longer able to dispense due to them living within a mile of the Bloxham Pharmacy. We have therefore had to increase the time from ordering your medication to the collection of your order to 5 working days (this does not include weekends and bank holidays). For our dispensing patients we sometimes have to source stock from alternative suppliers, which ultimately takes longer. Please do not telephone to check if your prescription is ready for collection unless you have been asked to do so. We have ended the old system whereby you would need to phone between 10 -12 noon and 3pm – 5pm daily to order your prescriptions. You can now phone at any time of the day or night and leave a message with your requirements. In the event of you having a concern about your medication you can always leave a message on this line with your contact details and a member of our team will call you back as soon as possible. You can download the "patient access app" which makes re-ordering your prescriptions extremely easy.

Please be aware when checking the status of your medication request either on line or on the app that if your request shows that it has been approved by the doctors this does not mean that the medication is ready for collection. It only means that the doctor has approved your request and has passed this on to the dispensary to process. You can also request online access from the reception team, which is yet another way for you to order your medication. Finally, if you would rather not use electronic systems you can post the right hand side of your prescription form to the Dispensary team.

When collecting your medication we ask that you pay by using a card or other contactless system such as Apple Pay. If you are unable to use this method then please bring the correct money as we are unable to give change. Please note that we deliver prescriptions to our Hook Norton patients on Thursdays. We have had no option but to cut back on our home delivery service to those patients who are not entirely housebound, and we have now instigated a weekly village delivery service where needed for those patients who are housebound and have been approved by a clinician for home delivery.

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We are fortunate in that we have a group of volunteers in each village who have been assisting us to deliver medication during the period of time when patients have had to shield. This group of people are still willing to assist us when we need them, and this is highly appreciated by the team.

We were extremely lucky to be involved in the first wave of COVID-19 vaccination clinics, however this has also created extra work for the team to do alongside their normal work. Some members of our team have been working 7 days per week to assist with clinic booking, assisting at clinics, and going out at weekends (even in the snow) to deliver vaccines to our housebound. We, as a locality, have also been successful in our involvement with cohorts 10-12 (18 to 50 year olds) allowing us to offer vaccines to our younger patients which has allowed us to keep things locality based and reduced the need for patients to travel to Oxford or other vaccination centres. We are, as a practice, extremely grateful to our neighbouring partner practice colleagues at Chipping Norton Health Centre for hosting these mammoth clinics to accommodate you, our patients.

We are expecting to be advised by NHS England in the next few weeks as to which guidance we will have to follow in respect of the proposed autumn booster COVID-19 campaign and whether this can be combined with the annual flu vaccination. We will of course keep you posted about this.

Finally, and sadly, we need to report that we have seen a huge increase in patients who have been verbally rude and sometimes verbally abusive to members of our staff. This is totally unacceptable. We do not expect sympathy or gratitude for the way in which we have had to work during the past 16 months, BUT we would appreciate support from our patients. Thankfully, it is a minority of our patients who behave in this way and the partners and practice team members are aware of the identity of these patients.

We, along with the NHS in general, have a zero tolerance of such behaviour. In the event of any future occurrence of this type of behaviour the patients concerned will be issued with a letter of warning as to their future behaviour, and if similar behaviour recurs we, the Partners, will consider requiring those concerned to leave the practice and register elsewhere. We are trying our best to give you all a high level of service in what has been, and continues to be, extremely stressful times. We hope that you will help us to provide the same standards of care.

Yours sincerely



Dr Tim Hurst



Dr Sanjay Ramani



Dr Cath Rose

Partners of Bloxham & Hook Norton Surgeries