

Bruton Surgery News

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Welcome to April

With the days getting longer and (hopefully) warmer, April brings with it hope of new life with fresh flowers and leaves all around. Whether you celebrate Easter, or Eostre, or just enjoy springtime for itself, take a moment to reflect on the past year and be thankful for what we have.

This year, we aim to provide a monthly update from the practice to keep you informed. This first edition includes a review of the past year including the changes we have made and our activity, an update on COVID vaccinations and some general information about services available.

Hands ~ Face ~ Space ~ Fresh Air

As lockdown eases and we hope that life will soon return to some semblance of normality, it is more important than ever to protect ourselves and each other:

- Wash your hands regularly
- Wear your mask, especially indoors
- Keep your distance from each other
- Stay in fresh air or keep air flowing by opening doors and windows.



None of us want lockdown to restart but each one of us is responsible for our own actions. Please, do your bit to keep everyone safe.

GP Practice Team update

We welcome **Dr David Rogers** who joined the practice on 12 April replacing Dr Rehman, having recently been working with us as a locum. Dr Rogers will be working on Mondays and Tuesdays, and some Fridays. All patients previously registered with Dr Rehman will be moved to Dr Rogers.

Our Clinical Lead, **Louisa McLachlan** manages the clinical and nursing team, and is the Cardiovascular lead for Symphony Healthcare Services. She is an Advance Nurse Practitioner/Prescriber and provides clinics on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Dr Nick Gompertz has chosen to reduce his days at the practice and will be working on **Mondays and Tuesday**.

Dr Susanna Stoneley has increased her days at Bruton and will now be working Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Dr Erika Andrews continues to work Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Dr Vanessa Wilkins now provides specialist clinics to the practice for dermatology, women's contraception and minor operations on Wednesdays.

COVID precautions at the practice

We hear there are questions and concerns about whether the practice is open, whether GPs are working there and why can't we book face to face appointments yet. We've heard 'well, Tesco's is open' and we've heard 'COVID is just an excuse or not real'.

Over the past year we have had to make significant changes to the way that we operate to maintain the safety of staff to continue working, and for patients who need face to face care.

As many of you know, our building is very small which makes social distancing very difficult.

We have followed the Government guidance for GP practices and have risked assessed how we can continue to provide safe care to everyone and protect our staff. We recognize that not all decisions we have made have been popular, but they have been necessary.

So let us answer some of your questions and concerns:

- The practice is open and has continued to be open throughout the pandemic. We have just had to change the way that we worked
- The practice team has remained on site with few exceptions where the risks for on-site working were too great, but those staff who could not work on site worked remotely in line with Government guidance to work from home.
- Face to face appointments have continued where it was appropriate and necessary. For example, our Nursing Team has continued to provide in person appointments for blood tests, dressings, injections and smears. However, not all consultations require face to face contact and in line with Government guidance, we have moved to Telephone Consultations for initial assessments and annual reviews. Indeed, this has increased the number of consultations/patients we can deal with each day.
- We have limited access to our waiting room due to the size of the room as social distancing is difficult. If you are able to wait outside or in your car for your appointment after letting us know you are here, it reduces the risk to you and to us.

We know that other locations such as supermarkets, hospitals and now shops have opened their doors – but they do not have our building or vulnerable patients attending.

New Website launched

We are delighted to have a new website at last! We are continuing to update it but do take a look around. In particular, please visit our Support Services pages where you will find helpful information and links about a wide variety of conditions. <https://brutonsurgery.nhs.uk/support-services/#>.

Facebook and Twitter

We also have our Facebook page and Twitter feed for news and public health campaign information which we hope are of interest. To find us:

Facebook: [bruton.surgery](https://www.facebook.com/bruton.surgery)

Twitter: [@brutonsurgery](https://twitter.com/brutonsurgery)

When visiting the practice, please wear a face mask at all times.

It protects us and it protects you.

