



*We would like to start this newsletter by wishing you all a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!*



To reflect on 2021, it has been an extremely busy year with the surgery working at pace. We have delivered vaccination clinics, some being out of hours on evenings and weekends. COVID-19 staff isolation and sickness has influenced staff resource and, on some occasions, resulted in clinics being cancelled or having to adapt clinics so staff can work from home whilst isolating. Incoming calls to our service continue to increase. Our staff are working extremely hard to keep up with the demand we are currently facing.

Looking forward to 2022, we are hoping to get back to some 'normality', with more specialist services such as domestic violence resuming with face-to-face appointments. We are hoping that TARGET afternoons will resume too; these afternoons are protected for clinical training have been greatly missed by the clinicians as well as our Admin Team, as these were suspended throughout the pandemic.



### Practice Telephones



Incoming telephone calls have increased on average +20% above usual levels. This is due to many patients still preferring to contact the practice by telephone, rather than in person, as a result of the pandemic. This increase in volume is difficult for patients, due to the long wait times which may be experienced; and is also difficult for our call handlers and clinicians to manage this increased volume. Clinical and admin resources continue to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with COVID-19 sickness and isolation.

A letter from our Senior GP Partner has been published on our website and social media, as well as being text to all patients. This letter has been produced to try and explain to patients why we are so busy and why it is taking longer to get through on our telephones. Visit: <http://robinlanehwc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Robin-Lane-Letter-to-Patients-211125.pdf> to view this letter.

We want to make it better for our patients and our Call Handlers and so we have launched a new call management system that should help prioritise patient calls to better manage incoming calls and reduce call wait times.

The new telephone system has number options to direct patients better and encourage patients to ring at quieter times if they don't require a GP/ANP appointment. The 5 options include: 'appointments', 'prescription queries', 'test results', 'existing referrals' and 'any other queries'.

We are also advertising for new call handlers.

### The Future of Our PPG

Due to reducing numbers at our PPG meetings during the pandemic, our focus in the new year will be to recruit new members and encourage wider membership through a Virtual PPG Group.

We will create an Action Plan in 2022 – Watch This Space!

We welcome and encourage helpful comments and suggestions on how we can improve the patient experience and engagement at Robin Lane Health and Wellbeing centre. Send your feedback to [RobinLane.PPG@outlook.com](mailto:RobinLane.PPG@outlook.com).

### Staff Changes:

- Dr Kirsty Baldwin has left to take up other opportunities
- Dr Emma Kitlowski returned from maternity leave & Dr Chloe Vites is due to be starting in the new year.
- One of our call handlers now has a dual role as phlebotomist and call handler.
- One of our Team Leaders has started maternity leave in December.
- PCN are recruiting more support workers and pharmacy technicians to help with health inequalities workload.

## Be Kind to Our Staff Campaign

We realise that these are difficult times. Please be kind to our staff who are working hard to protect the health and safety of our staff and patients.

We will refuse entry to our practice if you have symptoms of coronavirus, to protect other patients, our staff and service. Be aware of the symptoms for coronavirus by visiting [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus).

We have a zero-tolerance approach to aggression or abuse against our staff and patients. Please be kind to our staff in these difficult times.

Thank you for your patience and understanding during these difficult times.

