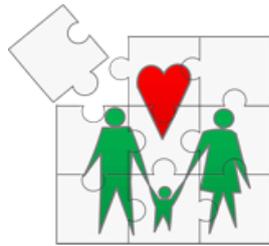


## Marden Medical Centre Patient Participation Group



# NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Spring 2021 Marden Medical Centre PPG Newsletter. The information in this edition is a collection of items which PPG members, the GPs & staff at the Surgery would like to share with patients. We start this edition with a reflective article entitled 'The Pandemic and Marden' written by Chris Childs (vice Chair PPG) with the help of Dr Neil Potter, which gives you some insight into a typical day for Marden Medical Centre's dedicated staff and GPs.

### The Pandemic and Marden



Just a year ago people were struggling with the possible Coronavirus (later to be named COVID 19) threat spreading from China. Most thought it would pass and then on 20 March the Prime Minister locked us down. So much was unknown about Covid; testing and vaccines were a distant dream. Some surgeries shut their doors, but Marden Medical Centre (MMC) which prides itself as a reactive organisation, stayed open. It gleaned information from NHS England and the BMA and operated with a doorman, as people became accustomed to both washing hands on entering the MMC and abiding by the two-metre rule. Consultations changed from face to face to the telephone, except in a very few avoidable cases. Those with Covid symptoms were within weeks directed to a Headcorn Aerodrome assessment area. No nonessential contacts, injections or minor procedures could be done. Our dedicated Marden team were focussed on keeping the Centre a Covid free area, because their 6,950 patients needed to be supported by a fully functioning medical team.

Deep cleaning of the MMC became a constant task and always the staff were aware that being at the front line put them at great risk. At the end of the day, returning to the family home did not diminish either the risk or worries about the potential consequences. Comradeship within the group had traditionally been cemented by social interaction and cups of coffee; this was all but lost. Daily meetings were held standing (an often-used business ploy to shorten a meeting) in the reception area with a phone link to home workers and always socially distanced. But for the most part of each day, the doctors in particular, were closeted in their rooms with their doors shut for privacy, making well over 25 phone call consultations. Par for a consultation would be 15 minutes including preparation and follow-up paperwork. If a patient needed to be seen face to face and especially if Covid was suspected, then the additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) procedures doubled the consultation time. Covid consultations took place in the hot zone with Hospital-level PPE. Throughout the Doctors and their support team continued with boundless energy, regularly working late into the evening to keep abreast of the evolving situations. If anyone had to suffer loneliness it was the medical team, but their stoic nature shone through.

In those early days we were fed a daily diet of graphs and acronyms by the TV evening Ministerial briefs. UK industry and Formula 1 solved the lack of ventilators and the PPE shortfall had Government money thrown at it. All this was at a high level and meanwhile the MMC provided the steady hand on the tiller,

working longer hours than before the pandemic. Telephone diagnosis is very effective for most cases, but it is not quicker, needs the same preparation and relies on the patient being available. Some patients are reassured by face-to-face consultations and sometimes a real problem only emerges under these circumstances.

The typical day for each doctor would be at least 13 hours, often starting at 0730. The first hour deals with urgent overnight documents, laboratory and x-ray reports, hospital letters and prescriptions and precedes a team meeting in reception. At 0830 the first of a series of 10-15 telephone calls would begin (one maybe by video), as well as 2 or 3 face to face consultations, using the hot zone as necessary; each consultation involves preparation and administration such as writing sick notes, prescriptions, letters, referrals and chasing hospitals. The afternoon starts with home visits, managing house-bound patients and internal staff matters followed by consultations as in the morning; sometimes a sandwich and coffee can be snatched. Before the day finishes at circa 2030 the doctors meet to plan the next day but often find they still need to finish their 'phone lists. The task has been relentless at the MMC and there is little hope of it diminishing.

Covid has had several unintended consequences:

- An increasing number of mental health problems
- Long Covid – the symptoms are still emerging.
- Loneliness – especially not being able to see family members.
- Vaccination – the worries are fading but are being replaced by wanting to return to normal.
- Digital Technology – as the reliance on communicating by phones and computers grows, access to Wi-Fi is the straw that breaks the camel's back. With more and more people working from home, sitting at computers for long hours is not healthy.

