

Glendale Surgery Newsletter 2019

Receptionists - Our Day in the Surgery

The most pilloried workers in the NHS, receptionists are often targeted by patients in some areas as being the Rottweiler on the desk that they have to get past to see the doctor. We don't have that problem here and, happily, the NHS Patient Questionnaire 2019 confirms this.

The day starts with a quick prayer that the computers will work when we switch them on and won't run at tortoise pace, then we switch the phones through at 08.30 which immediately start ringing with all 4 lines flashing virtually non stop for half an hour. Most of the early calls are for appointments and then from around 9am, requests for visits, prescriptions, (we have 1245 patients on regular repeat medication), test results and general queries start coming in as well. Patients also arrive at the desk to request these services as well as to booking into the clinics from 8.30am. During this time we also deal with the online requests for repeat medication and the hospital letters and reports for patients seen out of hours which have arrived electronically and need to be processed for the doctors to see at the start of the day. The start to our day is therefore generally very busy.

When the phones quieten down a bit, normally around 10.30am, we grab a quick cup of coffee then try and do some of the paperwork. We have paperwork to complete for the new patient registrations and files to prepare for patients who are leaving the practice so their new GP can receive their records as soon as possible. The laboratory specimens are checked before the hospital van arrives to take them away at 10.30am and the van driver kindly leaves us the internal mail hospital correspondence which is sorted and left for the doctor to check alongside the external mail which the postman has dropped off. There is a full and ever increasing list of 'tasks' to keep on top of which involves contacting patients to come in for reviews with the doctors, nurse and healthcare assistant, for medicals and health checks and follow up of blood results. Next we check the home visits and get the paperwork ready for the doctors to take out with them. In the meantime, people are still arriving at the desk with various queries and any actions that we need to do from them seeing the doctor or nurse.

During this time Lauren or Meg are also working in the dispensary as well as handling the calls. We dispense for around half of our patients so its a very busy and important part of the job and our aim is to have everyone's medication ready for collection within 48 hours.

The drugs arrive twice a day and need unpacking, checking and storing on the shelves. The order for the drugs we've used that morning has to go through to the wholesaler for delivery the following day as well as an afternoon order. One really time consuming job is for patients who can't manage their medication and are on dosette boxes. These boxes have a week's worth of pills set out in daily morning, afternoon, evening and bedtime slots. We have to put each tablet in individually and two receptionists are required to do this for patient safety so we are sure that each individual section contains the appropriate pill(s).

Those of us who work in the morning go off at 1pm then Susan takes over to do her admin work in the afternoon (and she'll tell you about that in the next edition) as well as answering the phones. She or Lauren cover the evening surgery with Hazel doing the late night on Thursdays until 8pm.

All in all, we have very busy days but it keeps us out of mischief and we really enjoy the work and helping you as much as we can. We are trying to get patients with internet access to register for online services which cuts down on the telephone calls and makes it much quicker for us to deal with medication requests and you can make your own appointments too as well as view your records.

Practice Information

Regular Locum GP

Dr Stuart Child is a retired GP who works for us each Monday and also on Thursday evening from 6.30pm—8pm covering the late night surgery. We found that Mondays were becoming increasingly busy and employed Dr Child to help with the workload. He starts his surgery at 8.30am until 11am and from 2.30pm until 5pm, the different timings from normal surgery hours giving further patient choice.

Registrar—Dr Vikki Long

Dr Long joined us in August as the final part of her GP training and will work in the practice until the end of January 2020. Vikki consults each Tuesday, Thursday afternoon and Friday morning. The other part of her GP rotation is working in the palliative care unit at Wansbeck on the days that she's not here.

Flu vaccinations

2018 was a particularly bad year for cases of flu so we highly recommend that, if you are in the categories below, and therefore at increased risk, you book your appointment at the surgery to protect yourself and your family against the flu virus.

Pregnant women, severe asthma, heart/kidney or liver disease, respiratory disease such as COPD, Emphysema, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, stroke or mini stroke, neurological disease, morbidly obese, a weak immune system, carers, health workers. This includes children aged 6 months and over in one of the above categories and children aged 2 to 9 years.

This year there is again a national problem with getting supplies of flu vaccinations for the whole population. Delivery of vaccinations for patients over 65 will arrive in September and the clinics will begin on 1st October. For those under 65 with health conditions (see below) who are eligible for a flu vaccination, supplies are expected at the beginning of October and the clinics will start on 9th October.

For children eligible for the nasal flu, supplies are expected in October and appointment will be available with the practice nurse from 9th October.

Visitors to the area

During the year we have many day-trippers and people on holiday coming into the health centre thinking that we are a walk-in centre and that they can be seen without an appointment.

If you have a B&B or holiday cottage with written information for guests, or have friends or family staying with you, unless it is a 999 emergency, the best course of action is to call NHS 111 which is available 24/7 and from where they will receive appropriate advice for the problem and be directed to the most appropriate service. NHS 111 have access to our appointment system so can make appointments where necessary.

ELECTRONIC PRESCRIBING SERVICE (EPS)

For visitors who have forgotten their medication, most practices in the country now have EPS. This means they can ring their own surgery, who have all their medication details, who will send a prescription to the nearest pharmacist to where they're staying. This saves the hassle of having to try and get an appointment to fit in with their holiday plans. This also applies to our own patients when visiting other areas of the country.

