



# Russell House Surgery

## NEWSletter

*The PPG is critical to the provision of modern, high-quality general practice by supporting the relationship between patients and the Practice.*



### Why is it sometimes difficult to get an appointment to see my GP?

On behalf of RHS patients, your PPG has put this question to Dr. Jaspal and asked for a deeper explanation of what is causing this issue, and why extra appointments can't be made available.

**PPG: Some patients are frustrated and asking why there seems to be a lack of GP appointments at the moment, what's the problem?**



**Dr Jaspal**

**“In the last few weeks there has been a surge in demand for GP appointments nationwide.** Because of a variety of reasons including delayed seeking of medical review due to the pandemic lockdowns, an increase in mental health concerns due to the pandemic, increases in non-Covid viral illnesses due to restrictions easing and delays in secondary care at the hospital due to the hospital pressures during the peaks of the pandemic. But please bear in mind that from the start of the pandemic Russell House has not closed its doors to planned face to face appointments.

**Patients that need to be examined have been seen at the surgery after an initial telephone consultation - blood tests or other primary care investigations have still been done by our nursing staff.”**

**PPG: Why can't extra appointments be slotted into a day?**

**“Our focus is always on providing good patient care** and delivering that means a huge amount of work behind the scenes that patients don't see. My typical day as the GP on-call at Russell House looks like this: -

- 8am - 11am** — Morning clinic - 15 booked patients (10 telephone, 5 face-to-face)
- 11am - 2.30pm** — Admin work – prescriptions, letters from hospitals/community teams/patients, blood/imaging/investigation results, queries from reception, letters from third parties (such as DVLA and DWP). Clinical Meeting. Home Visits.
- 2.30pm - 5.30pm** – Afternoon clinic - 15 booked patients (10 telephone, 5 face-to-face)
- 5.30pm - 6.30pm** – Extended hours clinic - 4 booked patients

**PPG: But how long does this admin work really take?**

**On a typical day as the on-call GP, I will deal with:**

- 100 prescriptions - which can take up to 5 minutes each
- 70 blood/imaging/investigation results - 5 minutes each, sometimes more
- 20 letters from hospitals/community teams/patients - 5 to 10 minutes each to do safely
- 15 queries from reception - often 10 minutes each

*There is simply not enough time in the working day to act upon all the administrative tasks, especially when there are home visits and clinical meetings to fit in.*

**As you can see the demand on GPs is huge. This is compounded by the difficulty in recruiting GPs and arranging locum GP cover when required. Everyone in the practice is trying their best during these very difficult times.”**



## Temporary Pause on our 'Text Reminder for Appointments' Service

Some of you may be wondering why you have not been getting your appointment text reminders recently. This is all down to automation – unfortunately the system used is unable to distinguish between telephone and in-person clinic visits and so we have taken the difficult decision to temporarily suspend these messages being sent out.

**Please note your appointment details down at the point of booking**, especially if it is made for some time in advance. We hope to resume the service in due course.

## New phone system

**We know that patients are experiencing some difficulties in getting through to the Surgery on the telephone so we are looking to upgrade our phone system in the very near future.**

The new system will have a more advanced queuing system with no engaged tone so you know that your call will be definitely be answered if you hold the line. Patients calling the surgery multiple times is one of the reasons why the current system is clogging up, so reducing call traffic should make it easier to get through to the surgery.

"I can't get through... again."



All calls will be recorded for training and monitoring purposes and there will be sophisticated reports that will enable us to accurately monitor call volumes, identify peak times and adjust staffing levels as best we can.

## Telephone calls between 8am - 9am to be for appointments only



**With immediate effect please do not call the Surgery between 8am and 9am for anything other than booking appointments (where reasonably possible). This will help those patients needing appointments to get through to us more easily.**

Please call after 9am for prescription requests / queries, test results or any other general enquires. We hope that this will help to reduce call volumes at this peak time in the morning and make it easier for patients trying to book an appointment to get through on the telephone.

## Russell House Surgery email address [russell.house@nhs.net](mailto:russell.house@nhs.net)

Please note that this email address is for prescription requests and general enquiries only - **never for medical advice or to book appointments.**

The inbox is not viewed by doctors or nurses and there is a 48 hour (working days) service level for responses. Any urgent requests should be made by telephone.

## ZERO TOLERANCE

**Increased demand for appointments has led to staff occasionally having to deal with abuse.**

The practice takes it very seriously if a member of staff or one of the doctors or nursing team is treated in an abusive or violent way.

The government's Zero Tolerance campaign for Health Service staff states that GP's and their staff have a right to care for others without fear of being attacked or abused.

To successfully provide these services a mutual respect between all the staff and patients has to be in place.

Very often staff are dealing with a multitude of tasks and situations all at the same time. Sometimes ill patients do not always act in a reasonable manner and staff do understand this and will deal with situations appropriately.

However, please be aware that aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated and may result in the patient being removed from the practice list.