Introducing Birthday Recalls for Chronic Disease Management

From 1 April 2021, we are changing when we invite patients for their annual review of certain medical conditions to your birthday month.

If you have a long term condition such as Diabetes or Asthma, you will receive an invitation to book your annual review with the practice during your birthday month either by text or letter asking you to contact the practice. When you do, our Reception Team will identify the appointments you need to support your care.

A blood test appointment is required for certain conditions, and this will include a mini-health screen which will include your height, weight, pulse check, blood pressure, waist circumference and lifestyle information. For diabetic patients you will also be offered a foot check as ensuring good circulation to your feet is essential to maintaining your good health. This will provide us with general information about your health to monitor your care.

If appropriate to your condition, you will be offered an annual review discussion with a Practice Nurse or GP/Advanced Nurse Practitioner depending on the condition. Due to COVID precautions this will be carried out by telephone or video call though we may return to face to face consultations later in the year. Covid-19 precautions remain in place in line with national guidance to maintain a safe place for patients to attend for face to face appointments and for staff to continue to provide safe care.

You may find that the period from your last review to your next review is more or less than 12 months as this enables us to transition to birthday month reviews over 2021/22. If you have any concerns about your condition before or after your annual review, please contact us via AskMyGP or by telephone to request a consultation.

COVID Vaccination Clinics

As a GP practice, it has been a national requirement that vaccinations are provided by small groups of practices working together as Primary Care Networks to share the workload and ensure that the surgeries continue to operate.

Since January 2021, the five local practices have been providing a COVID vaccination clinic at Wincanton Community Hospital where we have given over 15,000 vaccinations to patients from the five practices.

It has been challenging, as we receive deliveries of both vaccines but we only know about 10 days in advance when the delivery is going to arrive and which vaccine it will be. We then contact patients directly either by phone or more recently, by text message to book patients into the upcoming clinics. As some deliveries have enabled vaccination of up to 400 patients from Bruton alone, that is a lot of phone calls to make in a short space of time!

We have now started to use an online booking system called Accubook, which has helped the workload tremendously! Your text may say Millbrook Surgery as they are sending the invitations out for our practice group – if you receive a text, follow the link and book.

Over 47% of Bruton's 6000 patients have now received their first vaccination and we now giving second doses depending on the delivery of vaccines to us. Second doses are usually offered around 10 weeks after your first dose. If you have not heard from us by then please contact us to check but it's likely that we haven't received confirmation of delivery.



A message on behalf of our Patient Group

Your Patient's Participation Group, that is those of us that represent a patient's point of view to our Surgery, are really concerned about the way that some patients are behaving when they are in contact with our team at Bruton.

All patients have had to endure the misery of the lockdown processes and loss of friendly contact from all around us, on which our lives are so dependent. We have all also had to live with the fear of a dreadful disease and the impact that has had on those most dear to us, whilst trying to deal with a whole range of challenges which none of us envisaged a year ago. This has been really hard and a trial for everybody.

At the centre of dealing with the pandemic, day in, day out, has been our National Health Service which throughout this long struggle has won a new and special relationship with an already appreciative Public. Over these many months, they have been praised and recognised for their commitment and their courage right at the front of the front line. The support for the National Health Service has never been higher.

All that is being done has to be in accordance with nationally prescribed procedures designed to keep both patients and staff safe. This makes even the simplest of activities extremely difficult requiring the constant overlay of vital infection control in every activity undertaken. The work of our Surgery has increased, not just by the response required for Covid-19 but also for all the continuing health care needs of nearly 6000 patients. The Surgery has never been busier!

It has been essential to change methods of work to reduce exposure to infection, so it has been necessary to manage all patient's requests according to priorities. This requires that patients are questioned by reception staff to make sure that they get help appropriate to their needs. It may also mean that they have to wait for the attention they request while others in greater need are helped first. But all of this is being managed by the same number of staff we had before the pandemic so it is very demanding upon them. They are doing their very best! This might mean that you do not get the priority you would wish, but be assured that it will be in accordance with your needs.