New Blood Pressure self-testing machine in the waiting room

The Doctors' Fund has purchased a machine for patients to take their own blood pressure and record their height and weight. This is in the corner of the waiting room and the BP machine will print out a record of your reading to hand into reception. There are also some slips to record your height and weight and other important information to keep your records up to date. We've had a play with it and it's easy to use with simple instructions on the machine itself. Have a go, it could save you being called up for a health check.

General information

Patient Group

We are looking for patients to join our Patient Group. Members are a group of volunteer patients who meet every 3 months with the practice manager to discuss the services on offer and how improvements can be made for the benefit of patients and the practice as well as wider healthcare issues in Northumberland. Harry Wilson, our chairman, has recently been invited to sit on the Rural Advisory Committee.

We are particularly looking for involvement from teenagers, young mums and dads, people of working age and people with a disability as this would give us an overall view of the services we offer and help us, where possible, to shape our services around what you as patients need. If you're interested, give us a call or pop in for a chat or contact any of the group members.

Members of our patient group are happy to be contacted to bring anything to our attention regarding the surgery or health services in the area as a whole and are hoping to organise a regular 'surgery' so that patients can call in and have a chat.

Harry Wilson (chair)	07724 114475	email: hgew13@gmail.com
Joyce Robertson	07368 485314	email: robertsonjoyce@hotmail.com
Dorothy Madine	07497 288825	email: dorothy250354@yahoo.co.uk
Peter Bates	07775 075453	email: peterbates358@btinternet.com
Liz Veevers	07817 250149	email: liz.veevers@yahoo.com
Bronwyn Greig	via personal contact	

JMAPS (*Joint musculoskeletal and pain service*) Call : 03301 244652

This CCG contracted service started in July this year, replacing our local service in Alnwick. It removed our ability to refer patients to an orthopaedic surgeon and also removed the twice weekly physiotherapy service in Wooler. Following remonstrations from the people of Wooler, discussions were held between the CCG, the practices and both patient groups which resulted in the physio being reintroduced, albeit down to one day a week. The CCG will be monitoring the service and we would ask that patients with problems get in touch with the practice or our patient group who are liaising with Healthwatch. However, our lift is out of order and likely to be so for 2-3 months so patients with mobility problems who can't use the stairs will be offered other local services until its fixed.

Patients with back pain, sciatica, joint pain, persistent muscular pain can be referred by their GP but, better still, can self refer into the service, thereby saving a trip to see their GP. Specialist staff and physiotherapists will assess, advise and support patients to manage their condition and can directly refer to physiotherapy clinics and to orthopaedic services if appropriate.

TRAVEL CLINICS + NEW CLINIC IN BERWICK

We have a limited number of appointments with the practice nurse for patients wanting travel advice and vaccinations for going abroad. Once these appointments have been taken, you will be put on a waiting list for the next available clinic.

Patients can find out what vaccinations they need by going onto the NaTHNaC website which gives excellent advice and which is the site that the practice nurse uses herself or the .

A new MASTA travel clinic has opened at Lloyds Pharmacy at Well Close Square in Berwick for travellers to receive all the vaccinations they require. The MASTA website also gives excellent advice as to vaccinations recommended and advice for each country.

Information continued

Patient Satisfaction Questionnaires

2019 National GP Patient Survey

The results have been published and show the practice above Northumberland CCG average in all questions. The percentage of patients who describe their overall experience of the practice as good was 99% as compared to the CCG average of 84%. You can see the full results for all practices in England at <https://gp-patient.co.uk>

2019 Practice CFEP Patient Survey

The practice ran an internal patient survey during the month of June and the results showed 93% of all patient ratings were good, very good or excellent (a copy of the survey is available in the Patient Folder in the waiting room). It's good to know what we do is appreciated and we get it right more than we get it wrong!

Telephone Appointments

We offer daily telephone appointments with the doctor for patients who don't necessarily need to be seen face to face. This could be for general queries and advice, to ask about medication and for advice about ongoing problems. The doctors try and do their phone calls between 11.30 and 12 noon but it can vary if we are busy or have emergencies. If the doctor does ring you back and you aren't available to take the call, he/she will try to call you again later but it may be the following day.

SELF-HELP FACT SHEETS

We have a folder on the table in reception which gives advice on common ailments which can be used to discuss issues with your GP or to self care at home. They give details of what people can do to help themselves and when to seek medical help (the 'red flags').

Conditions included are back pain, heartburn and indigestion, fever in children, constipation, headache and migraine, eczema, coughs, acne, sprains and strains, sore throat, otitis media (earache), common cold, sinusitis and urine symptoms in men.

Visit www.selfcareforum.org for more information.

CHRISTMAS 2019

It'll be here before we know it and the shops are already getting geared up ready to start the buying frenzy.

For us, its making sure people don't run out of medication over the holidays so please remember to order your repeat medication in good time, ideally up to 2 weeks before Christmas.

We'll be closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day and open again on Friday 27th December. We expect this day to be very busy following the bank holiday so will only be accepting urgent appointments on the day for symptoms that can't wait. We won't be offering routine follow up or non-urgent appointments and we ask you to wait until the following week for these please.

We will be closed on Wednesday 1st January 2020 and, again, will only be making urgent on the day appointments on the Thursday.

If you need medical advice or help during the holidays and at weekends, please call 111 and don't wait until the surgery is open again.