



St. Paul's Medical Centre

Patient Newsletter

Autumn 2005

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Staff News

Dr Radha

After completing her training Dr Radha left us at the end of September - we wish her well in her future employment.

Dr Sally Roberts

After a year's maternity leave Dr Roberts returned to the practice on 5th October.

Dr Marcus Rieborn

(pronounced reeborn)

Our current gp registrar joined us on Monday 3rd October for four months.

Dr Brian Scroggie

After nearly 30 years at the practice Dr Scroggie will be retiring at the end of December. All the staff and I'm sure many of you wish Brian a long and happy retirement. Any patients registered with Brian can see Dr Lawrence or any other doctor of their choice. Patients are now registered with the practice rather than an

individual doctor as in days gone by.

Dr Helen Lawrence

Following Brian's retirement Helen will be replacing him in January 2006, she will be full time working the same hours as Dr Scroggie.

Dr Ashifah Sardar

Our second gp registrar will also be leaving us at the end of December as her training period comes to an end.



Flu Season

Can you believe a year has passed and we are fast approaching winter again? Our flu clinics started on 15th October; a month later than usual due to the date of our vaccines delivery. This was due to the content of the vaccine being changed by the world health organisation thus causing a delay in production. Following this we have been restricted to the amount of vaccines that we have been allowed to have on each delivery. To add to these delays there was then a huge media spotlight on avian flu and the usual flu jabs, this caused massive demand for the vaccine. Usually we send out letters to 3000+ patients asking them to come in and we normally have to send a second or even third letter to remind people; this year we have only sent one letter and have had such a huge response and have struggled to meet the demand and at times have had to cancel appointments. The telephones have been constantly ringing and we realise some of you

have been inconvenienced by this and we do apologise, unfortunately some things were beyond our control and we did not foresee this kind of demand. The majority of people have now been vaccinated though clinics are still running and will continue to do so for a few weeks. We can only apologise for any delay in patients receiving their vaccination but unfortunately the circumstances that led to this delay were outside of our control.

CPN Clinic for Elderly Patients

We have a new service just started; two community psychiatric nurses (CPN's) are running a clinic once a week on a Thursday at Arnside House for patients over 65 who have anxiety, low mood, memory problems or other mental health issues. If you or someone you know would benefit from this service please discuss with your doctor or nurse who will pass your/their details on for an appointment.

New Patients

You may recall past newsletters mentioning the amount of new patients we have had to take on. This has had a big impact on the appointments system and other resources within the practice. We now have over 14,000 patients registered with us.

At St Pauls we value the service we offer our patients and want to

continually improve and maintain standards. Therefore we will not be accepting any new patients unless they have not got a gp and have moved into the Arnside House Surgery area and wish to be seen there.



Hospital Transport

The ambulance service is currently reviewing the eligibility of patients who are using the service and have given us the following information

CUMBRIA AMBULANCE SERVICE

Eligibility criteria for non-emergency patient transport to hospital

Patients are primarily responsible for arranging their own transport to and from hospital for appointments and non-emergency admissions. Non-emergency patient transport is not a right except where the circumstances clearly meet the eligibility criteria. The following decision-tree assists users of the service in deciding whether or not a patient is eligible for transport by Cumbria Ambulance Service.

Note that financial hardship does not of itself confer eligibility for Ambulance Service transport; however patients who believe they cannot afford to pay for transport they need should be advised to apply for assistance under the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme.

To be eligible for hospital transport patients clinical condition is such that they require ambulance service skills

and/or vehicle to travel safely or that using public transport would be detrimental to their condition and they do not have a friend or relative to transport them. If you are well enough to travel with a friend or relative or can use the public transport system please do not use the hospital transport service.

Patient Forum

St Pauls recently held its first ever patient forum; a meeting where patients are invited to discuss topics and issues related to health and practice services with members of the practice team. Patients were selected at random from various age groups and invited to come along, although only three out of the twelve invited attended it was a very useful and productive meeting. Two of the items discussed were mentioned in the last newsletter; they are covered in more detail below. The forum will meet quarterly and the staff from the surgery will change around to ensure a variety of people and discussions.

If you wish to participate in the group please write to Tracey Scott, our Practice Manager at the St Pauls Surgery.



