

Oak Tree & Pensilva Patient Newsletter—Winter 2020

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Covid-19 Update

2020 has certainly been our most challenging and difficult year in general practice, and healthcare as a whole. The restrictions placed upon us due to the pandemic have been tough for everybody. Every one of us has been negatively affected by this virus in one way or another. But for all of the hardships we have had to endure there has also been an overwhelming sense of community spirit and solidarity. With two Covid vaccines now approved for use in the UK and the first dose administered in Cornwall on 9 December, 2021 is looking a lot brighter and we can all hope to start returning to something resembling “normal” later in the year. In the meantime please play your part in protecting our community and remember...

Hands, Face, Space!

Covid Vaccine Information

Here in Cornwall the NHS will be in touch directly to invite you when it's your turn so please do not call your GP and try to book. When your GP does contact you, please act immediately, and attend your booked appointments. The NHS has already started vaccinating people aged 80 and over and care home staff, as well as NHS workers who are at higher risk. The vaccination programme is due to continue by rolling out to care home residents, and other health care staff.

If you are invited to have the covid vaccine this may not be at your usual GP practice. Getting the vaccine is one of the best ways to protect you, your loved ones and your community.

We ask that you remain patient whilst those groups of people considered a priority receive the vaccine.

One thing you can all do now while we wait for the covid vaccine to rollout is to get your flu jab and continue to follow the prevention methods of hand washing, social distancing and wearing face coverings.



Flu Update

NHS England announced that from 1st December 2020 all patients aged 50-64 years old (not already in an at risk group) would be eligible for a free NHS flu jab this year as part of the expanded flu vaccination programme in a bid to help tackle winter pressures on the NHS during the covid pandemic.

We are very proud to have achieved record numbers of flu vaccinations this year... as of 17 December we have administered 5'346 flu jabs to our eligible patients. This is the first year in many years that we have reached our flu vaccination target before Christmas!

Flu clinics are always a busy time, but the restrictions placed upon us by the pandemic have meant that things were even harder this year. We would just like to say a big thank you to all of our patients who have attended a flu clinic this season, we have had some wonderful feedback from patients commenting on how well things were run and this is also thanks to you as well. Without your patience and respect for the covid measures they would not have gone as well as they have—thank you!

If you are eligible for a free NHS flu vaccination (now including anyone aged between 50-64) and have not yet had your jab please contact the surgery on the usual telephone number to book an appointment.



Staff Update

We would like to warmly welcome some new colleagues who have joined our practice recently. We hope they will enjoy being part of the Oak Tree and Pensilva Surgery family.

Louise Kelly—Physician Associate

Jane Cross—Mental Health Practitioner

Eleanor Karensa—Dispensary Receptionist

Amelia Bignell—Receptionist

Emily Pullen—(Covid Reception Cover, 6 months)

Similarly we would like to say farewell to our colleagues who have recently left the practice and to wish them every success in their future endeavors:

Linda Levy and Lisa Apps—Practice Nurses, will both be leaving us at the end of January.

You will be missed by staff and patients alike!

Pensilva Refurb Update

You may recall that in our last newsletter we were very excited to tell you about some refurb works to the waiting room, reception area, and admin office at Pensilva Health Centre. Well, it is with great delight that we can now share an update on how the work is progressing. We had a visit from the lovely Marlene Carr, Chair of Pensilva Patient Participation Group and Secretary to Friends of Pensilva Health Centre on 15th December so that she could have a look around and see how the work is coming along. It is with huge thanks to The Friends of Pensilva that this work has been possible.



We're working hard to look after you



A month in numbers...

The workplace has been different for all of us in 2020 but GP surgeries are working hard to see you safely. Your GP may want to call you or see you via a video consultation regarding your concerns. However, if your GP needs to see you face to face it is important that you attend. Here are just a few figures from the month of October to show you that

WE ARE OPEN AND CAN SEE YOU SAFELY!

Oak Tree and Pensilva Surgery	
Data collected from 1st - 31st October	
16'340 - Registered Patients	
31'473 - Prescription Items Generated	
14'465 - Incoming Calls Answered	
3696 - Telephone Consultations	
3143 - Appointments in the surgery, including...	
2460 - Nurse Appointments and...	
294 - Chronic disease reviews	
194 - Sick notes	
42 - Home Visits	



Get to know the role...

