

Abbey Medical Practice

Issue No: 1

# PATIENT PARTNERSHIP GROUP NEWSLETTER

Summer 2015

## WELCOME TO THE 'NEW LOOK' PATIENT PARTNERSHIP GROUP (PPG) NEWSLETTER.

After a long silence, your PPG Newsletter is back. Patients who have been registered with this practice for many years may remember our previous publication. It took time to put together, cost quite a lot to print – and then it sort of 'died a death'.

Happily, modern technology now allows us to resurrect the earlier concept we can now print it in-house. We hope to publish a regular Newsletter in this format from now onwards at approximately three to four month intervals.

But for newer patients enrolled with Abbey Medical Practice, you may be wondering what a Patient Participation Group actually does – so here's a brief outline about its purpose and history.

### **WHAT DOES IT DO?**



The PPG is a group of people made up of patients and medical staff with the following objective:

*"To support the Practice in delivering*

*and securing the highest quality healthcare for its patients."*

To achieve that objective, it needs people of both genders, from a diversity of ages and of other ethnic backgrounds, presenting with a variety of medical conditions.

It's only by securing a wide interest patient base that the PPG can function to full effectiveness. This is why **you** could become an important and vital part of the **Abbey Medical Practice PPG** and your input will most certainly be welcomed. NHS guidelines indicate a typical PPG should be able to muster about 1% (1 person in every 100 people) of the patients registered with the practice. In our case, we currently have some 8,000 patients registered with us and we're also growing by about 50 **new** patients every month!

Therefore, to have a PPG that is truly representative, we actually need about 80 people on the PPG! Currently your PPG panel has eight people – and we need more, many more. To achieve this, we really need people of all ages, all ethnic and cultural backgrounds and yes, all nationalities too. Clearly, as a patient, you are seriously *under*-represented at the moment and while existing PPG members do their very best to support you and your needs, there's nothing like a wider community airing their opinions and needs. 'As Evesham now has many people from Eastern Europe, their voice is extremely important. If at all possible, we'd like to issue this newsletter in Polish as well, so if any Polish speaker would be willing to volunteer as our newsletter 'translator' this will certainly to a great deal to ensure Polish patient inclusion, so who do you know?

### **HOW OFTEN DOES THE PPG MEET?**

One evening every two to three months at the Practice from 6.15pm until about 8.00pm, although there are currently a number of important issues under review and we're meeting at least monthly. As a PPG representative, you would not be expected to attend every meeting.

## HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN GOING?

The PPG first started in 1997

## WHO SERVES ON IT?



**Richard Allen**  
Business Manager



**Teresa Webb**  
Practice Manager

One of the GP's,  
quite often  
**Dr. Stephen  
Grant**

Together with:

**Brian Palmer – Chairman.** 'Prior to retirement I worked for some 30 years in Management Development in both the UK and Europe. Although originally from Birmingham, I have lived in the Evesham area for 20 years and have served as a member of the PPG for 3 years. I have been Chair of the group for 12 months and am passionate about giving patients a voice and involving as many as possible in the decision-making process surrounding healthcare.'



**Diana Cowan – Vice-Chair.** I joined our PPG at the start as I was interested in how it all worked and how our patients could be helped.

**Jenny Langley** I have been a member of our PPG for ten years. I'm just an ordinary wife and mother, having no particular qualifications apart from life itself. I have helped raise money for the Trust Fund.

**Jeanette Barnes** I have been a member of the PPG for about twelve years – shortly after my husband and I moved to the area. I was Secretary of the PPG for a couple of years and am a member of the Trust



Fund. I think the PPG is a great asset to the Practice and I have enjoyed the contact with both staff and patients.

**Alan Kain** I moved to Evesham in 2013. I have been retired for several years and before retirement I was a Sales Manager for a vehicle manufacturer. I am very pleased to be involved with the PPG and hopefully can offer substantial positive input into the group.



**Jenny Kain** I moved from Droitwich in November 2013. I am registered with Abbey Medical Practice because of its excellent reputation. I had been involved with the PPG at the Droitwich surgery and wanted to be involved again. Before I retired I worked in a Government Department as a Clerical Assistant



**Liz Macartney** I live with a rare disease and other long-term conditions. Over the years I have spent more time in hospital and doctor's waiting rooms than I like to remember. I run a national charity for people with the same rare disease as myself and part of this work is with NHS England to try to help to ensure the services that are provided are truly in the best interests of patients. Since the terrible situation at Stafford Hospital came to light, every area of the NHS has a legal duty to actively work with patients. This is why I volunteer to give a few hours of my time to the Patient Partnership Group.



**John Macartney** is the Newsletter Editor and one of Liz' two Carers. Now retired following a stroke, John is the voluntary Business & Charity Manager for the national charity that Liz created in 2012. After a career in the motor industry which saw him spending many years living abroad, John now enjoys singing church music and writes extensively on classic car matters. He has already had two books published.



## THE APPOINTMENTS SYSTEM



It seems quite a large number of people are a little confused about our Appointments System, so we'd like to explain this a little further.

Reception is open on weekdays from **8.00am** onwards for appointments that same day. This is essentially on a 'first-come-first-served' basis. However you can also make an appointment for up to four weeks ahead.

If you give us your mobile phone number and have a future appointment, or attend on a fairly regular basis, our booking system has the facility to send you a reminder as a text message and many people find this very helpful. If you'd like to use the text facility, just give your mobile number to any of the receptionists.