Visual Information Service

The patients wanted to be kept up to date with events and information related to

health and the practice. We are currently gathering information and planning how we will do this. It's likely there will be screens in the waiting areas displaying information, probably from early 2006.



The Telephone System

The patients felt that the current system failed as there were times when the 'phone constantly rang and it seemed as though no one was there or answering it. The general feeling was against an 'auto attendant' system - press one for this or two for that etc but they did want to be given a message so that they knew that there was actually someone there.

We have now upgraded our system so that after so many rings a message will cut in to tell you that the operators are busy but you will be dealt with as soon as possible, you will continue to get a message until the call has been answered. Please note that the ring tone will change as a result of this new messaging system.

Added to that here are a few tips that might help when calling;

Please avoid calling on a Monday unless your call needs to be dealt with that day as this is the busiest day of the week. Other peak times are 8.00-9.00am 12.00-2.00 and 5.00-6.30; during these times there may be reduced staff taking

calls so you can expect delays. The automated prescription line is available 24hrs a day 365 days a year on 616666 - please note prescriptions take **two working days** (Mon-Fri not including Bank Holidays) to process so allow plenty of time particularly around the weekend.

NHS direct is available 24hrs a day also on 0845 46 47 for healthcare advice.

You may not be aware but local pharmacists can also advise on a variety of medical issues.

Choose and Book Service

This was raised as an item to be discussed at the next patient forum. It will affect many people and has its pros and cons and may not be to everyone's liking but it is happening throughout the country.

This was also mentioned in the last newsletter and will be gradually introduced over the next few months and years. The idea is to allow patients greater choice of hospitals for treatments and referrals.

One of our own doctors Dr J Bone recently obtained a Diploma to become a gp specialist in ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat) he has been working up at the infirmary alongside the consultants up there but will now be running a clinic himself with the help of Nurse Linda Briody at our Arnside House surgery. As it is through choose and book our own patients have to be referred through this system to him and he will also see patients from other surgeries. At present this is just on a Tuesday morning but it is likely this will become a full

day clinic - this obviously will impact on his surgeries and his availability will reduce.

Dr Richard Barnsley is also becoming a gp specialist in the Ophthalmology (eyes) dept alongside his diabetic clinics, he currently works up at the hospital and he too will be running his own clinic through the choose and book service at our Arnside House surgery. This clinic has not been set up so the day has not been arranged so far. Again this may well impact on his appointments availability too.

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service, also known as

PALS, is an information service run by the NHS for patients, carers and their families to access when they need advice have concerns or don't know where to turn to.

PALS can help:

- sort out problems on peoples behalf.
- listen to concerns, suggestions, and queries.
- provide information on NHS services.
- advise and support patients, their families and carers

Claire Unwin, Patient Advice and Liaison coordinator with Carlisle and District and Eden Valley Primary Care Trust comments: "PALS is currently extending its services into the community and is delighted to offer advice and support for patients, relative and carers in this area".

If anyone would like to contact PALS please phone:

01228 603537, email: pals.pct@ncumbria.nhs.uk or alternatively write to PALS, 4 Wavell Drive, Rosehill, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 2SE.



Dentist Availability

We often have requests from patients wanting to be seen with a dental appointment - usually due either a shortage of appointments or not having a dentist. For your information the following service has been set up Dental Direct tel 603900. This service provides information about dental registration and how to access emergency dental treatment. It is open Mon-Fri 9.00-21.00 & 18.00-21.00 Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays.

Training Afternoons

Once a month each practice can if it chooses close for an afternoon for staff training. This is usually a Tuesday, Wednesday or a Thursday and the afternoon is covered by CueDoc. Arnside is closed all afternoon and St Pauls is closed 1.00-5.00; there are some months we do not close due to staff shortages.



Christmas & New Year Opening

Both surgeries will be open in the morning on Friday 23rd December for urgent appointments only; St Pauls

will operate an emergency service in the afternoon. Then both surgeries will be closed until Wednesday 28th December.

During the holidays CueDoc will be available on Carlisle 401999.

The surgeries will also be closed on Monday 2nd January re-opening as normal on Tuesday 3rd January.

When ordering repeat prescriptions please allow extra time during this period.

*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to all of our patients
Let's hope 2006 is a good one!*