



PATIENT NEWSLETTER

Spring 2022

SURGERY OPENING TIMES:

Monday to Friday 08.30 -18.00

(Phone lines are closed between 13.00-14.00)

Please note:

Long Crendon closes daily at 13.00 but opens Monday 17.00-18.00 for medication collection only.

Chinnor closes at 13.00 on Tuesdays

Princes Risborough closes at 13.00 on Wednesdays

The surgery will be closed one day a month for protected learning time.

(No closure in August or December) Please see here the upcoming closure dates

<https://www.unity-health.co.uk/surgery-closure-dates-for-protected-learning-time/>

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The Clinical Team at Unity Health

Across Unity Health we have 15 GPs, working across multiple sites:

Princes Risborough	Chinnor	Thame	Brill & Long Crendon
GPs	GPs	GPs	GPs
Dr Mulholland	Dr Stamp	Dr Stamp	Dr Logan
Dr Thomas	Dr Broughton	Dr Thornton	Dr Furlonger
Dr Rudin	Dr Shah	Dr Willcock	Dr Broughton
Dr Shah	Dr Herbert	Dr Church	Dr Walker
Dr Herbert	Dr Mata	Dr Connelly	
		Dr Rudin	

Our GPs are supported by Nurses, Health Care Assistants and other professional staff working as part of the Primary Care Network (PCN) team. The PCN team includes other clinicians and professionals providing patient care: Paramedics, Health & Wellbeing Coaches, Social Prescribers, Community Nurse Practitioners, Pharmacists, and Technicians, Physiotherapists and Care Co-ordinators. We can also offer evening and weekend video consultations via our Q Doctor service.

To provide patients with the best possible and most appropriate care your GP may refer you to a member of this wider team.

In addition, the Community Pharmacy Consultation Service (CPCS) is a new service starting up offering patients consultations with a highly trained local pharmacist to discuss a number of minor ailments. **Note:** our dispensary team (Brill and Long Crendon) are not qualified pharmacists and therefore not able to offer this service. It will be offered by the local community pharmacy teams.

How do I get an appointment?

Since the pandemic almost every business/professional call you make provides you with some initial information and then a menu of options so you can select the best service to suit your needs; this is also what we have at Unity Health. In everyone's best interests Unity Health follows the relevant guidance, prior to announcing the Triage process to help you directly, ensuring the urgency of your request is prioritised .

Triage is the universal NHS system for managing calls to GP Reception. It ensures that appointments are always available that day for urgent problems, aiming to ensure that patients are able to speak to the person most appropriate to help and/or book an appointment with a doctor, nurse or other clinician or professional.

If you feel your call is for an emergency, you will be seen as an extra, even if there are no longer any appointments available. Your care is always our top priority. Your understanding is appreciated.

Our Receptionists are trained to signpost you to the best person/support to help you, through use of the Triage system/process, which works as follows:-

REQUESTING A GP APPOINTMENT:

If it is not an urgent issue for today, please call to make an appointment on a future day you would like to consult one of our team.

- Patients will be asked if they need a follow-up appointment or are seeking help for a new condition.
- If a GP telephone consultation is the most appropriate way to help you, the Receptionist will offer you an appointment, taking account of the urgent nature of your request. For urgent needs an appointment will be made as soon as possible on that day. **It may not be possible to arrange an appointment with your chosen GP on that day so you may wish to wait for them on another day or speak to another GP working that day.** You will usually be called within the first two hours of surgery (8.30 – 10.30 in the morning, and 14.00 – 16.00 in the afternoon). If you just have a question for the GP e.g. about test results or a delayed referral, you will be booked a query call, which may be at any time during the day. Always let the Receptionist know of any time when you may not be able to receive a call that day.

- For less urgent telephone consultations, patients will be asked to clarify if this is a new request or follow up. After confirming with the patient that a telephone consultation with a doctor is needed, you will be added to the list for the day, confirming the most convenient number (mobile or landline) for the doctor to call and, if possible, giving an indication of the likely timeframe for you to receive a call back. The Receptionist will also advise that the doctor may request you to attend the surgery that day if this is considered necessary.
- Should it appear that another clinician/practitioner may be more appropriate to help you, the Receptionist may arrange for you to visit the surgery. Should no appointment be available at your 'local' surgery that day, then you may be offered an appointment at one of Unity's other sites, subject to your being able to travel there.
- Please be aware that all our staff are not available every day so you may be offered an appointment with another member of the team.
- Video calls may also be possible. Please ask if this would be the most effective media for your conversation with the doctor.
- We understand that some patients may struggle to answer calls during the working day. We will try to call you at the most convenient time eg during a lunchbreak. Please call us on the day which suits you best or ask reception about the evening and weekend appointments available through the Q Doctor service.