So it is a matter of great concern that despite all of this, our staff have never had a harder time in dealing with Patients. They have been rude and cruel in speaking to staff, they have not been prepared to listen, shouting down replies and apparently oblivious of the constraints under which Health Services are being delivered. And, it is very sad to say, extremely selfish. This is disgraceful.

Our Surgery is dependent on all of our staff being able to carry out their work without fear or dread when they are all trying to do all they can to help.

So, as the representatives of all of you, the Patients Participation Group urges that everybody takes stock of where we have been; what has been achieved and who it is that we should be grateful to. These are difficult times; all of us should be trying to make things better!

Finally, we would like to thank our staff and pass them our congratulations on all that they have achieved.

Robin Currie, Chairman, Bruton Surgery Patient Group

Patient Group – new members welcome

Our Patient Group is open to new members – the group meets with the practice leadership (Practice Manager and Clinical Lead) at least four times a year to discuss the practice from a patient's perspective. The role of the patient group is to:

- Be a critical friend to the practice
- Advise the practice on the patient perspective and provide insight into the responsiveness and quality of services
- Encourage patients to take greater responsibility for their own and their family's health
- Carry out research into the views of those who use the service
- Organize health promotion events and improve health literacy
- Provide regular communication with the patient population

(Source: The Patients Association).

The Patient Group works best when it reflects the whole practice population – we would particularly be interested to welcome younger patients or those with recent experience of the practice.

If you are interested, please email bruton.surgery@nhs.net or contact the Practice Manager for a discussion.

A year in review

Well, what a year that was! Looking back a year to when lockdown started and we all wondered what was about to happen, it is interesting to reflect on how much society and particularly general practice has changed in a short space of time.

One thing to make clear – Bruton Surgery never closed. We continued to be fully operational throughout the year except for a few types of appointment which national guidance advised practices to stop or defer, such as travel vaccinations and spirometry testing.

However, we had to change how we worked – and this followed the Government guidance to reduce face to face contact. Overnight we introduced telephone triage for all GP appointments so that all consultations were initially conducted by telephone with face to face appointments offered only if necessary. Our Nursing and HCA appointment time was increased to allow for room clean-down between patients and safe spacing, which in turn reduced the number of appointments we could offer. In April 2020, we introduced AskMyGP to provide new ways to request consultations and receive information.

The work of the practice involves far more than the 15 minute appointment with the GP or Nurse

We prepared for a 'red clinic' and Bruton Surgery was the designated as the local site if the infection rate rose to levels which affected the operation of the local practices – thankfully we never reached this, but it has allowed us to replace the old carpet with new flooring, just in case.

In January 2021, with our PCN colleagues we set up our COVID Vaccination Hub at Wincanton Community Hospital, providing vaccinations in our spare time and at weekends to over 10,000 patients and counting.

Our activity is not just about consultations and appointments as the following table shows:

Activity	November	December	January	February	March
Phone calls in	3310	3265	3331	3139	3925
AMGP requests	1474	1242	1261	1309	1595
Medications issued	6935	6870	7299	7192	7964
Referrals made	220	191	143	162	250
Test Results	1648	1649	1477	1790	1905
Documents coded	808	793	784	725	836
FFT Good/Very Good	84%	77%	87%%	100%	78%

In addition, the practice has also:

- Provided nursing & HCA face to face appointments for blood tests, smears, dressings etc
- Regular Healthcoach support calls to our most vulnerable patients
- Specialist appointments such as MSK, womens health, pharmacist reviews, dermatology
- Read, reviewed, considered and actioned so much information about COVID from NHS England, the CCG and many more
- Continued our regular meetings for Palliative Care meetings, Safeguarding for Adults and Children, Clinical Meetings, management team meetings, Primary Care Networks, complex care huddles, patient group
- Continued our premises maintenance including replacement of our front door, replacing the old carpet with washable vinyl flooring, painted the waiting room and corridor
- Ensured the practice was functioning including staff and financial management, premises, safety alerts, prescribing updates, a new website, newsletters, Facebook and Twitter posts and responding to complaints.

