



# BASSETT ROAD SURGERY PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

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## NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2023

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### NEWS FROM THE SURGERY

#### STAFF UPDATE

**New Head of Team in Dispensary:** We are delighted to welcome Sarah back from her maternity leave, to a new role leading the team in the dispensary, working alongside Karen, Michele, Kaz and Kim. Sarah and Kim will also be starting Pharmacy Technician training in the autumn which will allow them to extend their role in the surgery, working with dispensary, pharmacy, GPs and Nurse prescribers.

**GP Registrars:** We say farewell to Drs Abd and Shah this summer. Drs Dhami and Folorunso are still with us and are joined by Drs Hefny, Nasreen and Parekh.

**Other Team Development:** This year two of our Practice Matrons and a Pharmacist have undergone some extended role training so that they can better support patient's needs and the practice are able to offer a more responsive service for our patients.

**Practice Nurse Recruitment:** We have two part-time vacancies in our team at present which is challenging in terms of appointment availability. Our other nurse is working an extra day per week in the interim and we have also secured agency support one day a week. A second round of interviews will be held in early September.

#### COVID AUTUMN CAMPAIGN

We have been approved to provide the Autumn COVID vaccination campaign. Once we have information on the cohorts of patients' that can be immunised, we will update you.

#### FRIENDS AND FAMILY TEST

The new Friends and Family test will be sent to patients via text message 24 hours following their appointment. It provides the surgery with valuable feedback and helps shape future services.

#### TELEPHONE SYSTEM

The surgery is exploring a replacement telephone system and are mindful of the limitations of the current one. We will keep you posted on this.

#### BLOOD TESTS

Blood test appointments can only be booked after Clinician's Referral.

**CURRENT PATIENT NUMBER - 19,931 as at 31/7/23**

# UPDATE ON PATIENT HEALTHCARE SURVEY

## **A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR PATIENTS FROM THE PPG**

Thank you to all who completed our Patient Survey in the spring. You will have heard that 5,393 did so and the health provision decision-makers for the Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes (BLMK) area were staggered!!

Thank you also for all the letters you have written to everyone you can think of who prioritise the allocation of funds and facilities for health. Please continue to do this as it IS making a BIG difference and, at long last we are being listened to.

Those of you who were born and bred in this town or who have lived here a long time, will know that we have 'been here before' – promises have been made and our hopes have soared only to be dashed when little happened. Huge housing developments then appeared with no provision for health. We know that we will never get the Cottage Hospital we would wish for, but we CAN get more local services for our community. Sadly, our town has been overlooked for too long, so we have to hold those decision-makers to account and greatly improve the situation for our residents. This is what the PPG Leighton-Linslade Health Provision Group is doing and we need as much help as you can muster, so please keep up the pressure!

We know that access to healthcare is a national issue but it is extremely critical in Leighton Buzzard because historically we have never been well resourced. Your feedback gave us the evidence of what patients actually experience and how difficult it is for so many – your data, stories and comments were both informative and, at times, harrowing. Those decision-makers are now reading them!

Our experience is one of surgeries and services decreasing as the population has increased significantly. The two main problems are:

### **1. Insufficient GP Services and varying waits for appointments**

**2. A lack of basic services and clinics locally** with patient travel to a long list of hospitals and clinics - some at great distance - traffic congestion, parking difficulties and huge costs impacting further on health, purses and the environment. For those not able to access by car, a DIRE situation, quite apart from the cost, time and potential mobility difficulties. There is NO DIRECT SERVICE TO ANY ONE NHS LOCATION! Ours is an ageing community and all patients are vulnerable, so we need sufficient basic services here in this town.

To ease the first problem, the Leighton Linslade Health Connections based in the old Bassett Road Clinic, 25 Bassett Road (now called Leighton Buzzard Health Centre) now provides healthcare support to GPs and also prevention strategies to help keep us well for longer.

The second problem is much more complex, but through the Patient Survey feedback you gave us, we can now prioritise your needs and strive to get new and improved capacity for those specific services prioritised (when logistically possible) and the premises to host them, here in Leighton Buzzard.

Watch this space and look out for our monthly update, on this and topical health issues in the Leighton Buzzard Observer Opinion page - 'Health Matters.' Please note our group now has an email address [lbhealthprovision@gmail.com](mailto:lbhealthprovision@gmail.com)

Edith Griffith – Chair of Leighton-Linslade Health Provision Group/PPG

## DID NOT ATTEND (DNA)

Between 1st Jan to 23rd May 1,579 patients did not attend a booked appointment - this equates to 157,900 clinical minutes wasted. There are even instances of patients not turning up for appointments they booked that day.

Please - if you no longer need your appointment or cannot make it for any reason let the surgery know as soon as possible, by calling or cancelling online. Patients are struggling to access appointments, please do not waste an appointment others could use.

