



# Churchmere Medical Group

## Patient Newsletter

### Edition 4 - September 2024

*Welcome to the September edition of our patient newsletter.*

September saw the launch of our new 'Total Triage' service, and we are delighted with the smooth transition we have seen. It has been a steep learning curve for both our patients and our staff – in this newsletter we look at the impact this has had on our patients and the practice.

A topic you may have read about in the news is the collective action that GPs are taking at the present time – in this newsletter we address this topic so you can understand what it means for you, our patients.

Have you ever had an appointment with one of our Fabulous GP Assistants? Well in this newsletter we will meet Hannah and understand more about her role within the practice.



I do hope you are enjoying reading these newsletters and if there are any topics you would like to see covered in the next edition then please let me know.

Olivia A Barker  
Patient Services Manager

**Did you know?** 

GPs and their teams are exhausted and losing morale.

No matter how many hours we work, we still can't see all the patients that need our care.



**This is why you struggle to see your GP**

General Practice is being broken. We know you deserve better than this. GPs Are On Your Side.





## A day in the life of a GP Assistant at Churchmere Medical Group

Hello, my name is Hannah, and I am one of the 'GP Assistants' here at Churchmere Medical Group. I have worked at Churchmere for just over a year. The role of a GP Assistant is still relatively new within primary care and still evolving. The job role is a mixture of administrative work as well as patient-facing appointments, the aim of which is to free up the GP's time so that they can treat more urgent patients. As well as seeing patients routinely we also have the capacity to see people urgently for additional tests, such as ECGs, or observations if required by the doctors or nurses. Alongside this I also assist with minor ops and coils, baby immunisation admin, FeNO testing and chronic disease recalls.

*My daily routine looks like this:*

- *When I arrive at work I check my appointment book for the day so I can ensure I have everything prepared and know what I am seeing each patient for.*
- *If I am doing a phlebotomy clinic, I will then check the blood forms for the patients I am seeing to make sure all the necessary bloods have been requested as well as checking if the patient needs any information updating or further checks undertaking.*
- *If I am on administrative tasks or routine face-to-face appointments, I would then check through any online patient forms that have been submitted, such as; asthma, COPD, pill checks and HRT questionnaires. We use the responses to then assign patients to the correct type of slots to complete their review – either remote, telephone or face to face.*
- *Throughout the morning, I will generally have a mixture of face-to-face appointments, administration slots and some days we also have the urines and samples to action as well.*
- *Occasionally at 11:30am I will sit with a GP whilst they complete a care home MDTs (multi-disciplinary team meeting) – my role within this is to take notes for the GP as they discuss each patient, I then log the consults on each patient's record and action anything that is needed from these discussions.*
- *Just before lunch I will then check the in box again and act on any more responses that have come in as well as check the tasks box for anything that needs urgent action.*
- *The afternoon will again be a mixture of face-to-face appointments and administration. Within this time, I will also check the diary recall box and contact any patients who have outstanding requests for their chronic disease such as: blood pressure, blood tests and urine checks*
- *Within my last hour I will then recheck the inbox and tasks boxes for anything that needs actioning as well as restocking and tidying my room ready for the following day.*



## Collective Action not Industrial Action GPs are on your side

***You have likely seen reports talking about “industrial action” by GPs and we wished to update our patients.***

The British Medical Association (BMA - the registered trade union for doctors) recently undertook a ballot of all GPs who hold a contract to provide GP services to patients - the vast majority of GP practices are independent partnerships holding an NHS contract such as Churchmere Medical Group. The ballot asked if GP partners were prepared to participate in joint (“collective”) action with the BMA. An overwhelming majority said yes.

This is NOT about pay but about General Practice receiving the amount of funding needed to employ enough doctors, nurses and other staff to provide sufficient appointments and for our staff to work safely.

As GPs, we have for years been doing work that is not funded and not contracted due to gaps in commissioned services and pressures on secondary care services. We have been doing so out of concern for our patients and to ensure that you continue to receive the care you deserve. However, with chronic underfunding and increased demand it is no longer sustainable for us to continue working in this way.

Across the country, since 2015, we have seen 1600 Practices close or merge, there are 6 million more registered patients and 2000 fewer full time equivalent GPs. Our funding levels are significantly lower than 2018 levels.

The joint action across the country is hoping to force the government to look at General Practice and urgently reconsider the amount of funding it receives. **We get 30p per patient per day to provide services** – this is woefully inadequate. Though you may have heard this referred to in the press as industrial action; this is factually incorrect. This is not industrial action. We are not on strike. This is “collective action” which is about working legitimately within our contracts. We will not be doing anything that compromises your safety. But we are fighting to be able to provide better services to you.

