

News from Christmas Maltings & Clements

Providing safe, appropriate and sustainable care

Our practice currently offers more than twice the number of appointments compared with similar sized surgeries in Suffolk. We continue to operate under great pressure.

We now have three equivalent full-time doctors working at the practice. This will drop to just two in October. Despite our continued efforts, a shortage of GPs in Suffolk and across the UK means we will be unlikely to find replacements. We will therefore use locum doctors until we can attract other GPs to the area.

As a result, it's important that we maintain a manageable workload for our clinicians – otherwise there is a risk the situation will get worse.

To ensure safe, appropriate and sustainable care we must make changes to the way the practice operates.

To help manage this, some of our staff have now been trained as 'Care Navigators' so they can direct you to the most appropriate clinician to meet your needs. This may not always be a GP, but could be a nurse, physiotherapist, paramedic or pharmacist, all of whom are supervised by a doctor.

This will free up doctors' time for more complex cases – helping you to be seen quicker. Patients determined as clinically urgent will be given priority.

We recognise that this is a challenging time for the practice and would like to thank you for your continued co-operation and support.

Should you have any questions about the changes – or anything else covered in this newsletter – please email info@suffolkfed.org.uk and we will respond as soon as we can.

How the practice will operate

- Other than those for nurse or healthcare assistant clinics (e.g. blood tests or routine clinics for long term conditions such as diabetes), appointments will only be available on the day that you call.
- When you contact the practice you will speak to a Care Navigator who will treat your call with the same level of confidentiality as our clinicians.
- The Care Navigator will direct you to the most appropriate specialist clinician to meet your needs, which may not necessarily be a GP. You will be offered two alternative appointment times to choose from.
- On busy days we will prioritise appointments for those patients who we have determined as clinically urgent.
- When no appointments are available, you will be directed to other sources of advice (such as NHS 111 or the NHS Choices website) or asked to phone back the next day.
- Patients who believe they need a home visit are asked to request this before 10am.
- The practice is no longer able to provide certain services such as routine ear syringing.

Permanent doctor changes

- Dr Fiona Andrews will be retiring from the practice in September.
- Dr Tom Curtis, another long standing doctor, will be leaving in June.
- Dr Afshan Hussain has also recently left the practice.



Your clinical team

As well as GPs, your clinical team includes a range of healthcare professionals:

- **Nurses** – who undertake pre-booked reviews of patients with long term conditions (such as diabetes and asthma) and deal with minor illnesses.
- **Nurse Practitioners** – who provide treatment and advice for many problems which may have previously been treated by a doctor. Their main area of expertise is in the management of common illnesses and long term conditions.
- **Practice Paramedics** – who see patients with acute conditions such as flu, bronchitis or respiratory infections who need to be seen that day.
- **Physiotherapists** – who see adults with musculoskeletal conditions such as back or neck pain.
- **Pharmacists** – who answer medication queries, review and re-authorise prescriptions and hold face to face clinics.
- **Physician Associates** – who assess, manage and treat patients of all ages with a variety of acute and chronic conditions.
- **Healthcare Assistants** – who offer blood tests, check blood pressures and provide advice on weight loss and how to stop smoking.

Outstanding medication reviews

Our safety audits have shown that some patients on long term medication have not been regularly reviewed.

We are unable to continue prescribing medication without these reviews.

If you receive a letter from us giving you an appointment it's therefore important that you attend.

Contact us: If you have questions about any of the content in this newsletter, please email info@suffolkfed.org.uk.



To keep up to date with our news, visit www.christmasandclements.co.uk or search for 'Christmas Maltings and Clements Practice' on Facebook.

You can also share feedback on the changes with Healthwatch Suffolk. Call **01449 703949** or email info@healthwatchesuffolk.co.uk.

Our new telephone system

We have now installed a new telephone system. However, you may still experience a wait at busy times.

We have struggled to recruit receptionists and we receive two and a half times more phone calls compared to a practice of a similar size.

It is worth noting that Mondays and Fridays are always very busy and you may have to wait longer to get through.

Your appointments

Our clinicians are working under considerable pressure. This means it is really important to arrive for your appointment on time.

To help with this we are now running a self check-in system at the Clements building. This also helps free up reception staff so they have more time to answer the telephones.

Members of the Patient Participation Group have kindly offered to help show patients how the check-in system works, so please use the system if you can.

Christmas Maltings

An agreement has been reached to keep the Christmas Maltings building open. We are now awaiting approval from NHS England.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to offer GP appointments from the building. Instead, it will be used for physiotherapy and nurse led clinics to treat long term conditions. We also hope to provide space for community services run by local hospitals.