**PPG March update**

**Spring COVID Clinics**

We have started to take bookings for our spring COVID booster vaccination clinics. They are being held at The Digby Hall, Sherborne, DT9 3AA, on **Tuesday 30th April** and **Wednesday 1st May**. Patients who are eligible are those over 75 years old or if they are immunosuppressed/taking immunosuppressive drugs. Patients eligible will receive a booking link via text or email, if however, someone needs to ring the surgery to book in, we are encouraging patients to ring after 2pm as our phone lines are already busy in the mornings.

If you or someone you know is eligible for their COVID booster, please encourage them to book in!

**Easter Opening Hours**

The surgery and dispensary will be closed for Easter from Friday 29th March until Tuesday 2nd April. We are encouraging patients to place medication orders by Friday 22nd March to ensure the team can have it ready by Thursday 28th March and therefore patients will not have to go without over the bank holiday weekend.

**PPG Practice tour and first meeting**

On the 21st of March we had a tour of the practice given to some of our PPG members, this was then followed by our first ever meeting! The tour was given by our practice manager and showed our patients the non-clinical ‘behind the scenes’ part of the practice including the offices, meeting room and older part of the building. Gill, from NHS Dorset and I, then began a discussion about patient participation groups and the great work they do all over Dorset. We discussed the different ways PPG’s can be formed and the different initiatives they can get involved with such as helping to write our practice newsletter, advertising practice schemes, helping at covid and flu clinics and much more!

If anyone would like to read the summary notes and action points from the meeting let me know and I will be happy to provide you with a copy.

I will be trying to organise the next meeting over the next few months so please let me know if you would be interested in attending. I would like to emphasis again that there is no pressure to commit to anything, the aim is to discuss what may benefit the practice from a patient’s point of view to give patients a voice about their own healthcare.

The Grove Medical Centre’s PPG in Sherborne have also offered the invitation to attend their next meeting on Monday 22nd April. This will give you a chance to see how their established PPG works and may inspire some ideas! Please let me know if you would like to attend or would like further information.

**Dentistry in Dorset (from NHS Dorset)**

In February 2024 NHS England launched a national plan for NHS dentistry services in England. Here in Dorset, we recognise that things need to improve and welcome the plan which aims to give better access to dental services, setting out the steps to make accessing dental care easier and faster, including:

• £200m of new national funding from the Government

• Creation of up to 2.5 million more appointments nationally

• Up to 1.5 million more treatments in NHS dentistry.

In the plan there are three main areas of focus:

• Improving Access

• Growing and supporting our workforce

• Supporting prevention

Services throughout the county have been under pressure for some time despite teams working hard to meet the rising demand, and while we have seen some improvements in access, more needs to be done to ensure that everyone who needs to see a dentist can do so.

In Dorset we are:

• Planning improved dental access in underserved areas. This includes improving access to urgent and stabilisation programmes.

• From March 2024, improving access for people who have not been to a dentist in two or more years.

• Encouraging dentists to work in areas which historically have been difficult to recruit to.

• Increasing the minimum unit of dental activity (UDA) value from the £23 to £28 from April 2024.

• Dorset has been named one of a handful of areas in England who will be part of a national programme to introduce a dental bus.

As plans develop, we will ensure updates are published on our website – www.nhsdorset.nhs.uk – when they are available.

**National Diabetes Experience Survey 2024 (from NHS Dorset)**

The National Diabetes Experience Survey is a new survey which gives people living with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes in England the opportunity to feedback on their experiences. NHS England will use the findings to understand and improve experience of NHS care and self-management for people living with diabetes. The survey has also been designed to help local diabetes services make improvements based on what really matters to people living with diabetes.

From 18 March 2024 around 100,000 people living with diabetes will be randomly selected and invited to take part in the survey by letter and text message. NHS England need as many people as possible to respond to the invite so that the results reflect the views of different people living with diabetes.

If you receive an invitation, please don’t miss your opportunity to take part in the survey and share your experiences. If you need support completing the survey or need it made available in another language, you can call the free helpline number 0800 470 2983, email diabetessurvey@ipsos.com or visit www.diabetessurvey.co.uk/accessibility-and-language

This is the first time the survey has been run. Until now, there has not been a national survey of this scale for people living with diabetes in England. This is an exciting new opportunity to help diabetes services make improvements based on what really matters to people. NHS England have collaborated closely with people living with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, carers of those living with diabetes, healthcare professionals, and local providers to help develop this survey. This collaboration ensures that the survey remains relevant, accessible, and impactful for people living with diabetes.

For more information on how we accessed and use data, please visit www.diabetessurvey.co.uk/confidentiality-and-data-protection

For more information about the survey and other ways to provide feedback on diabetes care, please visit www.diabetessurvey.co.uk