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PRACTICE NEWSLETTER

The purpose of this newsletter is to develop an on-going partnership between the practice and patients to help us to continuously improve the service that we provide. We aim to produce a newsletter two to three times a year and would welcome feedback on issues/topics you would like to see included.

► PATIENT SURVEY RESULTS

Each year we carry out a patient survey to gather information on what we do well and areas for improvement. We carried out a survey in December 2004. This survey was done for us by an independent organisation (GPAQ), approved by the department of health. This organisation devises the survey and analyses the results received back from patients. We are asked to select a normal week when all doctors are here and hand out surveys randomly to any patients attending that week. The questionnaire focuses on how easy it is to access healthcare and the patient's perceptions of the healthcare provided. This is the first survey we have carried out since we fully implemented the new appointment system (advanced access) so we were very interested to see the results on access to a GP and continuity of care.

We received the results back at the beginning of February and have now discussed these within the practice and also discussed them with a non-executive director from Vale of Aylesbury Primary Care Trust. The key things we picked out from the survey are listed below:

- Overall satisfaction with the practice was scored at 79% - this is just above the GPAQ average benchmark. Until this year, participation in the survey was optional so we would expect only the more forward thinking practices would participate and so expect that the GPAQ average would be significantly above any national practice average.

We then analysed the results for Chinnor and Risborough separately to get a more detailed view of particular strengths and areas for improvement.

Chinnor:

- 84% of patients are usually seen within 2 working days, of these 74% on same day. 66% said they were normally seen on the same day and 29% didn't know/never needed to
- 64% usually get to see a particular doctor within 2 working days and only 5% felt the availability of a particular doctor was poor or very poor
- 75% of patients see their usual doctor a lot, or more of the time (often something that suffers with advanced access but seems to be fine)
- 58% of patients are seen within 10 minutes of arriving at the surgery and 95% within 20 minutes with only 2% 20-30mins and none more than 30mins
- Looking at the qualitative statements of the things that patients particularly liked about the practice, the vast majority were 'everything' or 'the doctors'
- Main problem area was satisfaction with phoning through to the practice. We installed a new phone system last year and, since the survey, have had the company back to make some changes/improvements in the way it operates.
- From the qualitative statements, the main issue for improvement was for more pre-bookable appointments

Risborough

- 86% of patients are usually seen within 2 working days, of these 81% are seen the same day. 77% said they are normally seen on the same day with 15% don't know/never needed to. Together these seem to indicate that the 'same day' appointment system seems to be functioning
- 67% usually get to see a particular doctor within 2 working days, of these 46% on the same day. Only 3% felt the availability of a particular doctor was poor/very poor.
- 77% see their usual doctor a lot or more of the time.
- 90% said that the receptionists were 'very good' or excellent (67%). The overall rating for receptionists was 92 compared with the GPAQ benchmark of 70
- Qualitative questions highlight 'reception' and 'all' as things they particularly like about the practice
- The main area for improvement was waiting time for the consultation to begin. Of those surveyed 23% usually wait for 20-30mins and 10% for over 30mins for their consultation with the GP to begin. The GPAQ report showed that this was a problem area nationally and our score was almost the same as the national score. We still feel, however, that this is a key area for improvement. Discussion was that to improve this surgery needs to start on time and run to 10min appointments. Agreed that we will monitor both of these.
- Qualitative questions highlight 'waiting time in surgery' and 'don't like day only system' as areas for improvement. Felt that some patients may still not be aware that there is an option to pre-book appointments and that this would be highlighted in the next newsletter

Actions:

- Review programming of new phone system to ensure working at optimum effectiveness
- Review appointment system and see if any changes to balance between 'day only' and 'pre-bookable' appointments required
- Highlight in next newsletter the ability to pre-book appointments
- GPs to ensure that surgeries start on time and aim for 10min consultations – monitor this
- Publish key points from the survey in the newsletter and the waiting rooms

▶ APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

One of the issues that came up on the patient survey was the appointment system. In general, the system of having mainly 'on the day' appointments seems to have now settled down well. There are still a few issues which we need to address:

- We will carry out another review of the balance between 'pre-bookable' and 'on the day appointments' to see if this needs to be changed



- Patients need to be aware that they can book pre-bookable appointments in advance if this is more convenient for them but, since there are fewer of these appointments available, they will need to wait longer for an appointment – in some cases the wait may be longer than a week
- The 'on the day' system means access to a GP, not necessarily a named GP. If your first choice GP is in surgery that day you will be able to be seen by him/her until all appointments are gone. After this you will be offered an appointment with another GP.
- Once all the appointments with all GPs have been taken, you will be booked a phone call with the GP who can often help over the phone which means that a visit to the surgery might not be necessary. Phone calls take place either in the middle of the am or pm surgery sessions (approx 10:30 to 11:00am or 5:00 to 5:30pm) or at the end of these sessions (after 12noon or 6:00pm). The receptionist will try to give you an idea of when the GP will call but, unfortunately, cannot arrange for the GP to phone back at a specific time.