Patients continue to be very grateful for the service the MMC has continued to provide and most understanding of the changes that have been made to surgery routines. In future face-to-face consultations may be rare. Risk needs to be managed differently. For instance, doctors may need to transfer tasks to paramedics, clinical pharmacists and nurses. Furthermore, the NHS England GP partnership model might need to be reviewed, as GP's are less and less interested in the financial, administrative demands and workload of running a surgery on top of clinical work. On a local level we remain in good shape.

In conclusion, Covid has shown us that everyone is equal in the eyes of this plague. The MMC has played a full part in ensuring that, for patient or parent, medical care in the widest form is within their reach.

The future will be different. Putting the housing development plans to one side, the MMC will soon have a portacabin at the far end of the car park to accommodate much needed additional staff and facilities. Also, now that Kent will have a medical faculty at Canterbury University, you can expect to see more undergraduate medical students observing our GPs working to sustain the NHS for future generations.

***Chris Childs (vice Chair PPG) with help from Doctor Neil Potter.***

For the latest coronavirus information please refer to the Surgery website:

<https://www.mardenmedicalcentre.nhs.uk/>



## One You Kent



Get FREE, practical support from One You Kent to lose weight and keep it off. Following an initial consultation, a number of options will be discussed to support you to decide the best pathway for your journey. This may include further 1-1 consultations, group webinars, virtual exercise classes, e-learning modules and more.

[Sign up](#) for a free consultation today or call:

0300 123 1220 or visit [www.oneyoukent.org.uk](http://www.oneyoukent.org.uk)

## Friends of Marden Medical Centre. Registered Charity No.1023162



The Friends of Marden Medical Centre were formed in 1993, when many patients and patients' families wished to express their appreciation of the care given by the practice in the form of a donation. The donated funds were intended to be used to purchase items of equipment that would benefit the patients.

The last 12 months have proved to be a very difficult and demanding year for our Surgery and the Friends are delighted to be able to support the doctors and patients in every way we can.

Friends income in the financial year ending 31st March 2020 amounted to £14,479.84 and expenditure £15,626.96. The Doctors' requests for items were presented to the committee and included among the items purchased were an APBI Measuring device, waiting room BP monitor, Phlebotomy chair, large vaccine fridge and planning and architects' costs for proposed Portakabin extension work.

We would like to express our thanks to all who have donated and to the doctors and staff for their continual hard work and dedication to us all. It is much appreciated. Please make any donations via the Surgery.

**Gill Tarry**

The following information was submitted by the GP's and staff of the Marden Medical Centre.



# General practice is open...

...but because of the Coronavirus pandemic the way patients are seen in primary care has changed.



**If you feel unwell or have any worrying symptoms, such as potential signs of cancer, you should seek medical assistance**

GP practices are open and here to help but because of the need to minimise the amount of face to face contact to keep you safe, most appointments in the first instance are carried out over the phone or via video. In an emergency, for example if you think you might be having a heart attack or stroke, call 999.



**If a face to face appointment is needed you will still be seen in person by a GP**

Telephone appointments are not suitable for everyone – if you need a physical examination or blood test, for example. You and your GP can reach a decision on what is best for you.



**If you have Coronavirus symptoms you should stay at home for at least 10 days**

from when your symptoms started and call NHS 111 if your symptoms worsen. You should arrange to take a test by visiting [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or by calling 119 but do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

**For more information visit**

#GPisopen  
 @rcgp  
[www.rcgp.org.uk](http://www.rcgp.org.uk)



## Online Access at Marden Medical Centre



Many of Marden Medical Centre patients have yet to take advantage of the online and paper-free services we offer at the Surgery. These services enable repeat prescriptions and appointment bookings as well as many other features, there are 2 main ways to access this facility:

**If you have a smartphone or Wi-Fi enabled tablet** you can download the NHS App from Play Store or the App Store etc. You will need to have a current UK passport or drivers licence to activate the app. This is a very effective and efficient service which has been simplified during the pandemic. It is entirely secure.

