

Kelvedon and Feering Health Centre ~ Newsletter

Your surgery, your care, your say...

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"Transformation is the process of putting in place new systems and services to ensure the practice moves forward in the right way"

Hello! Welcome to the first in a series of new monthly updates on progress at your local GP surgery. Some of you may be aware that we recently met district and parish councillors who shared feedback from you, our registered patients, about our services. We understand the concerns so we have started publishing this newsletter, first to apologise for the issues you have raised and then to keep you updated on the transformation of NHS services we offer here in Kelvedon and Feering.

Transformation is the process of putting in place new systems and services to ensure the practice moves forward in the right way. The recent merger and change of management at both your local surgeries, along with serious challenges in recruiting permanent clinical staff, have meant this process has so far been a rocky one.

We're sorry that some of our patients have not received the service they've come to expect in the past. We will value your help and input when you feel we have got it wrong but also let us know when we get it right as we make improvements.

Sharon Moss

Managing Partner

Where are we today?

2018 was a challenging time for the practice. In July that year, the partnership running Kelvedon and Feering Health Centre at the time took over the contract for Brimpton House Surgery, which had approximately 2,500 patients. The patient list at Kelvedon and Feering Health Centre in 2018 was 5,700 patients, meaning our current list size for the merged practice grew to 8,200.

“2018 was a challenging time for the practice... we now have plans in place to resolve!”

As part of the merger, there were some staff changes as one would expect during such transitions, and a new partnership took over the contract for the joint practice in August. That left us with fewer full-time clinical staff which also meant extra costs for locum cover.

We also had to put all of our patients onto a single IT system, as the two practices had different, incompatible software systems. This revision of patient records showed that some medical checks for former patients of Brimpton House were outstanding and required action within a short timescale.

With difficulty in recruiting clinical staff, the surgery faced real challenges. Our transformation also needed experts to identify and support the changes we needed to make. The partners commissioned two experts to help with our back office services, new ways of working, staffing structure, services available to patients, appointment systems and how to move us forward while making sure we follow best practice.

Fast forward to October 2019, and we have identified issues in areas that we do apologise for, but for which we now have plans in place to resolve. You can read more about those on the next page.

Concerns you have raised – and what we are doing

You said: Staffing gaps meant the reception team was not large enough to manage incoming telephone calls.

We did: New reception staff are already in place with more to come.

You said: The practice had a poor telephone system without dedicated lines, call queuing or capacity to record calls for training purposes.

We did: We are in the process of sourcing a new telephone system that covers all call recording, dedicated lines for results, appointment cancellation, prescription queries and call queuing.

You said: A shortage of administrative staff meant we were not always able to communicate with patients through website updates and other means as readily as we would have liked.

We did: We are currently on a recruitment drive to bring new admin and clerical staff on board.

You said: Not enough online appointments have been available.

We did: The transformation team are looking at the appointment structure and more online appointments will be available from November 2019.

You said: There are not enough clinical staff to cover blood test appointments.

We did: Following interviews in September 2019, we have a new nursing team joining from the end of this month which will allow for more blood test appointments covering urgent requests, along our current provision for over-65s and vulnerable people. The service will resume fully once we have recruited a new phlebotomist which we hope to be very soon. Watch this space!

You said: The surgery's website is not updated regularly and communication with residents could be better.

We did: We are working hard to ensure communication is available to our patient population via newsletters, updated website and monthly updates in the Parish Council Paper.

You said: It is not clear how vulnerable patients keep in touch with the surgery for emergencies.

We did: We set up a dedicated number that is being given to all our vulnerable patients and to care homes we work with.

Events and plans for the future

'Dementia in the Community' Event and Dementia Café

On Tuesday 12th November at 13.00 we are offering any members of the community the open invitation to attend our 'Dementia in the community afternoon'. Training and consultation about how you, the community, together with health centre, can best support friends, family and carers living with dementia. A presentation will be given by the Alzheimer's Society and will last about one hour. This will be held at Kelvedon surgery. All are very much welcome to attend. From January 2020 we will be running a monthly Dementia Cafe for carers and patients living with Dementia or Alzheimer's.

Food Bank Tokens available NOW

Just ask at the Health Centre building for more details.

Mental Health Positivity Packs Available

Enquire at the Health Centre site for more information. We are working closely with our neighbouring GP practices in what is called a Primary Care Network to offer social prescribing, clinical pharmacists and extended access appointments (which are pre-bookable appointments for routine matters outside normal practice hours).

New services at the Kelvedon Hub (the former Brimpton House site)

These will include MSK (musculoskeletal care – physiotherapy), flu clinics, a young carers service and nurse-led clinics.

New website and online consultation system

We will be sharing more details as they become available.

Useful information

FREE NHS Mid Essex Child Health App

Not sure what to do when your child is unwell? NHS Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group has a free smartphone and tablet app that provides you with expert advice on common childhood illnesses. It can help you decide what to do when your little one is poorly, including whether you need to seek help. Conditions covered include coughs, colds and flu, chicken pox and measles, earache, tonsillitis, breathing difficulties, meningitis, mental wellbeing and many more. There is also a handy section on when to keep your child home from school. The app is available now and free to download by searching for "Mid Essex Child Health" in the Apple App Store or on Google Play.

Help us to improve, join our Patient Participation Group

If you would like to support the transformation of the practice and get more closely involved, we are forming a new Patient Participation Group. For more information, please email sharon.kendall@nhs.net