We know this has been a challenging year for everyone. We know that people are not able to visit the surgery as they used to – but we are here and have needed to adapt quickly to new ways of working. We have heard from some patients that 'we're closed', or 'no one is here' - that simply has not and is not true, and is quite hurtful when staff have continued to work throughout the pandemic in very difficult circumstances to provide the care that you need.

We have followed national guidance to reduce face to face contact because we have a small building with a small team – if staff became infected we would have had to close for 2 weeks, so keeping contact to a minimum was the best way of reducing the risk.

Making Appointments

Tired of waiting on the phone to book an appointment? You can use our online service to request a consultation with a clinician instead.



Bruton Surgery uses 'askmy gp' to support our patients with their medical requests and questions. All requests are initially managed through a telephone consultation to assess the medical need, and the majority of requests can be dealt with by telephone or even by message. If the clinician feels it is appropriate and necessary to see you in person, this will be arranged by them with you.

Askmygp is simple and easy to use, all you need is your own email account. Once we have your email on record, we will send you a welcome email for you to set up your own online account. To use askmygp simply use the link on our website or download the app. It will ask you:

- To Log in to consult a GP
- Add log in details
- Identify if you are the Patient, parent or carer
- About your medical concern: what the problem is, how long you have been suffering and any further details/ symptoms. At this point you can add attachments and photos if needed, which may help the clinician.

Your request will be triaged (assessed) within 30 minutes and added to a contact list. All requests will be responded to in order of priority and patients will be contacted by a clinician from the practice within two working days of submitting the request or more urgently if triaged as a priority.

Please keep in mind that if you still wish to phone the surgery then your request will be processed by the reception team in exactly the same way on askmygp.

For all other appointments with nurses for blood tests etc you will still need to call the surgery but wait times on the phone should be reduced with the introduction of askmygp.

AskMyGP is open for online requests from 8am to 4pm daily (3pm Fridays), though this is subject to change depending on demand. If AskMyGP is closed, please contact the practice by telephone during working hours.

Prescription Requests

It is important to us that our patients receive their regular medication on time. Demand for medication during the pandemic has increased so we have made access to your prescription requests easier for you to manage without phoning the surgery. There are three easy ways to order your prescriptions as we do not accept requests over the phone.



1. Using Patient Access App
2. Using the NHS App
3. Emailing bruton.surgery@nhs.net

The easiest of these is to sign up to Patient Access and then you can order your prescriptions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!! You will need to download the App and register an account with some Identification and away you go!!

If you cannot download Apps then simply send your request by email to bruton.surgery@nhs.net, stating your name, date of birth and medication(s) required.

Most prescriptions are approved and issued by our Clinical Team within 24 hours of receipt and usually on the same day. However, please order your medication before you run out as it may take 3 working days for the pharmacy to process the prescription, especially if they need to order the medication in.

Making a Complaint

We hope that you receive the service you need for your care. If not, most problems can be sorted out quickly and easily, often at the time that they arise with the person concerned and this should be the approach you try first.

Where you are not able to resolve your complaint in this way and wish to make a formal complaint for investigation, you should do so preferably **in writing** as soon as possible after the event and ideally within a few days as this helps us to establish what happened more easily. It is helpful if you can explain what happened, why you are dissatisfied and what outcome you are seeking.

You can complain about your own care but due to confidentiality, you are unable to complain about someone else's treatment without their written authority.

We will investigate the complaint and provide our response to the issues raised usually within 10 working days. When looking into a complaint we will attempt to see what happened and why, to see if there is something we can learn from.

Our response will include details of our investigation and outcome, and also your right to escalate the matter further if you remain dissatisfied with our response.

Healthier You: NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme

Many cases of Type 2 Diabetes can be prevented by making lots of small changes to your diet and lifestyle. A record number of people in the UK are living with Type 2 Diabetes and this figure is only set to increase. This means that many more people will experience the complications associated with Diabetes which can have serious impacts on your health.

