Issue 76 August 2023



STOKEWOOD SURGERY

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Branch Site:

OLD ANCHOR SURGERY

Riverside, Bishopstoke,

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 Stokewood Surgery

Full information on the services and opening times of both sites can be found on our website: www.stokewood.co.uk



Latest News

Featured this month:

* Staff update
* Telephone Changes
* Flu Clinics
* Cancer Screening Services
* Premises Update
* Car Parking
* eConsult



PRESCRIPTION REQUESTS

We do not take requests over the telephone.

Please use the NHS app or sign up for online access.

We accept emails to: WHCCG.stokewoodsurgery-prescriptions@nhs.net

If you request prescriptions by paper you will need to nominate a pharmacy where your medication will be prepared as we are no longer giving out paper prescriptions.

**Staffing Update**

We are pleased to announce that Dr Nina Lyons has taken on a permanent post four sessions a week and Dr Jess Seymour has joined us also working four sessions per week following the departure of Dr Rashid. We have three new fully qualified doctors who are completing their training as GPs with us until Christmas, Dr Chris Hooper, Dr Hannah Balhaj and Dr Vincy Koshy. We were also joined in June by Mark Turner, paramedic. We will be losing Stephanie Ridout, paramedic and Julian Kerr, Nurse Consultant in August and we wish them every success with the next step in their careers. Sarah Elderfield, who many of our patients know from the diabetic clinics and practice nurse team, has taken on an Advanced Nurse Practitioner role with us from this month and we will be joined by Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Victoria Hingley, in October. Dr Richard Straughan continues with us as a long term locum covering Dr Mendoza’s patient list and Dr Leah Alexander is covering for Dr Vicky Lazell who commenced maternity leave in July.

We are delighted to share the news that Dr Lazell and her husband welcomed a baby daughter in August and both mother and baby are doing well.

We are also pleased to announce that Georgie Day, one of our care co-ordinators also welcomed a baby daughter recently, congratulations to Georgie and her husband on the new arrival.

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**Telephone Service**

As many of you are aware, our telephone service has been moved to a cloud-based system as required by NHS England and applies to all general practices. Furthermore, our choice of system was restricted to those already in use by other practices within our primary care network. Now the change has happened, we cannot revert to the old system. Unfortunately, in the move we have lost the call queue numbering facility, which is very disappointing as we know how useful this was. We have also experienced a number of teething problems which has resulted in callers being cut off. We are sincerely sorry for the distress that this has caused. Many patients will be very pleased to hear that we have now replaced the American welcome message with a recording of our own.

Following investigation into these problems and adapting the way our team works, we are confident that things will improve but we will continue to monitor the situation. Should you get cut off, please advise the call handler who will record the details for further investigation.

To avoid patients having a lengthy wait on the phone, the call queue has been restricted to **8 callers**. Once all our call handlers are engaged and the queue reaches 8 callers, you will get the engaged tone. Please wait a few minutes and try again and once you are in the queue, please remain on the line until the call is answered.

From the feedback received, here are some suggestions as to how we can cut lengthy call queues:

1. Use the NHS app to:
	* Cancel an unwanted appointment, even one not booked via the app
	* Check your blood test results
	* Book a blood test
	* Book a flu/covid vaccination
	* Access eConsult
	* Look up self help information
	* Request a repeat prescription and track it through the system
2. Complete an eConsult (during opening hours) if you require a GP appointment. This will be triaged by a GP.
3. Use the text link to book an appointment if you receive one
4. Avoid calling us between 8 am and 9 am unless you require a same day/acute appointment
5. Use our health pod for blood pressure readings and updating your smoking or health information
6. You do not need to ring and check your eConsult has arrived, all successfully submitted eConsults will send you an acknowledgement
7. Call after 2pm for results if you do not have a smartphone/NHS app
8. Check with the Pharmacy first to see if your prescription is ready
9. Use self-referral services (details on our website) – no GP appt required for:
	* Mental Health & Italk
	* Youth Mental Health services
	* Eye health & minor eye injuries service
	* Drugs and Alcohol services
	* Physiotherapy services
	* Sexual Health services
	* Referral for exercise
	* Smoking cessation advice
10. Please remain on the line if you are in the queue. If you ring off, you may get the engaged tone at your next attempt, extending the time it takes to get through to us.
11. Please avoid spending several minutes telling our staff how much you dislike the new telephone system, it prolongs the call and lengthens the wait for others in the queue.