Physician Associate

Physician Associates support Doctors in the diagnosis and management of patients. They are medically trained healthcare professionals working as an integral part of the multidisciplinary team. As part of their role they can:

- take medical histories from patients
- carry out physical examinations
- see patients with undifferentiated diagnoses
- see patients with long-term chronic conditions
- formulate differential diagnoses and management plans
- perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures
- develop and deliver appropriate treatment and management plans
- request and interpret diagnostic studies
- provide health promotion and disease prevention advice for patients.

We are delighted to have a Physician Associate-Louise Kelly working two days per week at Oak Tree Surgery supporting our On Call Team.

Please see the research section of our website for more information about research - <https://oaktreesurgeryandpensilvahc.co.uk/practice-information/research-2/>

COVID-19 Virological Surveillance

Oak Tree Surgery and Pensilva Health Centre are participating in a national virology surveillance programme to monitor the spread of respiratory viruses (including influenza, COVID-19, RSV) and measure the effectiveness of influenza vaccinations through the winter season.

Patients presenting with an influenza-like-illness, lower respiratory tract infection or other symptoms consistent with COVID-19 may be eligible to participate.

Eligible patients will be offered a self-testing kit which will be delivered directly to the patients' home.

RECRUITS NEEDED for a study of a new antibiotic to treat urinary tract infections. Please contact the Research Team at the practice for more information.

The leaflet features the RCGP logo and the text 'Royal College of General Practitioners Research & Surveillance Centre'. It is titled 'THE WEEKLY RETURNS SERVICE (WRS) SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMME' and 'Patient information leaflet'. The design includes a blue background with white icons representing various medical and surveillance concepts.

What is WRS programme?

This practice is participating in a national surveillance programme that provides continuous monitoring of infectious diseases in the community. The surveillance programme is coordinated by the Royal College of General Practitioners Research (RCGP) and Surveillance Centre (RSC).

What data is being collected?

Pseudonymised data is being collected. Pseudonymisation means that individuals are distinguished by using a unique identifier, that is, a pseudonym. That means that their 'real-world' identity is not revealed.

Why is this data collected?

This data is used for continuous monitoring of infections and diseases and is the main source of information for Public Health England (PHE). The purpose of collecting data is to support public health, including the evaluation of vaccine effectiveness.

How does this affect me?

Providing pseudonymised data does not affect patients directly. All information is collected anonymously and does not affect patient care, treatment or privacy. However if you no longer wish to allow your information to be used, please speak to your GP.

How about GDPR?

RCGP RSC are compliant with all current legislation including GDPR and work within the governance frameworks of NHS Digital and the Medical Research Council.

For more information, please visit: <https://clininf.eu/index.php/test-rcgp-gd>

Contact us:

Email: MedicalDirectorRSC@rcgp.org.uk

Weekly Returns Service: <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/rsc>

Version 2.20190701

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Do you have suspected or confirmed COVID-19?

Are you aged 65 or over? Or 50 to 64 with underlying health conditions? with symptoms within the past 14 days?

Please visit www.principletrial.org to find out how to take part in an Urgent Public Health Clinical Trial for COVID-19 Treatments

Logos for Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, Primary Care Clinical Trials Unit, and the PRINCIPLE trial.

NIHR Clinical Research Network South West Peninsula Research Awards 2020 banner with colorful squares.

The Oak Tree and Pensilva Research Team have been awarded Highly Commended in the Research Practice Award category at the South West Peninsula Clinical Research Network Awards. The digital awards ceremony can be found here

<https://local.nihr.ac.uk/news/south-west-research-awards-digital/25714>

Logos for the University of Oxford and the Royal College of General Practitioners Research & Surveillance Centre.

CASNET2 Study

This practice is taking part in the CASNET2 study. This is a study run by researchers at the University of Oxford looking at a new electronic safety netting tool which is part of the practice computer system. The tool helps GPs to make sure that patients get followed up if they have symptoms that might lead to a new diagnosis.

The researchers are hoping to find out whether the tool helps to reduce the time it takes for people to get a diagnosis. They will be using anonymised patient data from the practice computer system to find out how well the tool works. Using data in this way will not affect your privacy or care, and no-one will be able to identify you personally, but please speak to your GP if you have any concerns, or if you wish to opt out of the study.

