

Patients' Voice  
at  
Hall Grove Group Practice

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iCare weCare youCare

# Business as Usual

A Joint Newsletter from  
Hall Grove Group Practice and Patients' Voice

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### **1. GP Services after Covid**

There has been a lot of adverse publicity about the availability of GP services and appointments in broadcast and print media during and after the pandemic and on social media. This newsletter from Hall Grove Group Practice has been prepared jointly by the practice and Patients' Voice to provide you with information about the services now available through the practice.

The pandemic had a significant impact on patients and the practice. GP services continued but access was reduced and some services that were normally available could not be provided.

Now the lockdown is over, pandemic restrictions have been relaxed and it's now business as usual in both our surgeries. Business as usual in this case actually means that business is improved. All our services are available this includes face to face appointments.

All patients who visit the surgery are encouraged to wear a face mask to minimise the risk of transmission of infections.

The number of GP Partners working in the practice is 9. We are proud of being a training practice producing the future GP workforce. We have approximately 4 GP registrars and 4 Foundation Year 2 doctors who work under GP supervision and we currently have a qualified GP who is undertaking a work refresher period after a career break.

We are implementing an enhanced telephone system with caller queue information for callers and call waiting. (Call waiting means you do not have to hold on, the practice can call you back. So if you only have limited minutes on your mobile you won't waste them hanging on.)

BUT!.....There always has to be a but. At the time of writing, the number of Covid cases is increasing and a number of staff both clinical and non-clinical are having to self-isolate which can impact on waiting times. However, all the following services are still available.

## 2. Available Services

Routine and specialist GP appointments provided by doctors.

Services including vaccinations, regular reviews and maternity care provided by nurses.

Prescribing of medications such as antibiotics and various creams provided by Minor Illness Nurse, who works Mondays and Tuesdays.

Services to help improve patient's health, wellbeing and social welfare by connecting them to community services which might be run by the council or a local charity, accessed through the Social Prescriber. For example, signposting people who have been diagnosed with dementia to the local weekly dementia support group.

Physiotherapy appointments are available for assessments, diagnosis and management for all musculoskeletal disorders.

### Clinics available in Hall Grove Group Practice

Asthma	Family planning
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Cervical smears
Diabetes	Menopause matters
Antenatal and post-natal	Adult immunisation; Covid, Flu, Pneumonia, Shingles
Child health	Minor surgery
Child immunisation	Pneumonia vaccination

### **3. Appointments**

Consultations are available by appointment at both surgeries from 8.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday and alternate Saturday mornings. In addition, an Extended Access service at Spring House Medical Centre offers appointments from 6.30pm to 8pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm Saturday and 8am to 12 noon on Sundays. Contact the surgery to arrange an appointment at Spring House. With your consent at booking, the clinicians at Spring House will have access to view your medical records which can then be seen by your usual GP. Follow up appointments needed after an appointment at Spring House will be done by our surgery.

All appointments need to be booked. Urgent on the day appointments are available for those who need to be seen on the day by the duty doctor. However, those requiring an urgent on the day appointment will be contacted back by the duty doctor on the same day and given a time to attend the surgery. It is important to bear in mind that the Duty Doctor can be extremely busy and it can take up to a few hours to be contacted back. Asking for an appointment with other health professionals in the surgery (rather than the doctor) may give you a quicker response. The practice can also refer you direct to a physiotherapist and social prescribers.

### **4. Booking an appointment**

#### **Via eConsult**

For routine consultations, it's best to contact the surgery using eConsult via the practice website. You can arrange for somebody else to complete the eConsult application on your behalf if needed. The Practice can deal with up to three times as many inquiries in this way. You can ask for advice for a clinical condition, administrative help (letters, and general requests) and help for a child. For clinical help the practice will contact you with advice or an appointment by 6.30pm the following day.

#### **Telephone reception**

**If you do not have computer access** or do not feel confident to use a computer/mobile device to access eConsult or you just prefer to pick up the telephone - you can still ring the surgery on 01707 332233 or 01707 328528 and press option 4 to speak with a member of our reception team to book an appointment. Or you can call into reception and talk to a receptionist (please wear a mask).

If you wish to call the surgery, please bear in mind that the phone lines are extremely busy in the morning and you could have to wait to talk to a receptionist. When in place, the call waiting function will tell you your place in

the queue.

We encourage appointments to be booked using the above two methods, however if you are unable to use these, you can come to the surgery to seek an appropriate appointment and we will try our best to accommodate this.

**Home visits** Patients who are housebound and need to arrange-home visit call 01707 323355 **before 10am**. You will be phoned by the home visits doctor for an initial assessment.

**Routine matters** Calls about routine matters are best made **after 10.30am**.

**Test results** Call **after 2pm** to get test results.

**When the surgery is closed** and you require medical advice please visit **NHS 111 online**, call NHS 111 or in the event of an emergency, call 999.

**Life threatening** always **call 999**.

## 5. Prescriptions

If you need a medicine, this will be prescribed by the GP.

**Direct to pharmacy** If you have set up an electronic prescription transfer arrangement your prescription will be sent direct to the pharmacy of your choice. Allow about an hour for the pharmacy to receive the prescription and dispense your medication. (If you do not have a prescription transfer arrangement, complete an application form from the pharmacy of your choice and hand it into reception.)

**Regular prescriptions via reception** If you need regular prescriptions these can be requested with a request slip via reception. It normally takes 5 days for the prescription to be issued and it can be transferred to the pharmacy of your choice, as above.

**Online ordering** Prescription requests can also be made online via the practice website. It's best to allow a week for the prescription to be ready for collection. You can include a message about the prescription with your prescription request.

If you are going on holiday you can request an extra supply when you request your repeat prescription.

(<https://www.hallgrovesurgery.co.uk/prescriptions>)

## 6. Additional support

You will find a range of information resources including printed resources with details of helpful organisations, a range of clinical conditions and other health issues on: the Consultation Room section of the Practice website: <https://www.hallgrovesurgery.co.uk/consultation-room>; and on the Patients'

Voice section of the practice website:

<https://www.hallgrovesurgery.co.uk/patients-voice--information-for-patients-and-carers>.

7. The Practice is always looking for ways to improve their services. More improvements are being planned. If you have any ideas for improvements you can get in touch with Patients' Voice (below).

## **8. Patients' Voice**

Patients' Voice (PV) is the name given to the Patient Participation Group (PPG) at Hall Grove Group Practice. It has been set up to champion patients and work with practice staff to improve the primary health services offered. This is done by: keeping members up to speed with what's happening at the practice; acting as critical friends, promoting improvements for patient care and health and supporting practice initiatives. Members also support the practice with information from surveys and patient feedback about their experience within health care services. We publish and circulate newsletters at intervals.

Membership of Patients' Voice is a way to pool information, join forces and bring like-minded people together for the good of the patient population. You can get your voice heard through Patients' Voice.

Membership is free and is open to all patients, health professionals and carers of patients of Hall Grove Group Practice (anyone who attends either Hall Grove or Parkway Surgeries) in Welwyn Garden City.

You can get involved with Patients' Voice (PV) at whatever level you wish: simply read our newsletter or take on a more active role. All involvement is on a voluntary basis and in joining you will be making a positive contribution to patient services at the practice. Members of Patients' Voice can also join our Steering Group which meets at monthly virtual meetings with practice representatives, also occasional ad hoc meetings.

There is more information about Patients' Voice on the practice website (click on the button on the home page) including how to join the Patients' Voice community <https://www.hallgrovesurgery.co.uk/patients-voice---home> or ask for a leaflet at reception.