GP practices have recently been the subject of negative press/media items. It is understandable that patients sometimes feel confused and uneasy about accessing appointments. Face to face appointments have always been available and will continue to be available following your telephone consultation, if together the GP/you feel it is necessary.

We are, sometimes struggling with staffing levels at the moment. This is mainly because the 'rules' for NHS staff still require us to isolate following a positive covid test, even if no symptoms; this is a minimum of 5 days and can be up to 14 days if we continue to test positive. With the high levels of covid currently circulating this can have a significant impact.

We hope the information here may help to clarify how you can get the best from your Unity Health Practice.

Providing all patients with the best possible care is always our top priority. Future plans are being developed which will put greater emphasis on scheduled complex care, improving continuity for patients where this will have the greatest impact on clinical outcomes and navigating patients to the correct services.

What to do if I am waiting for a hospital appointment having been referred?

If your GP feels you would benefit from a review from a hospital specialist, a referral will be made. Different types of referrals apply for different problems, with the most urgent having a maximum 2-week wait. An appointment should be received within this period for these most urgent issues.

As covered in the press/media, hospitals are currently dealing with a large backlog and therefore less urgent hospital appointments are taking longer than usual to come through.

Once the referral letter is sent, communication is between the hospital and the patient direct. Should you wish to confirm when you might be called for an appointment, please phone the Outpatient Department of the relevant hospital:

Buckinghamshire hospitals (Stoke, Wycombe and Amersham) 01296 838888; Oxford hospitals (John Radcliffe, Nuffield, Churchill) 01865 231405

Please note, if you require regular blood tests whilst under the care of a hospital specialist, the hospital is responsible for arranging these for you. This is so that the results go back to them so they receive them reliably, review them and decide on any action required. We are only able to do hospital blood test requests prior to oncology appointments.

How do I know if my test results have come back OK?

Due to the sheer volume of blood tests and investigations processed through Unity Health, it is not possible to advise patients if results are normal. Whilst this can be frustrating and worrying in case they have been overlooked, please be assured that you will be called if the GP needs to discuss the results with you.

By signing up to Patient Access, patients are able to view their full medical record, including GP comments alongside test results when reviewing these e.g. “normal – no action required”.

If you are not already signed up, you can do so by bringing some photo ID to the surgery and asking Reception for a form to complete in order to gain access to this website, including ‘proxy access’ for children under 16 in your household.

You may already be signed up to Patient Access but only able to access information at a basic level, e.g. ordering repeat medications. If you would like wider access to your full medical record please contact Reception and provide photo ID.

What to do if I’ve been contacted about my COVID vaccination or Spring boosters?

Having vaccinated over 45,000 patients in 2021, Unity Health took the difficult decision to cease offering COVID vaccinations in Princes Risborough Community Centre, allowing it to focus on core primary care services and meeting the current excess demand. In April 2022 we temporarily reopened the clinic again to offer the Spring Boosters. This has now finished.

In future if you receive a letter about your 4th vaccination or Spring Booster please go to: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site/> or call 119 to book into a vaccination centre.

Other Services/Sites available to Unity Health Patients

Additional clinics and services are running out of the Hub at Thame Community Hospital. Currently operating are those detailed below. However, please be aware that, for operational reasons, services are subject to change, dependent on need and current Covid-19 requirements.

When attending the hospital site, please respect the guidelines/Trust requirements by wearing a fluid-resistant mask, wherever possible, for face-to-face appointments (this is still required despite changes to government guidance).

Day Hospital: assessment and treatment of mobility issues relating to complex health needs, falls or risk of falls, supporting those who fear doing things they used to do such as walking outside, walking up and down stairs, meeting up with friends and family.

CATS (Community Assessment and Treatment Service): assessment and treatment of frail and older patients with complex needs, reducing their likelihood of hospital admission, by identifying illnesses that need treatment and things to help our patients feel safe and independent. Physiotherapists and

Occupational Therapists can assess and provide mobility aids, and home equipment, e.g. grab rails. Patients may also benefit from medication reviews, catheter care or IV therapy.