Please continue to use our services as normal and rest assured that patient care is still our priority. We hope you understand that we are taking this action to ensure that general practice locally, and across England is there for our patients in years to come.





## Think Which Service.....

In the last edition of the newsletter, we shared information on why you may be directed to the Pharmacy in the first instance – this service is called Pharmacy First and is part of the NHS campaign which is called ‘Think Which Service’ to help practice staff and our patients think more about the correct patient pathway - here is some further information.

Think ‘Pharmacy First’ for help with common conditions including:

- Sinusitis
- Sore throat
- Earache
- Infected insect bites
- Impetigo
- Shingles
- Uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women.



Find out more:

<https://www.shropshiretelfordandwrekin.nhs.uk/news/think-pharmacy-first-when-seeking-help-for-summer-conditions-say-county-health-leaders/>



Walk-in service for urgent care



Urgent medical help or advice that isn't life-threatening



Symptoms that won't go away



Life-threatening emergencies

Integrated Care System  
Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin

Pharmacy First enables patients to access advice and treatments for:

- Sinusitis
- Sore throats
- Earaches
- Infected insect bites
- Impetigo
- Shingles
- Uncomplicated UTIs in women



Health advice and over the counter medicines



## NEW ONLINE APPOINTMENT BOOKING SYSTEM AT CHURCHMERE MEDICAL GROUP

***We know from your valued feedback how difficult it can be to get through to the practice on the telephone to arrange an appointment. Despite increasing our phone line capacity and employing more patient services advisors to take calls, waits can still be long at peak times.***

So, from the 9th September 2024 we moved to a 'Total Triage' based system. This means that patients are asked to submit an online form to contact the practice rather than phoning or coming into reception to book.

The form is clearly displayed and available on our website. It can be accessed via a smart phone, computer, or tablet. Once received our clinical and admin teams will review the forms, and patients will be contacted with the appropriate appointment or advice.

This model of practice is called Total Triage and helps us to prioritise urgent care and utilise the many members of our skilled primary care team appropriately.

Below is a link to the form:

[Econsult - Churchmere Medical Group](#)

If you do not have access to a smartphone, or computer, or are unable to use the online form you will still be able to telephone the practice. A patient services advisor will be able to submit the form on your behalf by completing it with you over the telephone. However, it will greatly improve access on the telephone if all those patients that CAN use the online form do use it.

Completing the form online will be quicker than waiting on the telephone.



## Flu Vaccinations – All you need to know!

### *What is the flu vaccine?*

Flu is a complicated virus. The flu virus can change quickly and easily and therefore the strains within each vaccine potentially need to be changed each year. Each year's flu vaccine is made to give the best protection against the strains of flu that are expected to circulate in the coming season. However, decisions about what to put in the flu vaccine have to be made six months before the flu season starts. In about 9 out of 10 years the vaccine matches the strains causing illness that winter.

### *Does the flu vaccine gives you flu?*

No, it doesn't. The injected flu vaccine given to adults contains inactivated flu viruses, so it can't give you flu. Your arm may feel a bit sore where you were injected, and some people get a slight temperature and aching muscles for a couple of days afterwards. Other reactions are very rare.

### *Once you've had the flu vaccine, you're protected for life?*

No, you aren't. The viruses that cause flu can change every year, so you need a vaccination that matches the new viruses each year. The vaccine usually provides protection for the duration of that year's flu season.

### *Who is eligible to receive the flu vaccine?*

- Everyone aged 65 or older (or aged 65 by 31 March 25)
- Patients who are 18 – 64yrs old and in the 'At Risk' Group
- Those who are pregnant or become pregnant during the flu season
- People aged over 18 who are living in long stay residential homes
- Carers

Those aged 50-64 years with NO underlying health condition are **NOT** entitled to an NHS flu vaccination this season.

*All our patients who are eligible for the flu vaccination should now have received an invitation to book an appointment. We have two clinics this year and they are on the 12th October for Ellesmere patients and the 19th October for Whitchurch patients. Please call the practice to book your appointment or use the link provided should you have received a text or email!*







## **Total Triage**

As our patients are aware we went live with a 'Total Triage' based appointment system on the 9<sup>th</sup> September. The first few weeks have gone very smoothly, and the team have done a fabulous job in educating you, our patients on how to complete an eConsult. Our team of wonderful Patient Services Advisors are still on hand to answer your calls and complete the eConsult on your behalf if you have no access to the internet or you are unable to complete one.

