

## AUGUST 2021 NEWSLETTER

### Changes in the practice

In July we said goodbye to our colleague Emma and wish her every success in her new job. She will be missed by staff and patients alike.

In August we welcome her replacement, Tara. We hope she will be made very welcome by all. We look forward to a new era at the practice.

### Flu Vaccinations

We expect our first delivery in the week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> September. We plan to use the gazebos again to reduce Covid-19 risk. We shall be contacting patients nearer the time and expect our first flu clinics to be held by 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> September. We hope to finish by the end of October so book early if you are over 65 or in an at risk younger age group. The decision to include the over 50s this year was announced some time after our vaccine order was placed so we intend to prioritise the most at-risk groups (over 65s and under 65s who are clinically vulnerable) at the start of the vaccine programme

### Covid booster vaccinations

It has been suggested that we can do these at the same time as the flu vaccine but logistically we do not think this is safe – three potential booster vaccines, some requiring complex preparation and no information yet about availability. We will plan to do flu first before looking at Covid boosters.

### Chronic disease management

We are looking at patient participation in helping with chronic disease monitoring – completing questionnaires via smart phone/email. Doing part of the assessment remotely reduces time spent in the surgery for physical review. If you are not able to do this, please do not worry – we will do it the usual way. Workload is very high and this is before vaccination season. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

### Blood tests

There is a limited local phlebotomy service available at Rainford Health Centre, Lowe House and the Millennium Centre – contact the treatment room central booking to book a slot. St.Helens Hospital still offers open access phlebotomy weekdays 8am to 6pm. We do not have capacity for patients to book purely for blood tests.

### Capacity

Demand is greater than ever before – including the demand for same day/immediate access. We are not an emergency service. Please choose your health care professional appropriately. Please make use of self-care, pharmacy, urgent treatment centre, minor injuries etc. Do not use on-line access for same day help as we might not see it until late evening. Anything urgent, please speak to reception.

### Screening

If invited for cancer screening, please take up the offer. It might just save your life.

### Patient Survey Results

Well, the only way is down! We were one of only 24 practices in England that scored 100% and remain very grateful for your on-going support. We had hoped by now for COVID restrictions to have been lifted but numbers are still high – even in those doubly vaccinated. Boris might have lifted restrictions but the NHS remains on high alert. You must wear a mask coming into the building. You must still maintain social distancing. This is to protect both vulnerable patients and staff. If you need to be seen F2F this will be arranged but safely. Your understanding and cooperation are appreciated.