September 2023 Newsletter

TELEPHONE SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS

Watership Down Health started using a new, enhanced telephone system from the 24th August 2023.

What is going to be different?

1. New main **toll free** Telephone Number from 24th August – 0333 034 1033, which provides an enhanced telephone service (please see below). You will still be able to telephone the two existing telephone numbers for Kingsclere and Overton, which will transfer to the new telephone number.
2. You won't need to wait too long as there is an automated call back option for the busy times.
3. People who are vulnerable or receiving end of life care will be flagged so that their calls are prioritised in any call queue.
4. We will be able to maintain calls being answered over the lunchtime period, whilst enabling staggered lunch breaks for the reception team.
5. When a member of staff calls a patient from any Watership Down Health telephone number, the number appearing will be 0333 034 1033. We ask that patients add this to their Safe Call List of telephone numbers so that as and when a member of staff calls a patient that they know it is the practice calling.

 The main message will now say (please note that this may be amended over time):

Welcome to Watership Down Health, please note all calls are recorded for training purposes. If you have a life-threatening emergency, please hang up and dial 999 now. Please visit our interactive website www.watershipdownhealth.com for online assistance. There is a Heathier Together App for children, which parents can download for free.
Our trained medical receptionists are doing their best to manage all patient concerns so please respect and be kind to them when they ask you about why you are calling today so that they can signpost you to the most appropriate clinician. We have recently updated our telephone system; please listen carefully to the following options:

Option 1 Urgent/Same Day appointments
Option 2 Non-urgent Appointments and Cancellations
Option 3 Prescriptions
Option 4 Admin and referral queries
Option 5 Test results after 11 a.m.
Option 6 Finance

These options will go to the appropriate person/voice recording feature. We hope that these enhancements will improve access and experience. Thank you for your patience and understanding whilst we implement the improved system. We will be offering new Business Cards with the new telephone number on, which will shortly be available from all three of our practice sites.

Transport to Medical Appointments for WDH patients

Transport is available to medical appointments, surgery, hospital or dental care, through two volunteer groups operating under the banner of the Good Neighbours Network. These groups are Oakley Community Care and Overton Action. Unfortunately the Kingsclere group is no longer active.
These groups normally ask for three days notice of an appointment as a volunteer driver has to be found wherever possible from the available list. Clients must be able to get into and out of a car under their own steam. Patients needing to go to hospital who cannot do that should ask the surgery to contact the Patient Transport Service

The telephone numbers are:

Oakley Community Care: 01256 781660
Overton Action: 07733602972 Monitored from 9.00am-13.00. Answer phone for messages.

All of the groups only cover people living in their community and ask for a donation to cover the drivers' cost of fuel.
There is also a group in Laverstoke / Whitchurch: telephone number 01256 893219.

Whilst most of the appointments at hospitals tend to be to Basingstoke the increasing specialisation of hospitals means that transport is provided to Frimley Park, Southampton as well as other hospitals within the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care System such as Winchester, Andover and Alton.

Basingstoke's New Hospital

As some of you may have read, Basingstoke has been awarded the money to build a new hospital with a scheduled completion of 2032-2033. Please look out for the public consultation that is meant to happen this autumn when you can have your input.