

Transcript – 12/10/2022

[Presenter] Around 1/4 of patients at Ipswich and Colchester hospitals have tested positive for the virus. One way pressure can be eased is through older people getting their covid booster vaccinations and Suffolk is leading the country in this delivery. Another key way is through providing people with information about staying healthy and promoting well-being. Guy Campbell has been to Aldeburgh to find out how one centre there is providing both of these services to help reduce the winter pressure on the NHS.

[Dr Crockett] Today we've got about 650 people booked in, which will take us up to over a third of our total eligible patients due to be vaccinated. We've got about 4000 patients, in all, to vaccinate and we will endeavour to do that in the next few weeks and complete.

[Reporter] Dr Lindsey Crockett is from the Peninsula Practice, she's at the Old Generator Station, a community centre which has for today become a covid and flu vaccination clinic.

[Dr Crockett] We are determined to do everything in our power to keep people as well as possible through this winter. We don't quite know what to expect together with the adversity with fuel costs etcetera, as well as, you know, no longer pandemic lockdown and covid is still very much in fact on the up at the moment. So, we're doing everything possible to keep people well.

[Reporter] We have the latest figures and says that the Suffolk and North East Essex areas are out-performing every other area in England in its delivery of the of the autumn booster vaccination - you must be delighted to hear that?

[Dr Crockett] Absolutely delighted to hear that. All of our patients individually are very special to us and we are very devoted. I have a fabulous team working with me and I know that colleagues in the area likewise, we have pulled our finger out, we have used all the staff available, sleeves up, heads down and we've been working hard. And our patients have been wonderful in being flexible to be able to come to the clinics that we provide.

[Reporter] Karen French is a social prescriber here to promote well-being and to help keep people out of hospital.

[Karen French] OK, so today I've talked about mostly about, frailty, about activities that can better balance, anything to do with making people much more active, talked about wellbeing, and referrals there, benefits is a huge thing, stop smoking. All those sorts of things today.

[Reporter] Vaccinations are so important we know, but there's more to it than that, isn't there, when it when it comes to keeping older people safe during this time.

[Karen French] It's the information they'll give us to help them actually is what they'll share and often the referral will come across from the GPs with information but once we get talking to them, we do a discovery form, we find out that actually they've come over for weight loss but actually they're depressed, they don't go out, they've got nobody to take them out, transport links are quite bad as we know, and they've got no friends at the moment neither - they've lost all of that due to covid and actually covid is now frightening them from going out.

[Dr Crockett] We know that if somebody is struggling because of heating costs then they might not be keeping warm and that could lead to further illness and mental health difficulties and this is where a social prescriber can wrap around the patient and find out what matters to them, and provide them necessary sign posting or support.

[Derek] My name's Derek, I'm a member of the patient participation group, and I've just been helping the practice in delivering the vaccinations today. So, we've got four cubicles being in service, and we've been able to get quite a good throughput of people. So, before lunch have done 300 and we've got another 300 to do, but actually the waiting time's been amazingly good and often people don't even have time to sit down before they're called to get the vaccination, so I think the feedback's been very positive.

[Reporter] Vaccinations, be they very important, you've got a sort of a holistic approach to this, haven't you?

[Dr Crockett] Yeah, absolutely, we know that people's well-being includes their emotional and mental health, as well as their physical well-being and we want to offer support in all those ways. Now that doesn't just mean that a GP can be the centre of care for all those things. I think when it comes to self-care there's the immediate need, which I would call first aid, and that's the mental as well as physical wellbeing. In terms of mental and emotional wellbeing it's important to check in with ourselves every so often; so we just reflect 'how am I?' and sometimes we can overthink and become quite negative and I think it's important to make sure that that doesn't gain power, and if it does then certainly, the resources that we can offer at the surgery and signpost people to the necessary services would be the right route.

[Presenter] And that was Dr Lindsey Crockett, GP at the Peninsula Practice covering Alderton to Aldeburgh, talking to our evening reporter Guy Campbell and we will have more on this a little bit later on in the programme.