

Grove Road Surgery Newsletter

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Editors Comments

(Stephen Fowler, Practice Manager)



Welcome to the latest newsletter. The year is $\frac{3}{4}$ gone and I look back and just do not know where it has gone. We have lost Dr Tran from our ranks. Two doctors have lost parents in the year, staff have been admitted for operations. All in all it has certainly been a mixed year, maybe having a 13 in the year has had something to do with it. It hasn't all been bad, others staff have seen their children married and grandchildren have been born. Of course we all have Christmas to look forward to now, but that can be both good and bad for some. However, I am sure there's something of interest for everyone in this edition.

NHS 111 Service

111 has been in place 6 months. The start-up fiasco is very much a thing of the past. The 111 service should be used for any non-emergency health matters when we are closed. The 111 service can put you in contact with an out-of-hours doctor, call an ambulance for you if required, direct you to the best local medical facilities, whether this be the walk-in-centre at Eastbourne Station, a minor injuries units or hospital accident & emergency department. We encourage you to call 111 before choosing which service to use.

Dr Sue Tran



Since our last newsletter Dr Tran has now left the surgery to take up her full time position at Stone Cross Surgery. We all miss her greatly but wish her the very best

Appointment Reminder Text Messaging Service



The practice is undertaking a 3 months trial of an ' Appointment Reminder Text Messaging Service '. This trial period will commence on Monday 7th October 2013. Any patient whose mobile number is known to the practice, who has an appointment after that date, will be sent a text message reminding them of the appointment date & time. If the appointment is no longer required, the message will prompt you to respond with the word " cancel ". The appointment will then be cancelled for you. Texts will only be sent between Monday and Friday and between the hours of 8am and 6pm on those days. Those who have an appointment on Monday, will be

sent the text message on Friday. There are several other advantages to using this type of messaging service, which if the appointment trial goes well, will be looked at in the future. The trial will end early in the New Year but we will keep you updated on any changes.

Half - Day Closing Event



The next all local practices half day closing afternoon(s) are Wednesday 23rd October and Thursday 21st November. These events are for all practice staff to attend jointly organised training events. Our surgery website is now showing these dates to advise patients well in advance.

Patient Participation Group (PPG) Recruitment



We have had no responses to our latest recruitment campaign and are very keen to recruit some new blood to the group. We have more than one vacancy for the patient group, so if you want to be a voluntary member, please let us know. The group meets Wednesday mornings every 8 weeks or so here at the surgery, commencing 10:30am, meetings lasting 1½ - 2 hours.

Patient Survey



The patient survey has been prepared and agreed with the patient group. On this occasion the survey will focus upon repeat prescribing. A simple 11 question questionnaire has been created. A link to 'survey monkey' will be sent out electronically to our patients whose email address is known to the practice. The electronic group will have until the end of October to complete the survey. Only those patients who are in receipt of repeat medications are to take part. Paper questionnaires will also be attached to patients repeat prescriptions during periods of October. We are hoping to receive at least 500 returns, to ensure the results are meaningful. Results will be made available on our website and in future newsletters.

Phlebotomy Clinics

We have recently purchased a label printer for our blood bottles. As we no longer have to write patients details on each small, blood bottle, we are able to reduce the blood appointments from 10 to 5 minutes. Of course this means we can achieve twice as many blood appointments in a hour, than we could manage previously. We should now be able to perform all our blood test ourselves, thereby being totally self-sufficient in terms of blood tests. However, we do have some patients who are extremely difficult to bleed and some who prefer to attend the hospital laboratory. I can assure you that your choice will be supported.

Nurse Appointments

We are emerging from the nurses summer holidays but have also had a nurse off sick for a couple of months. From Monday 14th October we are back to a full complement of nurses but it will take a few weeks to clear any back-log and

get back to normal nursing services. We can only apologise for this inconvenience and thank you for your consideration during this obviously difficult time.

Shingles Vaccine



Once again the government has failed to deliver on what was otherwise a sensible and potentially beneficial vaccination programme. Anyone who has ever had shingles knows that this is a really painful condition, which although self limiting in terms of time period, is excruciating when suffering. The Government announced it is making available the shingles vaccine to all those aged 70 -79 years. Practices were instructed to invite patients to make a booking for the vaccination, which can also be given at the same time as the flu vaccination, so the timing was absolutely perfect. We invited our 70-79 year olds and several have booked an appointment. The downside is the government made the announcement before it had placed an order with the manufacturer. Embarrassingly, there are insufficient stocks to cope with the demand. Practices are now being restricted to 5 vaccine doses per week. Sadly we have over 50 patients already booked for the vaccination, which are now being cancelled. What a complete waste of staff time, stationery, postage, telephone calls etc. and at a time of scarce NHS resources. To compound the problem, the Government decreed practices are only to vaccinate the 70 and 79 year olds first, whilst the shortage is experienced. Why this was not the 78 & 79 year olds, as they will be the ones in their 80's before stocks are at a buoyant level, is unexplained and makes no sense. It should also be noted that 70 year olds can have it next year or the year after as some 78

or 79 year olds could ultimately miss out as they will be outside the age range before stocks are available. We are cancelling all bookings except for those aged 79 years of age, as the stocks simply are not enough to cater for anyone else. I can only apologise for this complete mess which is not of our creating.

Data Extraction

In our March / April 2013 newsletter, we carried an article entitled " Data Collection and Use ". That article explained that under the Health and Social Care (H&SC) Act 2012, the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC), an authorised body, has the right to access medical data and this will be automatically extracted from GP records. Under the terms of the H&SC Act 2012, practices are to notify patients of this data extraction. We initially notified in our newsletter of March / April 2013 and are doing so again via this publication. This is also being promulgated on our website. We have also put up posters around the surgery.

In This Edition

Page 1

Editors Comments

NHS 111 Service

Dr Sue Tran

Appointments Reminder Text Messaging Service

Half Day Closing Event

Patient Group Recruitment

Page 2

Patient Survey

Phlebotomy Clinics

Nurse Appointments

Shingles Vaccine

Data Extraction