**If you prefer using a laptop or PC**, then ask or call reception (01622 831257) for a telephone assessment with reception within a week at which we may be able to verify your identity with questions using our medical records. After this you should get an email with links to several websites (Patient Access, myGP etc.) and some secure codes. The codes will let you open an account via your chosen website.

If you have forgotten your password and these websites cannot help, then you can start again with either option above. We encourage you to sign up.

**If you would like to obtain confidential help & assistance to get online, please contact our Patient Participation Group via email at: [ppg@mardenppg.org.uk](mailto:ppg@mardenppg.org.uk).**

## eConsult New Digital Online Consultation Service



We have recently launched a new digital online consultation platform, eConsult. eConsult is a way to contact your own NHS GP practice online, for free, anywhere and anytime you have access to the internet, quickly and safely. eConsult is easy to use and will give us all the information we need to triage and make sure every patient gets the care they need.

eConsult is a form-based online consultation platform that collects your medical or administrative request and sends it through to us to triage and decide on the right care for you and everyone else.

For further information please see: <https://econsult.net/nhs-patients>

To start using eConsult please go to our website <https://www.mardenmedicalcentre.nhs.uk/> or use the NHS App.

## Family Planning



You can access a full range of family planning services from us at the surgery. We are able to offer advice on oral methods of contraception but can also provide longer acting methods in the form of injections, implants and intra-uterine devices (IUD). One of our practice nurses, Juliet Rumbelow, is now an accredited IUD fitter. This has enabled us to expand this service and offer more flexibility with appointments.

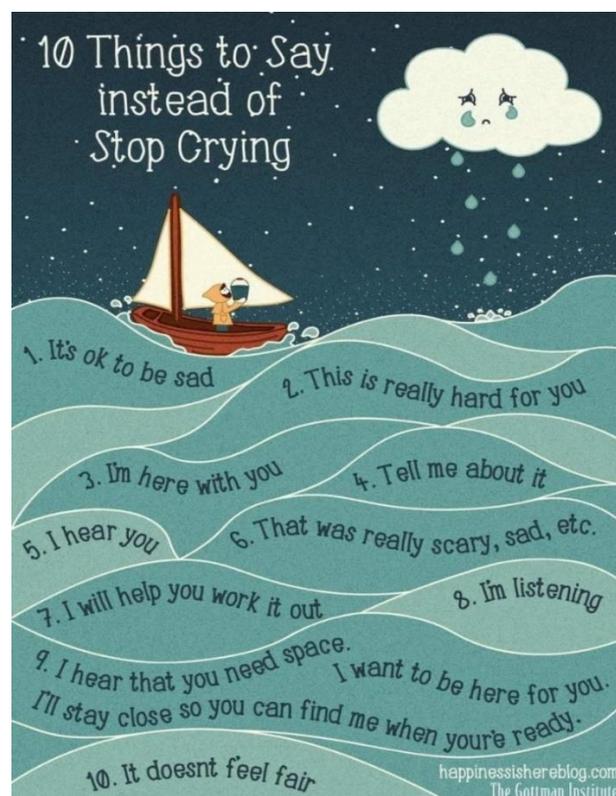
If you require advice, please 'phone the surgery to book a 'phone appointment with Juliet or one of the other nurses or GPs.

## New Portable Office

After much anticipation and planning we are delighted to announce that our new portable office should be installed by mid-March. Work has already started. This will provide us with much needed additional clinical and administrative space as well as allowing us to continue to see patients with COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 in a safe way. We also hope that in the future it will give us more capacity to host students (doctors, nurses and paramedics)

The portable office will be situated at the top end of the car park. With careful planning we will only be losing one parking space.

## Mental Health Resources for Children





## Support your child's wellbeing while schools are closed

With schools closing across the UK, most children will be at home full time. As parents/carers you will inevitably be concerned about the effect this may have on your child's development, their physical and mental health, as well as your family's wellbeing.

