Issue 6 – March 2022

**Update from all the practices**

We hope that our patients have managed to stay safe over the last few years in what has been a difficult couple of years.

As you are all aware, it has been an incredibly busy 2 years in General Practice. Since the first covid lock down in March 2020 we have all adapted to working differently, managing patients via telephone and video calls and now a mixture of this with face-to-face appointments. On a positive note, it has provided a more flexible system to assess patients but with security of having processes in place to see those patients that need to be seen.

All the practices have also stepped up to offering Covid vaccinations for all patients. As at the end of January 2022 we had given 75,000 vaccinations

**Getting an Appointment at your practice**

We realise that the telephones are busy and we are doing our best to manage the increased demand. Demand has increased for a number of reasons:

* Patients are coming forward with various healthcare issues that they have had for a while and so now need to be seen by a clinician.
* We are finding that there are a lot more mental health problems amongst our patients, which take time and require ongoing clinical support.
* We have a lot of ongoing staff covid sickness and isolation in the practice so this has impacted on the number of appointments we have had to offer.
* Whilst we were offering weekly or twice weekly covid clinics at STEAM our staff were supporting this so were not in our practices so again our staff levels were affected and the lack of appointments last year meant that our patients were not so able to get appointments so there is a backlog of work to deal with.

**So how are we managing trying to meet these demands?**

We are constantly reviewing how we work. The government has funded several new roles in General Practice and we have recruited a number of new staff.

Across Wyvern we have recruited:

* 9 Clinical Pharmacists
* 5 Pharmacy Technicians
* 4 Physiotherapists
* 4 Social Prescribers
* 1 Mental Health Nurse

These roles work across the practices and are able to offer appointments to support the work that traditionally our GPs would have offered.

For example, rather than seeing a GP for a medication review, our **Clinical Pharmacists** are offering these appointments.

The **Pharmacy Technicians** are supporting our GPs by managing the summaries we get from the hospital when our patients leave hospital. They are updating patient records with new medication that may have started in hospital. They are also able to deal with some medication queries and are also training to take blood and support patients with asthma technique.

The **Social Prescribers** are not clinicians but they are trained to support patients who may need some additional help in the social aspects of their life. For more information, please ask at your practice.

The Social Prescribers are also starting to do group work with patients. They are running weight management drop in events to support patients who want to lose weight.

The **physiotherapists** are providing around 100 appointments per week to support patients at their practices.