At the time of writing, we have 20,772 patients registered with Churchmere and in the first week of Total Triage 880 eConsults were completed. Of these 249 were completed by our staff on your behalf and therefore 632 were completed by patients. This means an impressive 72% of all eConsults received were completed by our patients.

We are interested to receive your feedback especially if you have recently completed an eConsult. As with any new system we are adapting from feedback and have already made changes based on feedback from our patients, such as reducing the threshold for patients being asked to call the practice from the system.

It is only from your feedback that we can continuously improve.

**Jenny Davies**

**Practice Manager**



## Dr Adam Pringle (MB ChB)

*During my induction period I had the pleasure of posing some questions to some of our GP's and in this month's issue of the newsletter I am delighted to share what I discovered about Dr Adam Pringle.*

### **When and where did you graduate from?**

I graduated from the University of Birmingham in 1990.

### **What are your medical interests Dr Pringle?**

No specific field of medicine, variety is the spice of life.

### **What is your most dramatic moment??**

Professionally my defining moments was early on in my career when I treated a child with a treatment, I had heard of but never seen. The child got better and so let me believe I was able to do this!

Personally - Sitting in the desert waiting for chemical weapons to land!

### **Do you prefer an adventure holiday or relaxing on a beach?**

Relaxing. Anywhere, doesn't have to be a beach

### **What would you say is your greatest achievement to date?**

My children all seem to have developed into sensible capable adults, I'm still married to my first wife, and I still enjoy medicine after more than a third of the century. All seem slightly surprising at times!!

Churchmere Medical Group		
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Tel: 01691 242222 / 01948 320044 Email: churchmere.admin@nhs.net		





## NHS Long Service Awards

This month we have two members of staff hit their long service milestones. Our congratulations go to Dr Branfield and Barbara Jones.

- ❖ **Dr Gary Branfield has hit his 10 year milestone having joined Churchmere Medical Group on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014.**
- ❖ **Barbara Jones our Mental Health Nurse has successful reached her 5<sup>th</sup> year with us having joined Churchmere Medical Group on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019.**

On receiving his award from Chloe Morgan-Jones (Assistant Practice Manager), Dr Branfield said...

*'I have really enjoyed the last 10 years here at Churchmere Medical Group, it only seems like yesterday that I joined the practice when it was a standalone entity in Ellesmere. Over the last 10 years I have seen many changes to primary healthcare, but I firmly believe that here at Churchmere we do things differently and we hold our patients at the very heart of everything we do. The recent change to Total Triage is testament to this and we are already seeing the results with more patients getting the care they need quicker than ever. I am really looking forward to seeing what the next 10 years brings'.*





## Friends & Family Test Update

In the month of August, we again saw a rise in our response rate. We are delighted that more patients are completing the Friends and Family Test and providing us with feedback which we can share with the whole practice at our monthly practice meetings.

When our clinicians need to revalidate, it is comments from our Friends and Family survey that they can use to show the care that they are giving to our patients – so when you want to send positive feedback about our wonderful team please try and use the name of the nurse or GP you saw, and this is really useful to them.

In the month of August both our ‘Very Good’ and our ‘Good’ responses rose again, and we are very much looking forward to the September results to see how the move to Total Triage has affected the satisfaction survey.

Statistics			Overall, how was your experience of our service?					
Date	FFT Sent	% Response Rate	Very Good	Good	Neither	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
Jan-24	2226	21%	79%	14%	3%	3%	2%	1%
Feb-24	2270	20%	81%	12%	5%	1%	1%	0%
Mar-24	2366	23%	79%	14%	5%	2%	1%	1%
Apr-24	2121	20%	79%	17%	3%	1%	1%	0%
May-24	2050	23%	78%	17%	3%	1%	1%	0%
Jun-24	1992	25%	82%	14%	1%	2%	1%	0%
Jul-24	2027	27%	77%	16%	3%	2%	1%	1.50%
Aug-24	1941	29%	78%	17%	4%	1%	1%	0%

### Reminder: Photographic Competition (Last Call)

We have already received a lot of wonderful pictures to use across the Ellesmere and Pauls Moss Health Centres, so this is the last call for any photographers to get their pictures to us!

We would like you to send in your photos of the local area and a selection will be printed and displayed around the buildings. Please send your entries to [churchmere.admin@nhs.net](mailto:churchmere.admin@nhs.net) along with a title for the image and your full name as these will be displayed as well.



**Why not try our eConsult service today...**



**No more hanging on the phone to contact our practice.**

Next time submit an eConsult online, wherever you are, for free. If you need an appointment we'll arrange one with you.

- Visit our [practice website](#) or
- Download the [NHS APP](#) or
- Go to: <https://patients.econsult.health>