Of course, from time to time, people miss their appointment for a wide variety of reasons and in certain cases this is unavoidable – e.g. you tried to ring us to advise non-attendance and the line was engaged. You then decided to call back later - and forgot, so the Doctor or Nurse you were booked to see naturally could not process your need. For our part, missed appointments obviously do disrupt the system as it means another patient is denied the opportunity to see one of the team and that patient's need could be urgent.

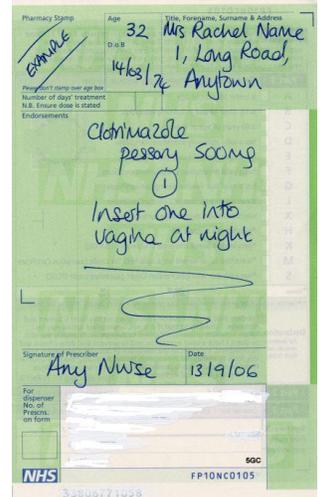
A survey we completed not so long ago for GP appointments, showed that in the course of one week, the number of missed appointments (or 'no shows') equalled the same amount of time of one Doctor sitting in his/her surgery doing nothing **for one day!** You'll surely agree this is a waste of a very costly resource so please, if you can't keep your appointment, do let us know as soon as possible. Most importantly, you could be helping another person with a truly urgent need by freeing up your 'slot'.

Finally, we've had feedback from some patients who have clearly misunderstood why we call you if you do miss your appointment. Take our word for it, the phone call is not to reprimand you for your 'no show'. The sole reasons are to check you are not ill and to ensure that you are given the opportunity to rebook your appointment if you need to do so.

All we strive to do is to be here for you and if we can assist by sending a text message to your mobile, or an SMS message to your landline, it'll help you – and us.

## PRESCRIPTIONS

The Department of Health is always under pressure to reduce costs. Periodically, this can mean that those of us on long-term medication may sometimes receive one (or more) drugs that have different packaging or perhaps the tablets may look slightly different to those that we have received before. When confronted by this situation, we might be



inclined to think the pharmacist has given us a 'cheaper' drug and that it may not have the same beneficial effect as the drug to which we've become accustomed – so a brief explanation here is necessary.

Pharmaceutical companies spend millions of pounds developing and testing new drugs. If an entirely new drug comes on the market, it's usual for the company that created it to have a period of 'exclusivity' – often several years, so it can attempt to recoup some or all of the costs spent in its development. However, at some future stage, that drug will come 'off licence' and this means other pharmaceutical companies can make that same identical drug.

In such situations, inevitably the drug will appear with different branding, in a different type of box and it may even look different. Yes, the drug may indeed be cheaper when made by other pharmaceutical companies because it's no longer 'exclusive' to the firm that originally developed it. However, if you feel that the medication is not the same type and that there may have been an error, please do not take the medication but contact immediately the place where you obtained that medication - either a Pharmacy or, if you are a dispensing patient, our Dispensary team.

While on this subject of prescriptions, have you seen the large transparent box on the table alongside the pharmacy counter? It contains a



large number of empty boxes of different drugs that have been returned to the pharmacy over the course of about two weeks by patients as “no longer required” - but ordered by them - in error.

We haven't actually costed the drugs value in that box but there are well over 100 different boxes in the display container. Bearing in mind that the current prescription charge is £8.20 per item, the notional value of items in the box is at least £820. In actual fact, its true value is probably even higher because quite a large number have a true cost to the NHS of £40 EACH – and in some cases a lot more.

In order for us to better help you, you'll really be doing us a favour to actually order the drugs you *really* need and not to (accidentally) order other drugs you no longer require.

So while the display box contents have a very high value to this practice, we do know that one national chain in Worcestershire recently managed (after much difficulty) to return drugs to its supplier that had been ordered in error that weighed in at just over **TWO TONS!** To make things even worse, those unwanted drugs had only been ordered during the course of the previous month! Again, please help us to help you in ordering the medication you really need to help avoid the additional costs incurred when you inadvertently receive something you no longer require.

### THE 24/7 DOCTOR WHO NEVER SLEEPS!



You'll be aware of recent media reports that the current government is insistent you should have access to a doctor for face-to-face appointments

out of normal surgery hours and at weekends. This obviously affects every practice in Evesham and they have all joined together under the South West Worcestershire NHS service in a new initiative that is planned for launch in the autumn.

It is proposed the new concept will work like this. If you need an urgent appointment, your first call should be to your normal surgery to determine if any appointments for that day are available up to normal closing time. In our case, it's 6.30pm.

If there is a vacant slot for you, all well and good. If however, there are no appointments available, then there is a very good chance for an appointment either later the same evening or over a weekend at the new Primary Care Access Service to be based at Evesham Community Hospital – but be aware, this is NOT the Minor Injuries Unit at the same location!

The proposed new service (which will presently exclude Bank Holidays) will be staffed by a qualified GP who will be able to access your medical record by a secure computer link. The good news is that while there is no guarantee you'll be able to see your usual GP - the GP on duty will be able to get all the necessary information from your records, which has not previously been possible'

When this service goes 'live', announcements will appear in the local press and certainly each participating surgery will promote it as well. Watch this space.

### OUR NEW PHARMACY MANAGER



Abbey Medical Practice is delighted to announce the recent appointment of Natalie Wood as our Pharmacy Manager.

In the next newsletter, we'll be running a more detailed article about Natalie and telling you more about her career this far, as well

as the ideas she has about further developing our excellent pharmacy service.

### FUTURE NEWSLETTER MATERIAL

We always need input from patients about the range of services offered by Abbey Medical Practice. If there's an issue you'd like to know more about in later newsletters, a quick note to either Teresa Webb our Practice Manager, or Richard Allen our Business Manager, will allow us to investigate your interest or query and inform you in due course of our findings.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!