## ORDER YOUR REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS IN PLENTY OF TIME

Our local pharmacies are extremely busy at the moment and some are asking for repeat prescriptions to be requested 10 days before needed. If you are not a dispensing patient (e.g. collect medication from BRS), you can request your prescription two working weeks in advance online from the surgery.

For dispensing patients, the surgery requires the existing two day turnaround, unless there are supply issues.

Check with your pharmacy if they offer any additional services e.g. at Tesco patients can register their mobile phone with the Pharmacy a text will be sent when your prescription is ready for collection.

## BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON – URGENT EYE CARE SERVICE (CUES)

**NHS**  
**Bedfordshire and Luton CUES**

  
(Urgent Eye Care Service)

**MINOR EYE CONDITION?**

Do you have a new eye problem?  
Are you registered with a Local GP practice?  
Do you need advice or an appointment with a professional?  
Please contact our Telephone Assessment Service.

 **0800 316 9200** 

**STEP 1**  
**Call our call centre.**  
We will take your details and arrange a phone call with a Clinician.

**STEP 2**  
**Our Clinician will be able to advise remotely and confirm whether a face to face appointment is required.**

**STEP 3**  
**If a face to face appointment is required, we will contact your local opticians for you to arrange an appointment.**

**OCULAR OUTCOMES**

Typical conditions that can be treated under the service include:

- A red or painful eye
- Removal of a foreign body
- Sudden loss or change in vision
- Flashes and floaters
- Dry eye or gritty/uncomfortable eyes
- Irritation and inflammation of the eye
- Ingrowing eyelashes
- Significant sticky discharge from the eye or watery eye

The service does not cover long term conditions, sight tests or major eye conditions that are being regularly monitored by your optometrist or hospital eye service e.g. cataracts, diabetic retinopathy or glaucoma.

**The CUES Telephone Assessment Service is open 7 days a week between 08.00 and 20.00.**

You can call the Freephone number directly to discuss your condition or be referred/redirected to the service by another health care provider e.g. GP, pharmacist, optician, care navigator.

## AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION (AMD)

It is very important to have regular EYE TESTS. You can find out online if you are entitled to free NHS eye tests (usually over 60s or under 16s but under 18s if in full-time education). There are more categories at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) Search : opticians and sight tests. You could also ask any local optician.

Information about AMD is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) Search under Health A-Z, letter A : Age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

It is estimated, that nearly 40,000 people develop AMD in the UK, every year. The central area of the retina, called the macular, changes with age and leads to a gradual impairment of vision, particularly central vision. This impairment affects reading, watching TV and even recognising faces. A common symptom is seeing straight lines as wavy, for example window frame or door frame. An easy test at home is to cover one eye and if with the other eye any vertical or horizontal line appears wavy, you should ask for an eye test immediately. There is also a test called an Amsler Grid which consists of lines on paper. A regular eye test can detect AMD before a person is aware of it. Treatment is available.

The Macular Society provides useful information at [www.info@macularsociety.org](http://www.info@macularsociety.org) Their Helpline is 0300 3030 111.

## BLOOD PRESSURE – KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

The poster features the text 'MAKE THE TIME EASE YOUR PRESSURE' in large, bold letters. Below this is an illustration of diverse people interacting with a blood pressure machine. A logo for 'Blood Pressure UK' is in the top right corner, showing a heart with numbers 140, 120, 90, and 70. At the bottom, it says 'Know Your Numbers! Week 2023 4-10 September' and provides the website 'bloodpressureuk.org' and social media handles '#KnowYourNumbers'.

*'High blood pressure is responsible for more than half of all strokes and heart attacks in the UK. It's the third biggest cause of disease, leading to kidney disease, vascular dementia and mobility problems, and costs the NHS £2.1 billion every year.'*

*'Around one in three UK adults have high blood pressure, but around one in three of these don't know it. Because it often has no symptoms, many people don't know they have it until they have a heart attack or stroke.'*

*'It's possible to prevent high blood pressure or bring it under control with a healthy lifestyle and medications if you need them, dramatically lowering the risk of life-changing illness.'*

Blood Pressure UK

**We are fortunate at Bassett Road Surgery to have access to a blood pressure machine in the waiting room. It's simple, quick to use and prints out your readings. Just add your details to the slip of paper, hand into reception and your readings will be added to your medical record.**

## CITIZENS ONLINE – FREE HELPLINE 0808 196 5883

Leighton Buzzard Digital Champions help older residents get connected, anything from how to get on the web, search information, book GP appointments, order prescriptions or online shopping. If you need help give them a call and leave a message, one of the friendly volunteers will call you back and offer advice over the phone or signpost you to local face to face support (such as at the Chatty Café or Library).

## NEW - PCN SERVICES FOR BASSETT ROAD SURGERY PATIENTS

Additional Blood Tests, ECG's and Health Checks - these are booked through our receptionists, but take place at Leighton Buzzard Health Centre, 25 Bassett Road (next to the ambulance station)  
Telephone : 01525 300780

For the Discharge Service you will be contacted directly

**BLOOD TESTS ARE BY GP REFERRAL ONLY**

You can follow the PCN on Facebook to find out what services are available



### LEIGHTON-LINSLADE HEALTH CONNECTIONS

-WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BASSETT ROAD, LEIGHTON ROAD AND SALISBURY HOUSE SURGERIES.

