

The Practice

The Stoke Road Surgery Newsletter
Delivering quality primary care



SUMMER 2012



There are some new faces joining Stoke Road Surgery!

We have some new members of staff coming to Stoke Road Surgery. The first is Dr Soden, our new partner, who replaces Dr Robinson, who retired last month. Dr Soden says "I am delighted to have been appointed as the new Partner at Stoke Road Surgery. Having qualified in 2001 and then having spent a number of years in hospital medicine, in particular 4 years in gastroenterology, I transferred to General Practice in 2009. I have lived in Gloucestershire since 2006 with my wife and now have two small children. I am very much looking forward to joining the team in August!"



The next is another face that some of you may already be familiar with, Rachel Camm. Rachel was previously working with the District Nursing team and will be joining us as a full-time Health Care Assistant (HCA). This is a new post to the surgery, to help us manage our increasing clinical demand. She has a background in the paramedic service, as well as the community nursing team, so is well placed to take up the HCA role. She has a special interest in dressings and wound management and will be managing a lot of the dressings we do in the practice.



We also have another brand new appointment, Nicola Apperley. Nicola will also be joining us as another HCA, to work alongside Rachel Jardine and Rachel Camm. Nicola was previously working in West Block Out Patients at Cheltenham General Hospital, so you may have met her there! She worked closely with Dr Slimmings in the dermatology department and comes highly recommended. We are delighted that she has chosen to work with us too.



We hope you will join us in welcoming them to the team and hope they enjoy their new venture at Stoke Road Surgery.

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Useful contacts

Appointments:
01242 672007

District Nurse:
01242 679946

Health Visitor:
08454 221388

Fax:
01242 678857

Out of Hours:
08454 220220

NHS Direct:
0845 4647

Appointment changes at Stoke Road Surgery

As mentioned in the last newsletter, we are starting to change the way we deal with requests for urgent or non routine appointments.

All our senior Nurses have undergone extra training in the management of Minor Illness and telephone triage (prioritising patients). From now on when you phone the surgery and request an urgent or non routine appointment, you are most likely to be called back by one of our



senior Nurses. They will take information from you and offer the most appropriate solution. This may be to come in the same day and see either the Doctor or the Nurse, or it might be to seek advice from the pharmacist or health visitor and so on.

The advantage of this is significant in many ways: firstly it utilises our very experienced and senior Nurses' skills to their best advantage. Secondly it frees up one of the "duty doctors" so that instead of managing telephone requests we can be offering more routine appointments.

We know this is where patients over the years have found difficulty in accessing routine appointments and we feel this is the best way of addressing this issue.

We hope you will welcome these changes and will start to see the benefit from them in the near future.

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Update of the new computer system for Stoke Road Surgery

We are aware that the move to our brand new, up-to-date clinical computer system has been more disruptive to everyone involved in the surgery (staff and patients alike) than we expected. It's been a difficult time however we would like to explain why we feel it's been worth the stress! The worst is now over and we are all getting to grips with the new way of working. At present, the benefits this system can bring to our patients will not be too apparent. These will come with time and will include; reductions in the time taken by our staff to perform routine, daily tasks (freeing up staff to spend more time answering the telephones and dealing with patients at our reception desk), better on-line communication with the surgery (ordering repeat medication, booking appointments, etc.) and faster communication with our patients through the use of e-mail and text messaging. Our new system is more tailored to the specific needs of a modern GP Surgery and we are working hard to bring together all of our various IT processes into one comprehensive, more efficient and responsive system.



Summary of patient survey results



The findings of our patient survey, carried-out earlier in the year, appear to show that what our patients rate the highest is the quality of care provided by the clinicians at the surgery and that what they rate the least is the ease of accessing that care and then the time spent waiting in the waiting room to see the clinician.

We are committed to working together with our Patient Participation Group (PPG) to address all genuine patient concerns with any aspect of the services offered by the surgery and to develop new services which can reasonably be provided at Stoke Road.

The areas we will be working on as a direct result of our patient survey and other patient feedback are;

a) Communication. We will improve the way we communicate with our patients through, for example, regular newsletters, an electronic visual patient information system in the waiting room, e-mail and text communications and promotion of the PPG as a vehicle for using patient feedback to shape the way the surgery delivers its services.

b) Access to the surgery / services. We will commission an independent assessment of patient access to the surgery by an external consultancy and work with NHS Gloucestershire and our PPG to review their findings and implement, where appropriate, any recommendations

they may be able to make to improve access. We will publish the findings and actions on our website and in this newsletter.

c) Quality of care is at the centre of everything we do at Stoke Road and any changes we implement will be done in such a way that quality of care is NOT compromised.