If you are at risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes, the good news is that by learning more about it and implementing small changes to your diet and lifestyle, you can prevent it occurring in the first place.

The programme is currently being held via remote telephone sessions or via an interactive app where you will be provided with the tools and guidance to make small but significant changes to your lifestyle to not only reduce or possibly reverse the risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes, but also other conditions such as heart disease and stroke.

Your commitment to take part would be:

- A one-to-one individual assessment over the telephone
- A number of weekly sessions delivered remotely either by telephone or app.

You can self-refer, but will require some medical details such as your NHS number and recent blood test results so please contact us to speak with one of our Healthcoaches.

For further information please contact the Healthier You team on 0333 577 3010 or by visiting www.preventing-diabetes.co.uk or Somerset CCG (<https://www.somersetccg.nhs.uk/health/health-advice-and-support/preventing-diabetes-in-somerset/>).

Research – Principle Trial for COVID-19 treatment

Bruton Surgery is taking part in the national PRINCIPLE clinical trial, which aims to find low-risk treatments for older people with COVID-19 that can be taken at home.

To be eligible to join the trial you will need to have experienced symptoms that are likely to be caused by COVID-19 for fewer than 15 days.

The trial is open to people aged 65 or over, or 18-64 years and experiencing shortness of breath as part of COVID-19 illness, or 18-64 years with certain underlying health conditions.

For more information about the trial including how to register, please visit: <https://www.principletrial.org/>

Open Mental Health

Mental health organisations in Somerset have come together to provide 24/7 support to adults in Somerset. Whatever is worrying you – anxiety, debt, employment, housing, low mood, addiction – they're there to help.

The support team is available 24 hours every day. Call 01823 276892 or email support@openmentalhealth.org.uk



Our team is here to support you
 24 hour Supportline 01823 276892
support@openmentalhealth.org.uk

Staff Meeting Dates 2021

The practice will be closed for staff training between 12.00noon and 3.00pm on dates during the year – a list of the dates is below.

During our closure, if you have an urgent medical issue please call us on 01749 812310 and hold. Alternatively please contact 111 for advice and guidance from NHS111. If it is an emergency, please call 999.

The Staff Meeting Dates 2021 are:

Thursday 22 April	Wednesday 19 May	Thursday 24 June
Wednesday 28 July	Thursday 26 August	Wednesday 29 September
Thursday 28 October	Wednesday 24 November	Thursday 16 December

 Self Care Care for yourself at home Minor cuts & grazes Minor bruises Minor sprains Coughs and colds	 Pharmacy Local expert advice Minor illnesses Headaches Stomach upsets Bites & stings	 NHS 111 Non-emergency help Feeling unwell? Unsure? Anxious? Need help?	 GP Advice Out of hours: Call 111 Persistent symptoms Chronic pain Long term conditions New prescriptions	 UTCs Urgent Treatment Centres Breaks & sprains X-rays Cuts & grazes Fever & rashes	 A&E or 999 For emergencies only Choking Chest pain Blacking out Serious blood loss
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Here for you 24/7, rain or shine.



Somerset
Mindline 01823 276 892

Bereavement support

The Somerset Bereavement Support Service is here if you've been bereaved and need emotional support or someone to talk to.



Call **0800 304 7412**
9am to 5pm, Monday to Saturday.

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One number for all

Somerset's Local Authorities
Coronavirus support helpline
0300 790 6275

- Available 8am to 6pm, seven days a week**
- A single number is now available for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus related support from Somerset's Local Authorities. Anyone who can't find help within their community can use the helpline to get help and advice surrounding:
- Emotional support if you're feeling worried or anxious
 - Financial support
 - Personal care and support including food and delivery of prescriptions
 - Housing and support for the homeless
 - Social Care or Medical transport needs
 - Waste collection and disposal
 - Employment, skills and business advice