



AMERSHAM HEALTH CENTRE

BULLETIN AUTUMN 2023

Welcome to the **Autumn** Bulletin.

Flu Updates:

We have been running a number of flu clinics at the surgery in which we have given over 2,000 vaccines.

We have been using the Ask First App since the beginning of the year and so far, 8,150 patients have engaged successfully with the system. This has led to the phone lines seeing a reduction of around 50% which I am sure you will agree is great success.

The App is continually being assessed and we are helping those patients who are struggling with set up or having difficulty linking their accounts. Please speak to a member of our Patient Liaison team who will be happy to assist. We have also produced a step-by-step guide which is included in the newsletter.

We hope those patients able to use the technology will embrace this system as it helps those patients unable to use this functionality to be assisted on the phone lines without the large queue.



Other Useful Applications:

The **NHS App** which you can download from the App Store, is for ordering repeat prescriptions, accessing your health records, viewing your test results, managing appointments, and seeing any referrals and covid passes. You can also link your profile to be able access services for someone else. This is via Proxy Access.



Using 111 On-Line

Get help for your symptoms including urgent prescriptions or medicine. This service now provides

access to GPs who can view your medical notes and issue medication and if necessary, organise a face-to-face appointment with us at the surgery the same day.

Website Update:

The new and improved website is now up and running. The new site offers the facility of completing forms online and access to information is a much more user-friendly style.

Notes for our patients when visiting the surgery:

The front desk remains fully operational for any queries you may have. We have 2 check-in screens to save you queuing at the desk. You can check in for both GP and nurse appointments. If you have an appointment with the nurse, check in on screen then make your way to the nurses waiting area.

Please do not come to the desk to book on the day appointments. There are several options available which have been detailed for booking.

Prescriptions – Please use your **NHS App** or our website wherever possible. You can also email prescriptions.ahc@nhs.net. Please note, prescriptions can take 3 working days to process which is a change from our previous policy.

Registrations – please fill in the electronic forms on our website or you can collect hard copy forms from reception.

Face to Face or Telephone Appointments

We have been offering the choice of face-to-face or telephone appointments, depending on your requirements. Obviously, some conditions would be best served with a face-to-face appointment. You

will be asked at the time of booking which appointment type you would prefer.

Pharmacy Referrals

Did you know we can also refer you to a pharmacy? For many minor illnesses, a GP appointment isn't always necessary. The patient liaison team can create a referral to your local community pharmacist. This useful tool can result in you getting to see a pharmacist in a private consultation room at a time to suit you. They can often provide advice or over the counter medication to treat the condition.

Travel Vaccine Process

If you are travelling abroad and would like to see your vaccination history, you can view all these details via the **NHS App**. You may then be able to research if you would require additional vaccinations before completing the Assessment Form.

Travel Health Pro provides country information including vaccine recommendations. You can find this via the link below:

<https://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/>

If after reviewing the vaccine recommendations you believe you require travel vaccines, the following process should be followed:

A Travel Vaccine Assessment Form should wherever possible be completed **6 weeks** prior to travel. We will always do our best to provide this service, however, if you have booked a last-minute trip and we are unable to offer an appointment, anyone can attend a travel clinic.

A form is required **per person** for each traveller. This includes children under 18.

You will find the Travel Assessment Form on our website under Travel Vaccinations or via the **AskFirst App** which is the most efficient way to access the form.

The nurse will then be in contact via text message to discuss your requirements and if necessary, organise an appointment for you to come into the surgery for the relevant vaccine.

Contacting the Surgery

The Ask First app can be used to contact the surgery for several things including:

Requesting an appointment

- Repeat sick notes
- Travel Form advice
- Updating contact details

For those unable to use the systems provided previously, please utilise the options below:

Telephone System: We open the lines at **8.30am** which are answered in turn by the reception staff. Please pick from the following:

Option 1 for appointments and reception.

Option 2 is for prescriptions queries. The line is open from 9am – 5pm.

Option 3 is for test results. The line is open from 11am-5pm.

Option 4 is for general admin queries.

Option 5 is for the Secretaries. Please be aware that the secretaries are unable to book any appointments so please do not use this option.

Email Policy:

Emails to the surgery may not be seen on the same day by your doctor. Please do not use this mailbox for the following:

Medical Problems: Please do not use the email for any type of medical consultation. **Results:** If your query is relating to a recent test, please call the surgery on **01494 434 344** and select option 3. If your test was requested by a hospital doctor, please contact them.

Appointments: We do not accept requests for appointments via email.

Prescriptions: Please do not send any prescription request via the admin email. If you are requesting a prescription, please do so via the NHS App or the website. We do not take prescription requests over the phone.

Visits: All visits should be requested by calling **01494 434 344** and select option 5.

Deaf and hard of hearing patients who have difficulty using the phone and rely on email for contact should register with the surgery that you are hard of hearing via admin.ahc@nhs.net. Your medical records will be updated. They may thereafter access the surgery by this email address for routine issues including appointment requests or general queries, remembering to include in your subject heading / content that you are hard of hearing.

General Appointments / Information:

Sunrise Clinic: The clinic runs on a Tuesday morning, 7.20 – 8.30am. This clinic is for blood tests only which are booked in advance.

Evening pre bookable appointments: These are available on a Wednesday 6.30 -7.30pm, they are available to book three days in advance.

Nurses Appointments: The nurses are continuing to see patients for blood tests, dressings, stitch removal, regular injections, health checks, smears and also routine child immunisations.

