



Larksfield and Arlesey Medical Partnership  
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Dear Patients

As we approach the end of the year and with the weather turning colder, we wanted to take the opportunity to provide you with an update of what we have been doing to keep providing you with the level of service that you, as our patients, deserve.

As a partnership we have been listening to what our patients have been saying and have taken steps to tackle the issues that you are raising. We know that both Larksfield and Arlesey have been through many changes over the last few years and in November 2022 we were successful in our bid to merge both practices together under one General Medical Services (GMS) contract, to offer stability and long-term sustainability to both sites.

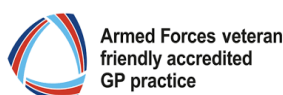
Since November 2022 we have been focusing on increasing access and improving the experience for patients by successfully doing the following: -

- Retaining current staff
- Recruiting new staff, including salaried G. P's, clinicians and administration teams which has not only increased the overall staffing levels in the practice but has also stabilised the practice. For patients this means that staffing will be more consistent, and we have more staff on site to assist patients.
- Implementation of new clinics, for example Women's health clinics, evening smears clinics, nurse-led asthma, diabetes and COPD clinics
- Establishing new relationships and new ways of working with our Patient Participation group and Primary Care Network
- Responding to and reducing complaints working with the Integrated Care Board (commissioners of the services) and the Care Quality Commission (the regulators)
- Ensuring appropriate processes and policies are in place such as clinical and administrative processes which ensure the patient's journey is consistent. An example of this would be our triage policy – where all staff will ensure that patients are booked with the most appropriate clinician the first time
- Updating systems following the covid 19 pandemic
- Staff training
- Developing an improvement plan for the practice

The practice is making good progress on all of the above and would like to thank patients for their understanding through what has been a challenging time for both patients and the practice team. We still have a way to go on with our improvement plan, but we hope you can see how hard we are working to make the necessary changes when you visit or contact the practice.

### **Patient Triage system.**

In August 2023 we implemented a new online patient triage system, with the knowledge that other areas have evidenced good outcomes by using total triage systems. A triage system means that every patient contacting the practice is first triaged before making an appointment. Triage is important as it enables us to make sure that you are seeing the right Clinician for the problem that you are seeking help for.



However, we need your help to implement this new way of working which, once embedded, will improve the experience of obtaining an appointment with the right clinician, and also save unnecessary lengthy waits at reception or on the phone.

We are asking all patients, where possible, to use AccuRX for future booking of appointments.

To access AccuRX you can visit our website [www.larksfildandarlesey.co.uk](http://www.larksfildandarlesey.co.uk). Once on the home page click the appointments box.

There are 3 options-

- Option 1 - GP/ Paramedic / Advanced Nurse practitioner appointments or administration query  
(this box takes you to our triage form where you can choose from medical query or administration query)
- Option 2- Appointments with other clinicians  
(this box takes you to systmonline – here you can access smear test, and various health check appointments)
- Option 3- NHS app  
(the NHS app offers a variety of services such as ordering repeat prescriptions, booking and managing appointments and viewing your GP healthcare record). You can find out more about the NHS app here [www.nhs.uk/nhs-app](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app)

If you are unable to access online services, you can call us and our reception team will complete the booking online on your behalf. If you are unable to book online or call us, you will be asked to complete a paper triage form in reception, which will be processed by our team online or our reception team will complete this on your behalf. You will be contacted with appointment availability. When we have reached capacity for the day, our triage system closes.

Any new system takes time to embed and changes will be required along the way to ensure that, as a practice we are able to manage demand.

Appointment demand is very high and clinical resource is very stretched. We are, therefore, trying to ensure that we direct patients to the right health care professional at the right time, making best use of our clinical skill mix and resource.

To support this, we are working closely with our Primary Care Network Ivel Valley South to offer additional appointments locally in the area. This means you may be offered an appointment at another local practice outside of core hours.

## **Our Staff**

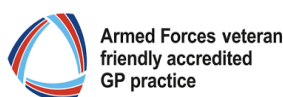
We absolutely understand, that when feeling unwell, patients can get upset and frustrated; however, we are asking for your support to ensure our staff are always spoken to kindly and with consideration. In the same way, we also expect our staff to always act professionally and deal with patient queries with care and understanding.

We need your help to retain our staff. Since July 2022 we have lost 13 Receptionists due to patient abuse either on the telephone or at the front desk. It takes months to train a Receptionist as the role is complex. We simply cannot continue to have such high turnover of front facing staff. We have now recruited new staff and are doing all we can to support and retain them.

Our Reception team are extremely important in keeping our services running and they are there to help you. They work hard every day to help patients and they do their very best in an extremely challenging job. They must follow procedures put in place and balance the resources available to us on any given day to ensure our service is safe for patients and staff.

Our team have also faced a lot of negativity on social media which can really damage staff morale. We do ask that, if you have a complaint or would like us to investigate a concern, that you follow our complaints procedure and, prior to posting anything on social media, think about the effect the post has on the team and on other patients who may be worried about their health care.

Any complaints to our service are fully investigated on the patient's behalf and, despite recent posts on social media. We would like to reassure you that we do not de-register patients who complain about the service. Complaints, dealt with in the correct manner, can bring the team good learning outcomes and help us to identify areas we may be able to change.



We do, like all other practices, follow a zero-tolerance policy for inappropriate patient behaviour, and follow a strict procedure when requesting removal of a patient. It is only ever activated where an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work and where the relationship between the patient and the practice has irretrievably broken down. It is not a decision we ever take lightly and any request to remove a patient has to be authorised by the Commissioners of the Service.

Keeping well this Winter –

- Get Vaccinated against Flu and Covid -19 - The surgery still has flu vaccinations available. If you are eligible for your flu vaccination please contact our reception team.

Finally, a message from our whole team –

Patient care and quality of care is always at the forefront of our mind. All of us enjoy working at Larksfield and Arlesey Medical Practice and we are excited about the future plans for change. A kind word from patients really makes a difference in our day. We want to do our job well and we want patients to feel cared for. Each of us are committed to learning and improving with the planned changes ahead.

As a team we are looking forward to the changes ahead and are committed to improving patient care and we hope patients see the benefits of these changes in the future. We work closely with the support of our Patient Participation group and have recently signed up to a 26-week programme with NHS England which will help us move forward on our improvement plan.

From the team at Larksfield and Arlesey Medical Practice.



Armed Forces veteran  
friendly accredited  
GP practice