

# Heathgate Herald

The Newsletter from Heathgate Medical Practice – June 2024

[www.heathgatemedicalpractice.co.uk](http://www.heathgatemedicalpractice.co.uk)



**Welcome to our latest edition of the Heathgate Herald. We have news of an updated telephone system in Practice providing new options for callers, details of the national Pharmacy First Service, which allows patients to visit a Pharmacy for help with seven different medical conditions, and a 'shout out' for Military Veterans to contact us. We also share in this edition the results of our Friends and Family questionnaires for the full NHS year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.**

---



Those of you who have telephoned the Practice since 5<sup>th</sup> June will have noticed we have a new telephone system. This now provides a refreshed range of options to reach the appropriate team at the Practice from your first call.

Also, patients who are more than 6<sup>th</sup> in our call queue, are now able to reserve their place in the queue without holding on and we will call you back. The new system is a large investment in our digital infrastructure and meets the requirements of our contract to provide NHS Primary Care services.

The system will provide a much clearer picture of patient wait times and the periods of the day when call demand is higher so we can closer match patient demand with staffing resource. It is bound to take our teams a little while to work with both the new software and the equipment so please bear with us whilst this beds in.

---

Thank you to those of you who attended our community covid booster clinic on a bright Saturday morning in mid-May at the Poringland Community Centre. Our team administered just under 800 Spring booster vaccines across that Saturday morning, providing our over 75-year-old patients with additional protection from coronavirus. The Spring booster clinics have now ended with 80% of our eligible patients accepting a Spring vaccine.



**NHS**

**Whooping cough cases are rising in England**

If you're pregnant, the whooping cough vaccine will help protect your baby

Data published by the UK Health Security Agency shows there has been a continued increase in pertussis (whooping cough) cases in the first half of the year.

In response to this data, the UKHSA is reminding all mums to get protected against whooping cough, so their young baby has protection from birth. All pregnant women between 16 and 32 weeks of their pregnancy are eligible for the vaccination which is available at the Practice. To maximise protection, women should have vaccination in each pregnancy, irrespective of previous doses. Patients can talk to the Community Midwife about this at their next appointment.



## Armed Forces veteran friendly accredited GP practice

We are pleased to confirm the Practice has been accredited as an Armed Forces Veteran Friendly Practice supporting the health commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant.

As part of Covenant, Military Veterans may be eligible for additional support and, to help us recognise this, we are reaching out to patients to tell us about their Military Service.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the Nation that those who serve, or have served, and their families are treated fairly and the Covenant is part of the NHS constitution.

In relation to healthcare, the Covenant states that the Armed Forces community should enjoy the same standard of, and access to, healthcare as that received by any other UK citizen in the area they live and that Veterans should receive priority treatment where it relates to a condition that results from their service in the Armed Forces, subject to clinical need.

By knowing about your service, we will add an electronic alert to your medical record. This information will be subject to the same confidentiality and Data Protection safeguards as the rest of your medical record but means that we will include reference to such in any onward referral we make to a specialist team at the hospital or other healthcare provider.

We are also able to direct patients who have undertaken Military Service to specific mental health support and put them in touch with veterans charities and support networks.

Access to wider mental health support can be found on the main NHS website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) Search within for 'Healthcare for the armed forces community'.



We have now analysed responses from patients who completed a questionnaire about their experience at the Practice in the last full NHS year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

95.8% of the 251 respondents told us their experience was very good or good. Thank you to those who took time to respond and comment. We have also reviewed the comments of the 4.2% of patients who were unsure of their experience or who felt our service could be improved. We are considering their thoughts and suggestions.

The friends and family questionnaires are available again now for your comments.

---

The **NHS Pharmacy First Service** is now up and running in most Pharmacies in Norfolk and Waveney. This new service allows patients to visit a local Pharmacy for support with seven conditions without needing to visit the Practice. The Pharmacist will be able to diagnose and treat, with medication where appropriate, without the need for a prescription from us. These conditions are:

- Ear infections (1 to 17 years)
- Impetigo (1 year & over)
- Infected insect bites (1 year & over)
- Shingles (18 years & over)
- Sinusitis (12 years & over)
- Sore throat (5 years & over)
- Urine infections (in women 16 to 64 years – uncomplicated)

To help manage patient demand at the Practice, our front-line team may ask if you have considered this option when presenting with these conditions.



Pharmacy First