▶ PRACTICE WEBSITE AND ON-LINE APPOINTMENTS

We have just developed a practice website and this can be viewed at www.wellingtonhouse.nhs.uk. This provides information on the practice, people, GP days/times and the services we offer, together with links to other sites containing useful health-related material. In addition the site can be used for the following:

- Booking and cancelling appointments on line. Any available pre-bookable appointments are listed – you can book these directly yourself on-line
- You can amend your contact details and send these to us for updating of your record
- Our software supplier, emis, are finalising software to enable you to order your repeat prescriptions on-line
- You can send messages to the practice manager – these should be related to the running of the practice rather than clinical issues. Please raise any clinical issues with your GP/practice nurse in the normal way – they do not yet have the ability to respond to clinical issues on-line

To access the website you do not need any password – just go to the site. If you want to use the on-line booking facility you first need an access id – please ask at reception and we will organise this for you.

▶ REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS

In the last newsletter, we reported on a piece of work we had done comparing ourselves with best practice on repeat prescribing and with three areas for improvement. Progress on the three areas so far:

- Whenever a patient requests a medication that is not on the repeat screen (the repeat screen contains a list of all medications that a GP has authorised can be issued regularly for a 12/15 month period) the request is passed through to the GP for a decision
- For items that are on the repeat screen, these have to be reviewed every 12/15 months. For year 2004/5, we have reviewed 97% of patients who are on 4 or more repeat medications and 85% of all patients on any repeat medication – both these exceed the national targets
- We stopped taking requests for repeat medication over the telephone as from the end August 2004. We realise that this may be more inconvenient for patients but the national prescribing centre guidelines say it is not safe practice. Please do not ask for repeat prescriptions on the telephone – it puts receptionists in a very difficult position since they have to refuse to take them. Our practice policy is that we do not take repeat prescriptions over the telephone – should a receptionist take a request as a 'favour' and a mistake occurs then this will be a difficult position to defend.

We are hoping that the ability to order repeat prescriptions on-line will be available soon.



▶ RESULTS

Where we have arranged for tests to be done, the results come back to us and we will let you know the outcome – generally blood results take a week to come back. Some confusion sometimes arises over results for tests that have been arranged by the hospital. In this case you need to call the hospital for the results, not your GP. Hospital results are usually sent through to your GP for information but, since the GP has not requested the tests they are not fully aware of all the background information/reasons for the tests etc so cannot give these results to you. Sometimes the hospital may tell you specifically to call your GP for the results but I'm afraid this is incorrect – you must ring the hospital directly.

▶ STAFF CHANGES

Since the last newsletter one of our practice nurses, Jenifer Haffenden retired after over 20 years with the practice. We would like to thank all the patients for their kind wishes and generous contributions to Jenie's leaving gift. Denise Rooney, practice nurse, has also left the practice recently since she is hoping to specialise more in family planning issues. We welcome two new members of the nursing team, Lucy Pledge, Health Care Assistant, and Kim Hopgood, Treatment Room Nurse. Both joined us towards then end of 2004 and have settled into the practice very well, working both in Chinnor and Princes Risborough. Those of you that have visited the Chinnor surgery recently will have seen a new face on reception – Lesley Pledge joined us as a new receptionist in November and is a welcome addition to the reception team.

▶ MMR CATCHUP

We have recently sent out letters to all 14-22 year olds regarding the mmr catchup campaign. The mumps outbreak at the end of 2004 led to a re-examination of the immunisations needed to provide immunity. To be effective, you need to have two doses of mmr (measles, mumps and rubella). During the original national roll out of the combined vaccine some children were missed altogether, some only had one dose and some had only some of the components of the combined vaccine. We have looked at our computer records, identified anyone concerned and written to them inviting them to attend for vaccination. Records of childhood vaccines are, however, difficult to maintain accurately since they are not always given in GP practice. If you are within the age group and think you have not had the full two courses but we have not written to you, please call us and we can check the records again.

▶ FEEDBACK

The practice works best if the doctors, patients and practice staff work together focusing on understanding what patients want and what services the practice can provide. We in the practice constantly review they way we work, looking for ways to improve the services we provide and the way we provide them but this works best if we also have input from patients. To do this we pro-actively seek your views from time to time, we have done this a couple of times recently on the new appointments system and also formally once a year via an independent patient survey but we welcome patient feedback at any time.

If you have any feedback on either the contents of this newsletter or the practice generally, please do contact the practice manager: Lesley Munro-Faure on 01844 271203.