For further information please visit <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/rsc> or contact:

Prof Simon de Lusignan
RSC Director
MedicalDirectorRSC@rcgp.org.uk

Practice Liaison
Team
practiceenquiries@phc.ox.ac.uk

Have your say...

We are committed to providing you with the best healthcare experience possible, the best way for us to offer a healthcare service tailored specifically to our patients is to listen to what you have to say, your feedback is invaluable. We have created an anonymised survey on our website to help us understand how we can help you better. The surgery will not be able to identify you from any answers you give to the questions however, anonymised data from the survey may be used for training and communication purposes. We would be very grateful if you could spare a minute to tell us how you feel -

<https://oaktreesurgeryandpensilvahc.co.uk/navigator/patient-questionnaire/>



We regularly update our social media pages with information relevant to the practice and local community. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter and look out for our Instagram and Youtube pages coming in 2021!



Online Services

Livi; free NHS service whereby you can access virtual consultations with a GP in minutes!

E-Consult; A service whereby you can complete an online consultation and receive a response within two working days! This can be used for clinical and administrative queries.

For more information regarding our online services please visit the practice website.

<https://oaktreesurgeryandpensilvahc.co.uk/>

Prefer to speak to an actual person?

Although the NHS are embracing digital services we know the world of technology is not for everyone. So, if you would prefer to hear a friendly voice rather than using our online services, please just pick up the phone and speak to our dedicated team who are here to help. Our trained administration and reception teams can give you all of the information that you would normally find online and will be able to signpost you to any relevant services that you might require.

Positive Feedback

We have had a lot of lovely feedback from our patients recently which has done wonders to boost staff morale. We would just like to say thank you to anyone who has taken the time to write/email in to us with kind words of appreciation and praise, it has really helped us through these difficult times.



“THAT PAIN JUST WON'T GO”

JUST SPEAK TO YOUR GP



WE ARE HERE TO SEE YOU SAFELY

Covid-19 has dramatically changed the way that people access NHS services. Some of these changes are positive and have improved patient experience, such as an increase in digital and telephone appointments. However, other impacts have been far less positive, as people have been discouraged from seeking medical care as normal as a result of Covid-19.

Specifically, there are concerns that some people are not coming forward if they have a symptom that could be cancer, or are pregnant and are worried about the health of their unborn child. In addition, some patients are not attending their routine appointments.

If you have a symptom that could be cancer (such as unexplained blood that does not come from an obvious injury, an unexplained lump, weight loss which feels significant to you or an unexplained pain that lasts three weeks or more, it could be a sign of cancer. It's probably nothing serious, but finding cancer early makes it more treatable, so just speak to your GP.

Your NHS is here to see you, safely.

Cancer is easier to treat when it's caught at an earlier stage and so coming forward for a check could save your life.

Free Delivery Service

The increased delivery service for Pharmacy and Dispensary has been running since September and we are now delivering to approximately 70% of our dispensing patients.

If you would like to have your medications delivered to your door (free of charge) please contact a member of the Dispensary Team on the usual surgery number who will be happy to discuss this with you.



Check out our new Oak Tree Pharmacy Facebook page for the latest information about our Pharmacy services - Just search "Oak Tree Pharmacy" on Facebook.

Christmas Foodbank Appeal

We would like to say a huge thank you to all of our lovely patients who donated food/goodies to the Foodbank Christmas Parcel appeal. Throughout November and December we donated a huge amount of supplies to the Foodbank. We also managed to raise a total of £542.71, some of which was used to buy further supplies and the rest was donated directly to the Foodbank. Together we have made a real difference to local people in crisis this year, thank you!



Green Impact Silver Award

Oak Tree Surgery and Pensilva Health Centre proudly received the Silver Award in 2019/20 for our participation in the 'Green Impact for Health' scheme. The scheme aims to support general practices to become more environmentally friendly and sustainable.

In 2019/20, 754 general practices signed up to take part nationwide, but only 69 achieved an award! We aim to build on this success and are looking to go further with the scheme this year!

Green Impact is a United Nations award-winning programme designed to support environmentally and socially sustainable practice within organisations. This can mean anything from communicating recycling systems, to committing to go Fairtrade; from supporting team health and well-being campaigns, to working towards carbon-neutrality! The model has been developed over ten years. Based on proven behaviour change models, its flexible approach means it can be tailored to meet each organisation's unique needs.