- 1 Establish a daily routine.** Routines provide reassuring structure and purpose. Include a mix of learning, creative, physical, relaxation and 'electronics' time. Help your child make a visual timetable so everyone understands the plan.
- 2 Make time for physical activity.** Encourage your child outside and rediscover garden games. If you can't get outside, suggest your child makes an indoor obstacle course. There are lots of resources available on the BBC, ITV and YouTube.
- 3 Work on personal care skills.** Identify self-care tasks that your child would like to do more independently, for example tying shoelaces or getting dressed.
- 4 Develop life skills.** Help your child learn how to prepare their lunch, use a washing machine or change their bedsheets. Older children could complete an online First Aid course or start to learn another language.
- 5 Create a suitable study space.** Ideally your child should have an appropriately sized chair and table, but if they must use adult furniture ensure they can sit with feet firmly planted and their shoulders relaxed.
- 6 Teach your child to type.** Typing is a valuable skill for education, social communication and for the workplace.
- 7 Rediscover creative activities** such as playdough, junk modelling, Lego and origami.
- 8 Spend social time together as a family.** Play board games, watch a film or make a cake. Schedule mealtimes together and commit to them.
- 9 Keep in touch.** Arrange for your child to spend time each day talking to friends or family members on the phone or on social media (with adult supervision where appropriate).
- 10 Look after yourself.** Being a full-time parent/carer with household duties and work is challenging. Make sure you eat and sleep well, and include time for your own rest and leisure in your daily routine.

[rcot.co.uk](http://rcot.co.uk)

Royal College of  
Occupational  
Therapists





# ONLINE RESOURCES

A list of websites & apps that are helpful for managing mental health

## NHS Every Mind Matters

[www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters)

This website offers a range of mental health advice as well as an interactive quiz that's designed to help you feel more in control of your emotional/mental wellbeing.

## Kooth

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

This site contains free mental health support with their online counsellors. It is a free sign up service that has resources such as discussion boards, helpful tips/articles written by young people and an option for them to write mood journals & set positive goals.

## Childline

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

A mental health charity for children & young people that has a wide variety of helpful videos, games and articles. They have a free telephone helpline (0800 1111) and message boards where young people are encouraged to share experiences and support each other in a positive way.

## Papyrus

[www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

A mental health charity dedicated to preventing young suicide by providing support and resources for young people and their families. They have their "Hopeline" (Call: 0800 068 4141 / Text: 078600 39967 / Email: [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)) for children and young people who are experiencing thoughts of suicide, or for anyone concerned for a young person that could be thinking about suicide.

## Calm Harm

An app to help teenagers manage/resist the urge to self harm by providing a wide range of distraction techniques.

## Combined Minds

This app contains psycho-education for parents, families & friends with practical advice on how to provide mental health support to children & young people.

## Cove

A relaxing musical app that helps people try to capture their mood and express it by making music within the program and capturing it in a journal format. Note: you do not need to know how to play an instrument to use this app.

## Stem4

[www.stem4.org.uk](http://www.stem4.org.uk)

A charity that promotes positive mental health in teenagers as well as encouraging them to build resilience and manage difficult emotions via online resources.

## YoungMinds

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

A mental health charity that gives help and advice for young people, as well as encouraging them to get involved in fundraising/campaigning to raise awareness for children & young people's mental health.

## Samaritans

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

A charity that offers mental health support & information online for everyone. Their helpline is free and available to all ages. Call 116 123 or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) 24/7.

## Child Bereavement UK

[www.childbereavementuk.org/young-people](http://www.childbereavementuk.org/young-people)

A site which has resources for young people who are grieving, as well as providing information & advice to families/professionals on how to best support a young person who is bereaved. A helpline is also available on 0800 028840.

## Clear Fear

An app to help children & teenagers manage anxiety through distraction & helpful activities.

## Calm

A mindfulness app that includes various relaxing sounds to listen to as well as "sleep stories" & some guided meditations.

## Headspace

A mindfulness app that has more of a "podcast feel" to it with various talks, guided meditations and helpful videos available.