



## Newsletter 12 Spring 2019

31 ORWELL ROAD, FELIXSTOWE, SUFFOLK, IP11 7DD

# Howard House Surgery



March 2019

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Spring 2019 edition of our Newsletter. We include a variety of updates on activities related to health and wellbeing at our Surgery and in the Town. We hope you find this useful. We also have a staff interview with Christine Smith, a Medical Secretary in our Practice.

In February some of the Patient Group members attended a talk by a senior manager from Ipswich/Colchester Hospital Trust (ESNEFT) at which she talked about the gradual plans to specialise at the two sites and how this should benefit patients and help secure the future of services at the newly-merged hospitals.

We look forward to welcoming at least one new member to our Patient Group at our next meeting, which will be upstairs at the Surgery at 6.05pm on Tuesday April 16<sup>th</sup>. If anyone else would like to find out more about joining our Group (we currently have 9 patient members), then do get in touch on 07986-714186, via the letterbox in the surgery lobby or via email at: [HHcomments@gmx.us](mailto:HHcomments@gmx.us).

*Alan Rose, Patient Group Chair*

### **Health and Wellbeing in our Community**

In the coming months, a new person is expected to be appointed to support the four Felixstowe surgeries. Their role, as 'Community Advisor' or 'Community Connector' will be to work alongside our clinical staff to signpost some patients, if appropriate, to activities in our community that may be of interest and beneficial to their health and wellbeing. The NHS term for this new process is 'Social Prescribing'. An example, perhaps in addition to 'medical' treatment, could be to inform a person suffering from loneliness or depression about the Men's Shed or the Community Choir.

### **Felixstowe Hospital Minor Injuries Unit**

As you will be aware, there will be two important changes at this Unit from April 1<sup>st</sup> this year. The hours of opening are being reduced to 8am-8pm (nearly all activity is in this period anyway).

More significantly, the traditional 'walk-in' access is being replaced by the requirement to make an appointment (just as you might with a GP at the Surgery), via calling Howard House or via the national 111 telephone service (available to all, 24 hours). Although this seems like an inconvenience, it will ensure that the service is as safe and effective as possible and may mean, in some cases, that patients are advised to attend Ipswich Hospital Emergency Department or another service that may be more appropriate.

We have had a degree of patient input and although we are disappointed to lose the 'ease' of walk-in access, we understand the reasons for the change. We have sought assurance that the ability to book an appointment is as 'rapid and simple' as possible. The Unit will be renamed the "Minor Injuries Clinic" and some changes to signage in the town may be made.

### **Leaflets Galore**

In the waiting room, changes have been made to the arrangement of leaflets on the main wall. We have information on a wide range of topics from illnesses to care in the community. The leaflets are now arranged in categories, with the poster to the left of them showing where to find the information you need. The categories are listed with the letter next to them indicating which section they are in. We have a larger range of information on the different types of Cancer and on Dementia issues. We hope that it will be easy for you to find what you need.

## EAR SYRINGING SERVICE

Knowing that this has been a hot topic on social media around Felixstowe recently, we would like to reassure our patients that we are continuing to provide an ear syringing service. However, we would like to take the opportunity to pass on some important information from our Health Care Assistants (HCAs) to help ensure the service is used as effectively as possible:

- Ear syringing is to be performed if hearing loss has occurred and a clinician cannot see your ear drum. It will not be carried out as an ear cleaning exercise.
- Please book an ear check prior to ear syringing to ascertain whether one or both ears require syringing.
- If you are taking warfarin please ensure that your INR blood test result is stable before booking an ear syringe.
- Make sure oiling of the ear is carried out before attending. Oil twice a day for best results at least 7 days before your syringe appointment. Oiling is best carried out with olive oil with the patient lying down on one side. Repeat for each ear as needed. DO NOT put cotton wool in your ears and NEVER use cotton buds.
- As a requirement of their training protocol, it will occasionally be necessary for our HCAs to seek the support of another health care professional to check the ears prior to syringing.

Your adherence to this guidance will help ensure that we can continue to provide this valuable service to our patients.

Thank you.

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## RENEW YOUR PRESCRIPTION ON THE MOVE

Have you tried renewing your prescription online via the Patient Online service? You can access the service from your computer, tablet or mobile phone. Renewing your prescription online is increasing in popularity with more than 1,000 of our 7,600 patients now registered for the service. Once you've ordered your prescription online you can go to your nominated Pharmacy to pick up your prescription after 48 hours (or get it delivered to your door by the Pharmacy). Not only is it more convenient for you, it also helps Louise and Alison (our Prescription Clerks). Louise says, "It's much quicker to access, process and issue a prescription when the request has come in online". It also provides a clear audit trail of your request if there are any queries and involves less paper; so better for the environment too! If you would like to give the service a try, just speak to Louise or Alison when you are next passing the surgery.

### **MEET THE TEAM: Christine Smith – Medical Secretary**

Our interview this edition is with Christine Smith, who has been a Medical Secretary at the surgery since July 2017.

She told us that she had felt 'at home' straight away at Howard House, part of a family really. Christine enjoys all aspects of her role but said that the best part was speaking directly with the patients to help them chase referrals, etc. In the near future Christine will be doing 'care navigator' training which will mean that she will be able to work on the surgery reception when needed, so we will be seeing more of her.

Christine grew up in Framlingham, where her parents still live, but now lives in Martlesham with her family, 13 year old daughter and 12 year old twin daughter and son.

She remembers that from her school years she always wanted to be a secretary. For a while she did care work and this gave her an interest in medical matters. She did a two year medical terminology course at Suffolk College and has since taken a 'refresher' course.

Christine has worked as a medical secretary at a GP practice in Woodbridge and also at Ipswich Hospital prior to coming to Howard House.

She has been an Ipswich Town F.C. fan all her life, her parents are fans and she has been a season ticket holder for thirty years. She goes to matches, home and away, with her two daughters, so she is definitely passing on a love for the 'Tractor Boys'.

Christine swims regularly with her children and family holidays are very important to her. They also often cycle together. Visiting her parents is much enjoyed by them. Her father has a collection of eighteen vintage tractors which Christine's children really like exploring. It's those Tractor Boys and Girls again.