To find out more information about the Green Impact for Health scheme, visit Green Impact or <http://greenimpact.nus.org.uk/about/>



What is Social Prescribing?

Social Prescribing is a method of linking people with non-clinical sources of support within the community. "At Volunteer Cornwall, our Project has dedicated Link Workers based within GP surgeries, to offer confidential, 1:1 support to patients referred from their GP or health care professional." Social Prescribing can help you with being more active, financial support, living more independently, improving social connections, a healthier lifestyle, and mental wellbeing support. If you feel you would benefit from a referral to our Social Prescribing Team please speak to a member of staff in the surgery.

Supporting Men's Mental Health in Cornwall



Man down is a Cornwall based group offering safe spaces to meet the current emotional and mental health needs of men who are struggling to cope with the everyday pressures facing them in our modern society. Liskeard Group meet up at the Tic Tac Bungalow, Liskeard School fortnightly on Thursdays at 7pm. For more information please visit their website <https://www.mandown-cornwall.co.uk/>

FEELING LOW? GETTING ACTIVE COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Take our free Mind Plan quiz now and discover simple steps to look after your mental wellbeing.

Search Every Mind Matters



Better Health every mind matters

Health, Work, and Lifestyle

Test and Trace support payments

Applications open



[cornwall.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/coronavirus)

If you're on a low income and have been asked to self-isolate through NHS Test and Trace, you may be able to claim a £500 payment. Check if you're eligible here <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/testandtracesupport>

Start 2021 the best way possible with Dry January - the UK's one-month alcohol free challenge.

- 86% of participants save money
- 70% of participants have better sleep
- 66% of participants have more energy



Research conducted by the Royal Free Hospital found that a month off alcohol can lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of diabetes, lower cholesterol, and reduce levels of cancer related proteins in the blood.

People who take on the official Dry January with Alcohol Change UK are twice as likely to have a totally alcohol-free month, and to get amazing long-term benefits. Sign up for free here -

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/dry-january>

Dry January helps people drink more healthily year-round. Research conducted by the University of Sussex has found that six months after dry January more than 70% of people who take on the month with Alcohol Change UK's support are still drinking more healthily. On top of that, they have boosted levels of wellbeing, and much more.

Do you have a smart phone or tablet? - Download the free app to help you meet your goals, whether you want to take on Dry January, cut down on your drinking, or go totally alcohol-free. The app can help you to; track your units, calories and money saved, understand your drinking pattern and track your progress by using the "My Charts" feature, use the health quiz to check up on your drinking, and keep track of your current and best ever dry streaks.

You can use the app for dry January and beyond!



Volunteer Cornwall are a charity dedicated to building social capital and developing the wellbeing of individuals and communities in Cornwall. They do this by working in collaboration with a wide range of organisations to promote and support active citizenship and voluntary action covering the emotional, social, environmental and economic needs and opportunities in Cornwall.

As well as helping vulnerable patients in the community with shopping and medication deliveries throughout the Covid pandemic, Volunteer Cornwall offer a vast range of services such as telephone befriending and walking buddies for people who find themselves isolated and lonely. They have also set up a key worker support line to offer a listening ear to key workers across the public, voluntary, and private sectors who may benefit from having someone to talk to through this difficult time. Please visit the website for more information: <https://www.volunteercornwall.org.uk>

Age UK's winter wrapped up guide has lots of useful information to help you stay well through winter -



https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig27_winter_wrapped_up_inf.pdf

Keep warm, keep well

Who's most at risk from cold weather?

Some people are more vulnerable to the effects of cold weather, including people aged 65 and older, babies and children under the age of 5, people on a low income (so cannot afford heating), people who have a long-term health condition, people with a disability, pregnant women, and people who have a mental health condition.

How to stay well in winter:

- Get advice if you feel unwell
- Get a flu vaccine
- Keep your home warm*
- Look in on vulnerable neighbours and relatives

For more information and helpful tips on how to keep well this winter please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/keep-warm-keep-well/>

*Help with heating costs - You may be eligible to claim financial and practical help with heating your home. Grants available include the winter fuel payment - <https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment>, and cold weather payment - <https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment>.

For more information on how to reduce your bills and make your home more energy efficient, go to the governments Simple Energy Advice website - <https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/> or call the Simple Energy Advice helpline on 0800 444 202.