# Apps to help you take control of your health



Go to Patient Access

**Patient Access is a facility that is available 24/7, via an online Application from your mobile phone, iPad or computer.**



**You can: -**

- Investigate your medical records without the need to contact the practice.
- Get confirmation of immunisation history, including recent Covid 19.
- Look at your test results without the need to phone the practice.
- Trigger repeat prescriptions, minimising trips to the practice

**To use Patient Access**, you first have to contact the Practice by phone, preferably in the afternoon when it is less busy, and Reception will verify your identity via a series of questions and then email you security details to enable you to register on the application itself. Then, via the App Store or Google Play, download the app, enter your registration details and you are ready to go.

In the not too distant future you will be able to book either GP Telephone appointments or Surgery appointments and it is expected that the app will go on to have additional features that will give you greater access to help you take control of your health.



## NHS App



**An alternative is the NHS App** which you can also download onto your phone or tablet/computer.

The NHS App has the same functions as Patient Access but when you log in your vaccine and Covid status are shown immediately. We may come to need this as proof in future to access airports, events and holidays.

You can find the NHS App in the Apple App Store, the Google App store or Google Play for android phones.

- ✓ First you need to register and prove your identity – You will need your NHS number, email address, mobile phone number, your postcode and either your driving licence or passport.
- ✓ The NHS App will prompt you to scan your face to check you match the image on your driving licence or passport. The site talks you through how to do this.
- ✓ There could be a week or so delay before you are granted access to your health records and can fully utilise the App.

## New PHYSIOTHERAPISTS service at Russell House



Receptionists can book **telephone consultations** with them Monday to Friday, am. or pm. If the FCP feels it necessary, they will arrange a **face-to face appointment** at Russell House on Monday / Tuesday afternoons. The physios can offer advice on a range of conditions including 'whiplash', back pain, osteoarthritis, disc problems, sprains and strains or make referrals if necessary. This will reduce the need to see a GP about musculo-skeletal problems and ease some of the pressure on our hard working doctors.

**The practice is now able to use the services of two First Contact Physios (FCP), who specialise in muscle and joint conditions. They are available to advise patients who have problems affecting the neck, back, bones, joints or muscles.**

# Advice and help on health matters

# PALS

Patient  
Advice  
& Liaison  
Service

*The feedback you give can often be used to inform the development of services.*

## Patient Advisory Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers confidential advice, support and information on health-related matters. They provide a point of contact for patients, their families and carers.

### GP Practices

You can call **0808 196 8861**

or email: [-patientservices@staffsstokeccgs.nhs.uk](mailto:-patientservices@staffsstokeccgs.nhs.uk)

### Hospital Services

You can find the PALS officers in your local hospital.

If you feel that you have not been heard or not gained access to the Doctors and Consultants, maybe waiting too long for access to your treatment or disagreements about treatments, PALS can offer confidential assistance in resolving problems and concerns quickly.

**PALS, New Cross Hospital 01902 695362**

**healthwatch**  
Staffordshire

Healthwatch are national independent Healthcare Champions for Health and Social Care users. They find out what matters to people and help to shape the support that patients need. **Look for them locally online**, they have very informative websites.

**Healthwatch Staffordshire 0800 051 8371**

OR

**Healthwatch Wolverhampton 0800 470 1944**

**Kingswood Trust**  
Discover nature. Learn outdoors.



People aged 65 and over and their carers are invited to take part in our Nature Connections Project.

**Open on Tuesdays and Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.**

There are many health and wellbeing opportunities offered by discovering nature and being outdoors, particularly for people experiencing loneliness and isolation and for those older people living well with dementia.

A morning at the Trust offers walking for health and a chance to meet other people. Our secure, nine-acre site is full of history and character and is accessible to most.

Up to three adults can attend in a car and book a free car parking place to come and enjoy our grounds, woodlands, natural habitats, historical features, on site animals and have a hot drink and a cake totally free.

**Holyhead Road, Kingswood, Wolverhampton WV7 3AP Tel: 01902 558132**

**Email: [Kingswood@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:Kingswood@wolverhampton.gov.uk)**



Keep up to date on facebook



**[Russell House Surgery@codsalldoctors](mailto:Russell House Surgery@codsalldoctors)**

If you click 'like'  on our page, new items will appear on your facebook feed when we post them.

*Please do not use Facebook as a way of contacting the surgery or discussing your or another person's personal or medical information.*

## Book and CD sale



Sadly, our book and CD donation / sale has now been cancelled. Partly because Covid 19 has completely prevented any selling for safety reasons and also because we are running out of storage space thanks to the generosity of so many patients. The items will be passed on to those Charity Shops still able to take them.

*"We would like to thank everyone that has been involved. The money raised purchased an additional 24hr Blood Pressure Monitor and 2 height adjustable for couches for the direct benefit of patients. What to spend the remaining money on will be discussed at the next PPG Meeting in September."*

**Julia Shenton**  
Practice Manager

Produced by the  
Russell House Surgery  
Patient Participation Group

Designed by  
Mike Davies