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# Summer 2021 Newsletter

Welcome to the first of the Longcroft newsletter we will be doing quarterly to ensure all our patients are updated and to improve our communication with our patients. We would, firstly, like to thank you for your continued support throughout these challenging and stressful times for you; we encourage you to seek our help where required.

We realise the pandemic have brought up different ways of working for us. We do want to provide an excellent service for our patients; we realise feedback can be good and others focus on areas for improvement, which is fantastic, as we want to provide a great service, listening to your needs, whilst recognising constraints we have.

It is amazing to see some of our patients now have their own children and even grandchildren and lovely to have them as part of the Longcroft family.

### Communication

Digital Access (Silicon Footfall), our new website, is designed to help patients navigate their way to find help in exactly the way they would if they walked into reception. The home page of our website (Silicon Footfall) is clearly laid out to help patients manage their health more easily and request advice from a health professional. It means people are getting the help they need quicker and more conveniently. It reduces the pressure on phone and ensures we are able to manage demand safely and effectively giving face to face appointments to those who really need them and also for your convenience. All practice appointment requests are now triaged. This approach encourages patients to go online and request advice or an appointment without having to phone the practice if they are able to. Patients can ask questions and report symptoms. The practice then looks at the request and responds within a stated timeframe, connecting the patient to the right person, service, or support. Please

follow this link if you want to know more

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ftrkKpXzcE>

However, if you do not have access to going online which we realise is the case for some of our patients, you may still phone the practice and the reception staff will take your request for your health problem and treat it all with the strictest confidentiality. A health professional will contact you, which may take the form of a face-to-face consultation or telephone. The reason for triaging all calls is so that the urgent calls are dealt with on the day; even the non-urgent ones are generally dealt with within a week, and we will inform you on the time scales. This is a huge change from pre-pandemic times where patients had to wait 4-6 weeks for appointments.

We have recently carried out workshops for all reception and administration staff to ensure that our patients have the best possible experience in a safe and caring environment.

It has been a challenging period for all our staff with Covid; they are all very hardworking and we are thankful for their dedication and extremely proud of them.



## Services at Longcroft

We have a multitude of services available at the practice from in-house blood taking, standard ECG measurement, 24-hour blood pressure monitoring, 24-hour ECG monitoring, asthma reviews, anticoagulation reviews, and cervical smears to childhood immunisations.

We would like to also inform you that we do currently have access to other practitioners through our Banstead Primary Care Network(PCN): a First contact Physiotherapist, who does clinics with us on Thursdays and at Banstead Clinic on Tuesdays, a social prescriber (who will give advice on a multitude of services from social services available, exercise classes to losing weight), first contact wellbeing psychological practitioner, a mental health practitioner, a visiting paramedic and doctor visiting service.

## PPG (Patient Participation Group)

PPG provides a link between the patients of Longcroft and the practice for all matters except specific medical issues. The June meeting reaffirmed the Terms of Reference for the Group which can be found on the PPG web page

## High Patient Demand

We have been open throughout the pandemic and seeing patients whose condition requires them to be needed and dealing with other conditions by telephone or online. Demand for NHS services has been extremely high as lockdown has eased and we have experienced remarkably high demand, sometimes experiencing over 250 patient requests in just the morning. We have needed to switch off our online forms at certain times so we can work through the high numbers of requests received for patient safety, and this does mean there are delays in responding to your requests; all requests deemed to be urgent by the doctor are dealt with immediately. Whilst our online system is switched off, we can still be contacted via phone for urgent requests. We do realise our telephone system can be improved and hence it will be upgraded in the next month.

under the main Longcroft surgery web page. Mike Harris was re-elected as Chair.

The practice has nearly 11,000 patients split fairly evenly between male and female and through the age range, this may be a little surprising as many consider Banstead to have an ageing population. The aim of the PPG is to replicate the gender and age profile. The PPG is an active, dedicated Group to improve the patient journey.

If you wish to join the PPG team, please contact us via [sdccg.ppg.longcroft@nhs.net](mailto:sdccg.ppg.longcroft@nhs.net).

Despite media suggestions to the contrary, face to face appointments are always offered if appropriate. A proportion of GP requests can sometimes be for very minor health concerns but dealing with these reduces our capacity to spend time addressing patients whose conditions are not minor or self-limiting. Please remember that you can also get help for minor illness by asking your local community pharmacist. As qualified healthcare professionals, pharmacists offer clinical advice and over-the-counter medicines for minor illnesses such as coughs, colds, sore throats, tummy trouble and aches.

Patients also have access to local improved access GP service at Epsom and Leatherhead Hubs, which can be booked by the practice, for telephone appointments in the evenings and at weekends. Outside of our core hours, you can also call 111, or you may book a GP video consultation with LIVI, one of our Partner services, who will have direct access to your full records. The information on these services is on our website.

## Longcroft Partnership

We have had some changes within our Partnership recently.

- Dr Rafi has reduced his sessions as he has become involved in innovative medical research nationally. He will share his time between Longcroft Clinic and his interest in genomics relevant to General Practice. Genomics is the study of DNA and how it works. This research will lead to greater understanding of many diseases, particularly cancer and rare diseases.
- Dr Emanuel has also joined the partnership recently. She has a wealth of experience in general practice, with strategies on improving the patient journey and offering excellent patient care. Her specialist interests include anticoagulation and ophthalmology. She will continue to do GP training, teaching, and assisting young doctors to be GPs. We are hoping to be accredited as a GP Training Practice soon with her arrival.

## New Care Home

We are delighted to provide primary care services to a brand-new Care Home, Woodstown House. It is an independent provider of care for adults living with complex neurological conditions, requiring specialist nursing care due to illness or a result of an acquired or traumatic brain injury.

## Park Run

Park Run is a nationwide 5 Kilometre run held at local venues. All Park runs, regardless of where they are, start at 9am on Saturday mornings. Whilst it can be a timed event it is not a race and participants can run, jog, or walk; many participants enjoy the camaraderie of the event because it is not a race. The local park run to Longcroft Clinic is Banstead Woods.

We have been certified as a RCGP (Royal College of GPs) Park Run Practice recently to encourage staff and patients to take part.

We will aim to do this as a group monthly from September 11<sup>th</sup>, although any of you can do this weekly if you wish.

Our initiative aims to improve the health and wellbeing of healthcare staff, patients, and carers, reducing the need for lifelong medication.

- Mandy Sharkey has joined the Longcroft Clinic as Practice Manager. She has a wealth of experience in NHS and brings with her some innovative thinking on patient care and staff management.

We, as a Partnership, are fully committed to our patients and wish to work collaboratively with you to provide a unique high standard healthcare, so you may achieve the wonderful feeling of being in good health and/or having outstanding care. We are constantly reviewing the way we work, so we can achieve this effectively and with efficiency for you all.

Exercise reduces the risk of developing heart disease, raised blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, joint and back pain, certain cancers such as bowel cancer as well as falls depression and dementia. Exercise really is the underrated “wonder drug”.



If you are interested, please let us know via our website or email [sdccg.ppg.longcroft@nhs.net](mailto:sdccg.ppg.longcroft@nhs.net) and we can start to compile a list of names.

Dr Pearson and Dr Nathan are marathon veterans and so will happily discuss how much they have enjoyed the exercise in the past.