#### BLOOD TEST SERVICE

- If you need a routine blood test, your GP Practice may offer you an appointment with us!
- Your results will be handled in the same way and will return to your registered practice.
- Whilst you are here we might check your height, weight and blood pressure - these readings will be added to your medical records.

\*Please note we are not currently taking direct bookings from patients



25 BASSETT ROAD, LU7 1AR  
01525 300780



### Leighton-Linslade Health Connections

In partnership with Bassett Road, Leighton Road and Salisbury House Surgeries

- ✓ Have you recently been discharged from hospital?
- ✓ Sent home with some medication changes?
- ✓ Wondering what options are available to you?
- ✓ Needing a little bit of support?

**You may receive a call from our Care Coordinators or Pharmacy Technician to see how you are and / or talk about your medications.**



Telephone: 01525 300780



### Leighton-Linslade Health Connections



We are happy to announce we are now supporting our practices by offering an ECG service.

If you need an ECG your practice may book you in with us, this is to help relieve pressures on the practice and improve patient care.



Leighton Buzzard Health Centre,  
25 Bassett Road,  
LU7 1AR

01525 300780

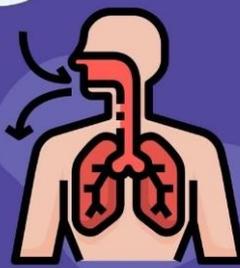


### LEIGHTON-LINSLADE HEALTH CONNECTIONS

-working in partnership with Bassett Road, Leighton Road & Salisbury House Surgeries

#### New Services

- Spirometry
- FeNO
- Asthma
- Reviews
- High Blood Pressure checks



LEIGHTON BUZZARD HEALTH CENTRE,  
25 BASSETT ROAD, LU7 1AR

## TIBBS DEMENTIA ACTIVITY GROUPS



**Fortnightly Walking group** for people living with dementia and their carers, relatives and friends. Every other Tuesday (weather permitting) 2pm. A gentle stroll and then refreshments at a pub or cafe afterwards. To book your place, please contact [louise.evans@tibbsdementia.co.uk](mailto:louise.evans@tibbsdementia.co.uk) or call 07483 951733. If you would like to volunteer to help out give Louise a call, just two hours fortnightly to support the group.

The **Cognitive Stimulation Therapy group** meets Monday mornings 11am-12pm at St George's Court Extra Care Supported Living Scheme. Aimed at people living with mild dementia it involves a programme of activities aimed at stimulating brain function to slow down the progression of the disease. There is also a carer support group held in a different room which runs at the same time, where family carers can get together to socialise and support each other. To book into these sessions email [sarah@tibbsdementia.co.uk](mailto:sarah@tibbsdementia.co.uk) or phone 07483 951737.



## LEIGHTON BUZZARD VOLUNTARY PATIENT TRANSPORT

Members attending the PPG meeting on May 30th enjoyed an informative talk by Tom Hendrick from this local charity. Details about LBVPT can be found on the website [www.lbvpt.co.uk](http://www.lbvpt.co.uk) We invited the speaker because we are aware that the charity urgently need more volunteers, both drivers and call handlers. When patients are driven to hospital for their appointments, a voluntary donation is suggested for each venue, part of which may go towards the driver's petrol expense and part towards the running costs of the charity. Donations from the general public towards running costs are always welcome. These costs include the LBVPT portable 'phone used by call handlers which is passed from one to another.

A new driver told us how much she enjoys helping patients in this way, how well-organised the charity is and how helpful to new recruits. Drivers are DBS checked and LBVPT's insurance covers their activity.

May we appeal to Bassett Road Surgery patients to consider helping in whatever way they can? For an informal chat on volunteering call Tom on 07970 479007.

## FESTIVAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE – FRIDAY 6 OCTOBER

**FESTIVAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE**  
'Resilience Of Older Persons In a Changing World'  
**Friday 6 October 2023**

Drop in any time between 10am to 2.00pm  
The Rufus Centre, Steppingley Road, Flitwick MK45 1AH



Representatives from many statutory and voluntary organisations will be offering advice and information about local services for older people, such as social care, health, housing, leisure activities, holistic services and much more. Entertainment throughout the day, such as musical interludes and other activities.

For further information email [info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk), or call 0300 303 8554.

### Patient feedback on the newsletter

We would love to hear your feedback on the newsletter.

Did you find it useful and informative? Is there something you would like us to cover in future issues? Do you have a non-clinical question that you would like answered? If so, email us at [bassettroadppg@gmail.com](mailto:bassettroadppg@gmail.com) or leave a comment in the PPG Comments Box in the Waiting Room – with your contact details and we will get back to you.