Annual Reviews: Patients will be invited in for their annual reviews; including diabetes, asthma, hypertension etc. Please wait to be contacted by the surgery; we will contact you by letter or SMS.

Welfare Support: Please contact us if you are having any difficulties with shopping, prescriptions, transport and essential deliveries. Prescriptions can be delivered by many of the pharmacies please speak to them

about this service; many of the people helping out are volunteers. There are 750,000 volunteers in the UK helping with the National Voluntary service. We can refer you to offer you the following services:

Check in and Chat Support: Provides short-term telephone support to individuals who are at risk of loneliness as a consequence of self-isolation.

Community Support: Provides collection of shopping, medication or other essential supplies for someone who is self-isolating and delivering these supplies to their home.

Patient Transport Support: Provides transport for patients who are medically fit for discharge or to support patients going to NHS appointments.

NHS Transport Support: Provides transport for equipment, supplies and/or medication between NHS services and sites. Also involves assisting pharmacies with medication delivery.

IMED: Available for home delivery, their number is 01727 837985 or look at the website: www.imedpharmacy.com

Amersham Voluntary service: A volunteer group registered with Buckinghamshire Council. They are a network of local people who are here to help. They can run errands, like basic shopping or collect prescriptions or even for a chat. They aim to respond within 24 hours.

Contact via youramershamcoronahelp@gmail.com or 01494 702149.

Buckinghamshire Community Transport

Do you need help getting to your appointments or activities. They give advice and how to book transport services in your local area. 0800 085 8480 / transport@communityimpactbucks.org.uk

Social Prescribing Service – Referring

The Social Prescribing Service connects patients to non-medical support, such as day centres, charities or community groups, in the community to improve their wellbeing and tackle social isolation.

They can link you in to support within your local community to help you work towards a more fulfilling life.

They enable people to have more control over their lives, develop skills and give their time to others, through involvement in community groups.

Patients can now refer themselves to a social prescriber or health and wellbeing coach. They can give free help if your health is affected by loneliness, your weight or diet, addiction, your housing, debt, stress, or other things. Please see overleaf for a leaflet providing useful information.

The website is <https://www.midchilternpcn.nhs.uk>

Ear syringing services: We do not offer this service at the surgery. Below is a list of alternative providers:

Aston Hearing Services, Old Amersham: 01494 733840

Chalfont Hearing, Little Chalfont: 01494 765144

Boots Hearing Care: 0345 270 0999. Based in Aylesbury

Pharmacies: Please utilise your local pharmacy who are able to provide over the counter solutions for many symptoms including, coughs and colds, verrucas, eye infections, thrush, hay fever, diarrhea, constipation, mouth ulcers, head lice: You can purchase all treatments from your local pharmacy and some medications are available at supermarkets. Please try these over-the-counter treatments before contacting the surgery.

Staff Updates:

We have welcomed Dr Bhargava to the team this September. She is in the surgery Monday, Thursday and Friday every week.

Dr Esmail will be joining us on 31 October working on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Caroline has joined the reception team as a patient coordinator and Jackie is part of the secretarial team. Both have already been helping lots of our patients and look forward to assisting you in the future.

Irina is contracting with us working with Meeta, the Practice Manager whilst Steph is on maternity leave. We are delighted to announce that Steph has welcomed baby Oscar into the world. We have already enjoyed lots of cuddles with him.

Meeting the Team:

Dr Pallavi Bhargava:

I am Dr Pallavi Bhargava and I have recently joined Amersham Health Centre. I did my MBBS and MS(Obstetrics and Gynaecology) from India. After working in Obstetrics and Gynae for several years in various hospitals in NHS, I decided to move into Primary Care. Last year, I completed my GP training. Since then, I have worked in Penn Surgery before joining Amersham.

I am Passionate about patient care and enjoy the diversity and variety of challenges the profession throws at me.

If you need a GP in a medical emergency when the surgery is closed, please call 01494 434344 for details of how to contact Buckinghamshire Urgent Care, the out of hours emergency service.
If you need medical information or advice, please call
111

Ask First

What is Ask First?

Ask First is our online triaging system for requesting an appointment with a clinician.

The Ask First App has no age restrictions.

Should you need to see a clinician, it will flag up within our booking system where a member of our patient liaison team will **contact you** to arrange a suitable appointment either on the phone or face-to-face.

These appointments are based on your medical needs and will be booked on the day, within the week or within a two-week period.

This application can also be used to request repeated sick notes, travel forms, book NHS Health Checks or update your contact details, as well as chasing up a referral or refer yourself to our social prescribing team. We will be opening further features to enable you to book your annual reviews with the nurse.

Downloading the App

Download the App from the App Store or via a link on the Amersham Health Centre website.



Step by Step Guide

- Once you have created an account, go directly to Book Urgent Appointment, and follow the instructions. Please make sure the account is in your name.
- The first screen confirms it is not for any medical emergencies.
- The second screen asks if your concern is a new or ongoing problem.
- If it is ongoing, you will have your call directly logged with the practice for a call back and we will call you.
- If it is new, you will be directed to the Symptom Checker.
- You will then be asked to enter your main symptom i.e., hip pain, ear pain, mole concerns etc.
- Follow the list of questions and at the end it will say there are call-back requests available. Would you like me to schedule this? Confirm YES.
- It will then ask what you are hoping for from the consultation i.e., Advice, Medication, Referral etc.
- It will also ask for your phone number for your call-back.
- Your call-back will then be logged with the practice, and we will contact you.