Dear PPG,

Firstly I would like to apologise for the lack of communication since my first email requesting patients to join this group. As I hope you can understand we have had an increase of workload on various areas, but mostly the confusion and queries regarding the C19 vaccine and priority groups.

**Website** - I have tried to keep the website up to date with various COVID queries and also what we are doing and how we are working the current COVID-19 vaccine programme. If you are able to, I would like you to visit the site <https://www.boltondoctors.co.uk/> and receive your feedback on the information provided on the website and if there is anything missing, that you would feel would benefit patients. The site has been a working progress since I started at the practice.

**New Staff**- We have now received allocated time for a Musculoskeletal service (MSK). MSK physiotherapists provide advice and treatment for a wide range of orthopaedic and rheumatological conditions that affect joints, muscles, ligaments and tendons. For example, sports injuries, lower back pain, and complex pain conditions. We are offering this service as a first point of contact before seeing a GP, as these practitioners are more suited and specialise in this area, more than the GP.

We have James who is with the practice on Friday’s and we also have Simon who works for us on a Thursday morning every 3 weeks.

We also have 2 in-house pharmacists who can help with medication reviews and any other queries or concerns you have about medication. They may also contact you to discuss various medications you’re on, if the local CCG have updated guidance. Our pharmacists are Amirah who is working with us on a Monday and Nabeelah who works at the practice on a Tuesday and Wednesday.

**Mental Health Practitioner** – We are aware that this is a service that is needed within our practice and we have been without a MH practitioner for over 18months. This has been discussed at every PCN meeting and we are hoping to be allocated one in Mid-April 2021.

**Appointments** – As a lot of you may have noticed we are currently operating a telephone or video consultation service. However, if the GPs or nurses feel that a face to face appointment is needed then patients are being booked in, mostly in the afternoons. We understand this is not always feasible and are trying to sort these issues on an individual basis as everyone’s circumstances differ.

Your feedback or suggests are welcome on this area.

**Telephones** – Due to the increase of queries and calls regarding the COVID vaccine, this has put pressure on the phones and has resulted in calls being left when patients are at the window and also engaged calls.

We are trying to promote the use of the ‘Online consult’ to help with this, and I have just created a new section on the online consult for COVID queries. Doing this we hope to reduce the pressure of calls.

We are also working with the staff to try and streamline the process of call answering to make the phone a priority.

**AccuRx** – We have used this text messaging service more since COVID-19 started. I hope this service has been well received for fast communication from the practice. We had a whole team meeting last Wednesday regarding prescription text message, when the medication is not due to be issued.

I would like your feedback / suggestions on this, and whether this is something you would like if your medication was due to be able to contact the practice with a reason?

**Coming in April** – We are now starting a Birth Month recall system, I was aware when I started that the practice were trialling this but then COVID hit and the system didn’t work as well. We have now invested in a service to help the practice support this and hope this will work well for patients.

The idea is that patients are called to attend the practice for their annual reviews for example, asthma, COPD, diabetes and one appointment is made for all required areas, in their birth month. This should try and save time for the patient as you would be attending the practice for one appointment instead of several throughout the year. We understand there could be teething issues with this, so would ask you bear with us.

As always I value feedback and suggestions and I feel the best people to give this on our service is you the patients and hopefully build a good relationship.

Take care

Zoe Morrison

Practice Manager