And finally, please be kind to the call handler, they are not responsible for the issues with the phone system and we are all really are doing our very best to get the calls answered as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your patience.

**Flu & Covid Clinics**

Invitations have been sent out to patients eligible for a flu vaccination this winter season. Patients can book in via the text link sent to them or via NHS app. If you don’t have a smartphone and are not registered for online access/bookings, then please ring reception after 10.30 am.

Patients in the flu categories are also eligible for a covid vaccination and we are happy to co-administer these vaccinations. If covid winter vaccinations are available at the time of your appointment, you will be offered the opportunity to have it at the same time. If you wish to have a covid vaccination but not the flu vaccination, clinics will be available to book directly in the near future.

Please ensure you attend your flu vaccination appointment as a vaccine is being reserved for you when you book your appointment. Last year over £9,000 worth of vaccines were wasted when patients booked but then went elsewhere or did not turn up.

We have been advised that the categories for eligibility for the flu & Covid vaccination this year will be:

Over 65s, patients aged 6 months to 64 in an at-risk group and children aged 2 and 3. We will be inviting patients to book soon.

**Vaccinations**

The practice offers a wide range of vaccinations including those offering protection against Meningitis (Men ACWY) for patients from age 17, Shingles for anyone aged 70 and over (you usually only need one dose of this vaccination in your lifetime) and pneumovax, protection against pneumonia, is available to everyone over 65, and again usually just one vaccination is required in your lifetime. You do not need to use eConsult to book an appointment for vaccinations, these can be booked via the NHS app or contact our reception team if you would like to any of these vaccinations.

Please speak to our team about any childhood vaccinations if you think you child has missed any.

**Cancer Screening Services**

During the height of the pandemic, a lot of patients missed out or delayed their screening appointments. If you missed an appointment for a cervical smear, mammography or bowel cancer, please contact the surgery. If you have the information sent to you from the screening services, please use the contact number supplied and they will help you with a new appointment or kit. Screening saves lives and every precaution to keep patients safe from covid-19 is being taken so there is no need to avoid attending your screening appointment.

**Car Parking**

With the return to more face-to-face appointments, the car park will be busier. Please walk or get a lift to the Practice if you can. Please park carefully and use only one space. Do not park in the covid parking bays unless directed to by a GP or use a disabled bay unless you have a disability.

Please do not park in the area marked for residents of Stokewood Close sheltered housing. If you are visiting someone in Stokewood Close, or are a resident, do not use the Stokewood car park spaces, not only are you depriving a patient of a space but these spaces are rented, at considerable cost, by the surgery, along with our premises.

If you park on any local roads near the Surgery, please be respectful of local residents and do not block driveways or paths/pavements. For visitors to Old Anchor branch site, please be aware that the Practice has only 6 parking spaces and the majority of spaces behind the surgery are private spaces for Old Anchor Flats. Thank you.

**eConsult – why is it offline when the Practice is shut?**

A consequence of ‘opting out’ of out of hours care is that a large sum of money is deducted from the surgery contract to pay for these services on behalf of our patients.  Unfortunately, we quickly found, as have many other surgeries, that not only were we paying for an ‘out of hours’ service for our patients but we were now getting a high proportion of the enquiries and work that was previously handled by pharmacies and out of hours services submitted to us via eConsult as patients avoided using the 111 service when we were closed.

It may be in future we are able to return to having it available out of hours again but at present, it will remain open only during our contracted opening hours.

**Premises Update**

Unfortunately there has been a delay with the practice obtaining planning permission as Eastleigh Borough Council investigates whether or not a soil contamination test is required prior to approval being given. We are optimistic that this is a temporary delay and we will be able to get things moving in the near future.