

# Strawberry Hill Medical Centre Patient Newsletter May 2021

## Welcome

Welcome to your third Newsletter put together by your Patient Participation Group (PPG)

## Covid 19

The vaccination programme continues with the focus now on second doses and on reducing inequalities in take-up.

GPs will be closing the centre at the Racecourse and a pharmacy-led site will open in Newbury town centre to offer vaccination to patients aged under 50.

There is also a wealth of facts and figures about Covid on the new vaccine page

[www.berkshirepublichealth.co.uk](http://www.berkshirepublichealth.co.uk).



The page has visuals, videos and questions, which should give you all you need to know about the virus.

Do check out our practice website along with the Berkshire West CCG and Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust websites which are regularly updated with new FAQs and other Covid related information.

There are very few new admissions for Covid now at RBH but there are six long-stay Covid patients still in hospital. There has been an increase in A&E attendances with, on a few days, a daily attendance exceeded 350. Development of the outside area has led to an improvement of ambulance handover time.

## Long Covid Clinic

GP Dr Elizabeth Mottram from Thatcham Medical Practice and Dr Deepak Ravindran, the RBH's Lead Clinician for Long Covid spoke about the symptoms, impact and support at a virtual meeting organised by Community United West Berkshire.

The RBH was one of the first to set up a long covid clinic last November and latest figures show 263 referrals with 190 triaged and 70 seen at the clinic. A further breakdown of the figures shows 68% were women and 15% from ethnic minorities. The main symptoms are fatigue (95%), short of breath (82%), concentration problems (72%), pain (64%), depression (65%) anxiety (50%).

Dr Mottram from Thatcham Medical Practice said she had noticed many long covid sufferers had a feeling of 'abandonment', which was made worse by the closure of support networks during lockdown.

"In Primary Care we are here and listening. Most people will recover from long covid, it might take a long time but you will recover," she said.

## Friends and Family Test

There is a Friends and Family Test on our website, and it would help the Practice to have feedback on how patients feel about their Medical Centre services.

Please do leave your views. This is routinely looked at during Practice inspections.

## RBH Supports Drugs Trial



A clinical trial started this month at the RBH to test whether a drug called Almitrine can help people who are seriously ill with Covid. The Hospital is one of three centres carrying out the research on around 116 patients. The John Radcliffe in Oxford and University Hospital of Wales are also taking part in the four-week trial.

The trial team hopes that administering the drug Almitrine to Covid patients will reduce the amount of other respiratory support the patient needs.

Nicky Lloyd, Acting CEO of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, said: "This trial offers a great opportunity to supplement our increasing understanding of Covid and meet the need for new, cost-effective treatments. The RBH is a research-active hospital, which is well-placed to improve care and outcomes for our patients by taking part in collaborative research studies."

Lead researcher Professor Peter Robbins said: "The primary idea behind medical treatment is that it is supportive – its aim is to keep people alive while they make their recovery from the disease. The idea behind our trial is to enhance the supportive treatment – extend people's runway."

## Cancer Team Pioneer New Treatment

Pioneering radiotherapy technology, which will revolutionise the way some cancer patients are treated, was launched at the Berkshire Cancer Centre (BCC) this month.

Studies have shown that SABR – Stereotactic Ablative Body Radiotherapy – can be more effective than traditional radiotherapy for some cancers because it

delivers a far more powerful, targeted beam of high energy X-rays directly to a tumour. This means the tumour receives a very large dose in fewer treatments and fewer visits to the department for patients.

SABR's higher precision means the very intensive beams are targeted exactly on the tumour. Initially it will be used to treat lung cancer patients but the plan is to then roll it out to treat other appropriate cancers for which benefit has been proven.

In a separate move, BCC has become the first NHS site in the South of England to introduce Surface Guided Radiation Therapy (SGRT). This technology eliminates the need to put permanent markers, like tattoos, on a patient's body to aid treatment. SGRT halts the beam if a patient moves during radiotherapy, which means the tumour is always within the intended treatment area, and minimises the beam affecting non-cancerous surrounding tissue. There's full details here

## Stroke Pilot Rolled Out Across 39 Hospitals

High tech AI technology, which the RBH piloted last year, is now being rolled out for use by 39 hospitals across five stroke networks in England and Scotland.

The RBH was the first hospital in the Thames Valley to start using the AI software in March 2020, and last month the hospital's lead stroke consultant Dr Kiruba Nagaratnam was interviewed by The Times. Internet search *The Times Dr Kiruba Nagaratnam* for more.



The software is being used in the Emergency

Department (ED) to help clinicians quickly diagnose stroke. It analyses CT images of the brain and blood vessels immediately after the patient has a scan. It automatically highlights the area of probable damage and the blocked blood vessel. This means it acts as an expert second opinion and helps the physicians make faster treatment decisions and, where necessary, fast forwards patients to specialist centres for clot retrieval treatment.