Falls Pathway: assessment and treatment of patients at particular risk from falls, for:

- older people who may have had complex and unexplained falls
- those needing expertise of falls specialists or other healthcare professionals

The falls prevention pathway helps Patients access the most appropriate levels of assessment and treatment.

Ultrasound: diagnosis and treatment using clinical imaging (radiography).

Health Visitors: NB: depending on the Patient's postcode, care is provided by:

HP postcodes = Buckinghamshire Healthcare

OX postcodes = Oxford Health.

Health Visitors support families with children up to the age of 5 with all aspects of bringing up a child, beginning with pregnancy (30 weeks) to preparing your child for school.

The same services are offered to all families with children under school age, with more targeted and tailored support for those who would benefit from it. Health Visitors work with parents who are pregnant or who already have children under 5 years old in the household, advising on:

- taking care of yourself and your family
- encouraging your child to develop and grow
- keeping your child safe.

Outpatients Clinics: a number of consultant or nurse-led outpatients clinics operate from the Hospital including:

- Paediatric Audiology
- Genetics
- Tissue Viability
- Rheumatology
- Continence
- Plastics
- Heart Failure

Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy: provided by Practice Plus Group, specialising in physiotherapy, women's health advice, acupuncture, multi-disciplinary management of MSK pain and diagnostics (MRI scans, ultrasounds and X-ray)

Podiatry: caring for patients experiencing problems with feet or lower limbs, assessing, diagnosing and managing foot and leg problems to help reduce pain, prevent deterioration of chronic conditions and increase mobility.

Patients at risk of deterioration of medical/podiatric problems are treated for:

- painful corns and callus
- ingrowing toe nails
- foot ulcers.

Pulmonary rehab: treatment is provided for patients with chest diseases, lung and breathing problems.

Buckinghamshire Health Trust

For most of the last 8 years, the Trust has been on a remarkable journey moving out of special measures to achieving 'good' with 'outstanding for caring' in the last CQC inspection in 2019.

Recently, the Blood Sciences Department has been accredited by UKAS, the UK's national accreditation service. The team has been doing fantastic work and it is great that patients now have this added assurance as to the quality and efficiency with which their blood tests are being processed.

Free health checks for people of South Asian heritage within the local community have been introduced by the Trust.

A heartfelt thank you!

Stephanie Service had the pleasure of meeting with Ramesh Pandya a couple of months ago. He is not a patient of Unity Health, but wanted to meet with her personally as Practice Manager to tell her how grateful he was for the care he received from the practice. He asked if he could write in our newsletter to express his gratitude and promote the good work of the practice.

'By way of background - I had heart surgery at Harefield Hospital in Oct 2020 and was recuperating in Piddington with my friend Tim. He kindly booked me in as a temporary patient for some stitch removal on Friday the 15th October at the Princess Risborough surgery.

A few days before that I had some breathing issues and when I reached your surgery after getting a brush off from my local surgery in Chertsey, I was attended by nurse Tania who duly removed my stitches, but kept asking me if I felt okay - which I didn't.

To my surprise, she kept insisting that I see the doctor and kept going out to see the doctors to ask them if they could see me. Dr Mulholland (who was dealing with a separately emergency) was finally able to see me and confirmed that I had fluid on my heart and kindly called all the local hospitals to get me looked at urgently.

I attended Wycombe hospital where they drained the blood from my heart and then they took me to Harefield by ambulance to drain the lungs. I am now in the process of getting better and can't thank your surgery for what they did for me on that day; the surgery saved my life. But that's not all - they showed care and commitment to their patients and I am ever so grateful to them and how they looked after me. Please keep up with the wonderful work you do at that surgery. I wish all surgeries were like yours as I haven't had that kind of care shown anywhere else.'

Final Updates.

Our Practice Manager Stephanie Service left at the beginning of March to spend more time with her young family. We wish her all the best. Her patient contact role has been taken over by our Patient Services Manager Laura Twomey. If you would like to contact us with a compliment about the surgery, our staff always love to hear your stories. Also, if you have any other feedback – please email us at Unityhealth.bucks@nhs.net or ask to speak to the Patient Experience Manager.

If you would like to contact our Patient Participation Group (PPG) please email Ppg.unityhealth@gmail.com. They would love to hear your views as to how they can represent you better and listen to your feedback.