For more detail of the survey results, please visit our website at www.stokeroadsurgery.co.uk

Parking in Stoke Road

We have had some comments from our patients and local residents, expressing concern about cars being parked in Stoke



Road. There are worries that this is causing an obstruction to traffic due to the restricted view when travelling up and down Stoke Road as it forces drivers to drive on the wrong side of the road for a short distance.

One of our patients, who lives in Stoke Road, has informed us that she has contacted Gloucestershire Highways about this issue. Their opinion is that double yellow lines will not be placed on Stoke Road because, to date, there have been no accidents. There are strict criteria as to where double yellow lines can or cannot be placed. They will, in due course, paint white lines across the Pullar Court / Stoke Road junction, to remind people that this is a stop and give way junction.

Also the Patient Participation Group is to hold a meeting with the Highways Agency and our local councillor to discuss some of these issues.

Whilst we have no control over where people park their cars, and car parking spaces are limited, we would like to remind all our patients to park with due consideration for local residents and other road users.

Chlamydia screening

Chlamydia is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections. It affects both men and women, and is most prevalent in young people. There are usually no symptoms at all, so you do not know if you have been infected. In the long term it can cause serious pelvic infections and infertility.

However, it is easy to test for and easy to treat. There is a simple urine test for men and a self-taken swab for women (don't worry, we can show you how to do it!)

We offer confidential Chlamydia screening to all sexually active people under the age of 25. We suggest testing once a year, or after any change in partner. Please ask the doctor or nurse if you would like to have this test.



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Why are we waiting?

Have you ever sat in the waiting room and thought to yourself “why am I waiting – my appointment was 10.30am and now it is now 11.30am, I’ve been sitting here for an hour. What are they doing?!”



In this article we try to explore some of the reasons why. At Stoke Road Surgery as is common with many surgeries, your appointment is a 10min slot. This is not a particularly long time. However if we offer any longer routine appointment times, we see less patients in that same amount of time.

A routine surgery is approximately 2 ½ hours, and each doctor can see up to eighteen patients. We also offer same day / urgent contact with the Nurse or the Doctor, via a telephone triage system. The number of patients we speak to through this system can be very large, sometimes up to 50-60 calls in a morning, so it’s understandable that you may have to wait an hour or so for this call back from the Nurse or Doctor.

Regarding waiting times in the surgery, we try our best to keep to time, but sometimes it is just not that simple. Your appointment may be for something minor, such as a repeat medication or a quick review of a rash, but it might be about a complex medical issue, which takes a lot of time. Equally, if someone is very distressed, they may need some extra time to discuss their concerns. If that person was you, would you like us to rush you along and not deal with your problem properly as your 10min time was passed?

Each patient is an individual and the 10 min slot is really an approximation. Timing is not an exact science as each patient will come with their own medical issues that they want to resolve. This is one reason why we ask you not to bring multiple problems to a single consultation, as it’s not fair on you when we cannot deal with everything properly in 10mins or equally on the person waiting behind you, who is now waiting even longer!

Bank Holiday

Remember the practice will be closed for the August bank holiday, Monday 27th August.

The practice will also be closed on Thursday 26th July for staff training. We will be offering emergencies only that afternoon.

Don't forget:

Advice can also be obtained from the pharmacist or

NHS direct (0845 4647)

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Keep Safe in the Sunshine



Although it is nice to see the sun (when it finally arrives!) remember it can lead to health problems.

Sunburn: Sunburn is skin damage by UV rays. These rays make your skin red and later peel and blister. It is still possible to get sunburnt on a cloudy or breezy day. You can prevent sunburn by wearing clothing to protect against UV rays, wearing a wide-brimmed hat, having good quality sunglasses which protect against UVA and UVB, keeping babies and children out of direct sunlight, and using sunscreen with a minimum SPF15. This has to be applied generously and frequently (every 2-3 hours).

Heat exhaustion & heat stroke: This can occur when your body temperature rises to over 37 degrees C. Symptoms include hot skin which feels flushed, heavy sweating, dizziness, extreme tiredness, feeling sick, rapid heartbeat, confusion passing urine less often and it being a much darker colour. Heat stroke is more serious than heat exhaustion and occurs when your body can no longer cool itself. Heat stroke should be treated as an emergency and you should seek medical help.

You can avoid heat stroke by staying out of the sun between 11am – 3pm, applying sunscreen, wearing a hat, drinking plenty of cool drinks, taking a cold/tepid shower, avoiding extreme exertions and keeping your environment cool. Hopefully by following this advice you can have fun and stay safe in the sunshine!

Poetry Corner

Reflections of a 90 year old By Anita Harrison

As Shakespeare said in days gone by that “all the world’s a stage”

And men and women play their part which changes with each age.

From baby in its nurse’s arms to errant school boys days,
To lover, soldier, judge and then to second childhood ways,
And finally the seventh age of man draws to a close,
And Shakespeare brings the curtain down to end its sweet response.

