



Dear Patient,

**December 2022**

Christmas is fast approaching and we hope that you are all gearing up for a wonderful time with friends and family. For the health service however, Christmas sees increases in pressure and 2022 is shaping up to be a record in this regard.

Our team will work as hard as we can to provide the very best for our patients over this period and plans are in place to ensure that we can safely deliver care over the winter months.

To protect yourself we'd encourage all those who are eligible to contact us to book a flu and covid vaccination. We will be offering rolling clinics over the winter to ensure that all our patients are able to get their jabs.

Finally, thank you to thank all our patients for your support, kind words and patience over the past year. It's been truly touching to hear some wonderful feedback and we will do everything we can to improve on our services in 2023. We all hope you have a happy Christmas and wonderful New Year.

Martin Randall  
General Manager

## What's making the news this month?

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|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Christmas and New Year Period | 4. Increase in Group A Strep (GAS) |
| 2. Patient parking update        | 5. Planned building works          |
| 3. Last month's activity         | 6. Merry Christmas!                |

### **1. Christmas and New Year Period**

The Christmas period is always challenging of the NHS and this year the pressures are exacerbated by a sharp increase in Group A Strep and Scarlet Fever in children. We have seen a dramatic rise in our on the day demand in December with 800 urgent, same day appointments being delivered during the first five days of the month. In the context of our 15,000 patients, this is one out of every 18 patients having an urgent appointment in a single week.

As a result of this sharp increase, we have made the decision to prioritise urgent care over the Christmas period and will be allocating more GP capacity for this. The inevitable knock-on impact of this, along with two long weekends, will be that waits for routine appointments will be longer than we would usually expect, even at this time of the year.

If you are on a repeat prescription, please ensure you have ordered this in plenty of time as the surgery will be closed for the bank holidays. Pharmacy times are also impacted by the Christmas period.

## 2. Patient Car Parking

Over the past year or so it has come apparent that that non-surgery users are taking advantage of the facilities, impacting on the ability of our patients to park here. With traffic being so busy in the town we do not want issues with parking at the surgery to contribute to delays in accessing the services available here.

We are committed to provide free parking for our patients and those using the services offered at Leatside. As a result of this we will be introducing a parking management solution which will monitor traffic coming in and out of the car park.

When arriving at the surgery you will need to enter your registration at terminals located at reception, Boots pharmacy and the private wing (where the Sports Injury Clinic, chiropractor and mental health teams are located). There is a short grace period to allow you to park and enter the surgery. Our reception team will be on hand to support anyone who needs help with the system.

In this way we will be able to ensure that parking at the surgery is reserved purely for those who are using our facilities and not those who are taking advantage of our location for free parking. We would like to assure patients that Leatside will make no profits from any fines issued.

## 3. Last Month's Activity

A huge amount of the work that is carried out at a Leatside goes on behind the scenes. Whilst a lot of our clinician's time is spent delivering direct care to our patients this is supported by a range of administrative and non-patient facing activity. Below is a summary of some of the work that goes on at the surgery. During November 2022 we:



Delivered **7,505 appointments**, which works out as 495 per 1,000 registered patients **(up 7% on last month)**



Requested, received, and processed **3,574 pathology requests**, such as blood and urine samples. Each of these results needed to be reviewed and actioned by a member of our clinical team **(up 48% on last month)**



**Referred 385 patients** for care or investigations from other services such as hospitals **(up 25% on last month)**



Received, process, and reviewed **5,179 clinical letters** and reports and services **(up 24% on last month)**



Issued **19,142 prescription items**, each of which needed to be signed off by one of our GPs or non-medical prescribers **(up 9% on last month)**

Unfortunately, **312 patients did not attend** their booked appointment during September, resulting in roughly **78 hours of lost clinical time across the month.**

We do appreciate that sometimes circumstances do get in the way, which can prevent someone making their appointment. We also recognise that at times we are required to rearrange appointments at short notice, which can be frustrating for our patients. We would ask however that if you are unable to attend your appointment to please call the surgery and select option 1 for the cancellation line so that we can offer this appointment to someone else.

#### **4. Increase in Group A Strep**

Scarlett fever and group A Streptococcal infection (GAS), including invasive GAS, have been at lower levels than normal for the last two years during the pandemic.

This year, the spike in infection in spring lasted longer, and the spike expected in winter has started earlier and is resulting in higher levels of infection than normally expected at this time of year, particularly in younger children. Marked increases in scarlet fever notifications are also being seen.

Up to date government guidance on both infections can be found at the Gov.uk website here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukhsa-update-on-scarlet-fever-and-invasive-group-a-strep>

#### **5. Planned building works**

We are planning building works for the early new year. Firstly, our roof has been leaking this autumn so we will be having the glazing in the atrium area replaced and fixing any other required actions. During the period of the work, it is going to be necessary to scaffold within the main waiting area so that work can be carried out safely.

As demand for primary care services has grown, we have been steadily recruiting over the past two years and now find ourselves out of consulting room space. It seems incredible that we have already used up all the space created with the previous extension - luckily these planned works will not be anywhere near as disruptive as the last time!

Between January and March we will be building a new consulting room in the far end of the GP waiting room. We have ample space in the doctors' waiting area and additional space for face-to-face consulting is badly needed.

For both schemes it will be necessary for the contractors to work during our opening hours but we will try to keep the disruption down to a minimum.

**From everyone at Leatside we wish you all a very merry Christmas!**