The seventh age is feared no more as we’ve now progressed in time,

For now we have the NHS to keep us in our prime.
No longer do we end up sans teeth, sans eyes, sans all,
With spare parts and replacements readily on call.

We start along life’s journey knowing not what lies ahead,
But gather as we go along the winding path we tread.
The happiest of memories are things we can recall,
Of family and friendships the most treasured of them all.

And when we stop and wonder was it “much ado about” or was it “as you like it” in a “summers dream” no doubt.
As Shakespeare summed it up so well, this mortal coil we quit,

That “all is well that ends well” and there’s an end to it.

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A Day in the Life of.....

In this edition we review Rachel Jardine, one of our HCAs.

My work involves supporting the practice nurses and doctors and helping to make sure the surgery is kept well stocked with the enormous amount of equipment and consumables we use each day. I order everything from needles and syringes to paper towels and loo roll (yes it is my fault if we run out!)

I arrive at work quite early and check the doctors' rooms are stocked up for the day and that all the emergency equipment is working and the emergency drugs are all in date. Although I enjoy the hustle and bustle of surgery life, I have to confess, I quite like the peace and quiet of this half hour.

At 8.30am patients start to arrive and the phones begin to ring. Typically my first patient may need a blood sample taken or their blood pressure (BP) done. For a nervous patient, who does not relish a trip to the surgery, a BP may have to be taken several times to get an accurate measurement. It really is worth taking time to do this and doing a 'quick BP' is rarely achievable. Raised BP, left untreated can be harmful to health, so this is an important test. ECGs to measure heart rate and rhythm form much of my work and are frequently done if a patient has raised BP. I may have to do an emergency ECG if someone comes in to the surgery with chest pain or arrange a 24 hour heart monitor for those patients who are experiencing 'palpitations'.

In the lead-up to winter I will give flu vaccinations and I also administer many vitamin injections for patients who have a deficiency, a common but easily treated condition. Smoking cessation appointments are available to people who wish to have support to give up smoking and I see several people each week who benefit from regular contact to help them stay motivated. Giving up smoking is probably one of the most important lifestyle changes a person can make in order to improve their health.

During the afternoon there are still lots of blood tests and BPs to be taken. I carry out lots of "finger prick" tests for warfarin monitoring. Our INR* warfarin testing method is working well. I also do hearing tests for patients referred by their doctor, who feel they may require a hearing aid. If I have some time at the end of the day, I might be able to catch up on some administration, e-mails, phone calls to patients to arrange appointments and arrange servicing of some of our equipment. I can truly say that I am never in a position where I have to ponder on what job to do next! My day really does 'fly by' and two days are rarely the same. Before I know it there is only a little time to test the numerous urine samples that appear and need to be processed and sent to the laboratory. Oh, and on that note, please ask for a surgery sample pot for this – a discarded whisky miniature bottle just won't do (although it does make us smile!)



Stoke Road Surgery PPG - Chairman's Newsletter



'Steady as she goes' would be my first comment on the first six months of PPG activity. Starting off our efforts on your behalf as a part of the process could not have been more telling than responding to the results of the Patients Questionnaire Survey.

A village like Bishops Cleeve, with the planning control legal credentials of 'a sustainable settlement' is both a quality of life blessing, and an infrastructure provision practical challenge. The main challenge for Stoke Road surgery is of course in enhancing a medical provision infrastructure that is operating at full capacity.

The questionnaire survey has underlined the fair and reasonably expressed expectations and aspirations of patients. Most of all, there is real and pressing evidence that access to see or communicate with a doctor or a nurse is a priority.

Encouragingly, having secured an appointment, there is good evidence that practitioners are very much revered and appreciated.

Accordingly, point by point, the PPG has drafted and agreed a 2012 Action Plan. In July, Stoke Road Surgery has invited two PPG members to attend a planned meeting with the independent consultants who have been appointed to assist this process.

During the summer therefore, gradually, step by step, we will be working together to identify just what practical improvement measures are realistically achievable.

Going out to the local community, we hope to engage the advice of some of the younger members on how to enhance the waiting room.

At our last full committee meeting, we agreed to attempt to address the question of our younger age group profile member deficit. Our first port of call will be to see if we can recruit two parent governors of two local primary schools. The current PPG members are very gifted and possess a wide range of skills but we still have a need for some refreshing ideas and novel solutions, especially from the younger generation of patients.

The next full committee meeting of the PPG is planned for September. In the meantime, as well as the aforementioned action plan, we will be engaging in some strategic planning for the future business of the PPG.

May we invite you to contact us with any suggestions that you may have. Please address them to myself at the Surgery postal address, or by the Stoke Road Surgery web site. In this way you have the opportunity to participate and contribute to a fully inclusive planning process.

Paul Holliday
Chairman Stoke Road Surgery PPG

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