

Ecclesfield Group Practice

Newsletter June 2008

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"We are extremely pleased with our achievements"

Foreword

Welcome to our practice newsletter aimed at informing you about recent developments at the practice. The past few months have been an extremely busy period for us and hopefully, our patients will now begin to see the benefits of the changes we have recently made.

Lloyds Pharmacy

Many will be aware that our on site pharmacy is now complete and opened on 6th May 2008. We would like to thank patients for their co-operation throughout the build period, particularly with regards to the car-park disruption. We hope patients will now benefit from the alterations to the car park and also from having a pharmacy attached to us. In the coming months we will be looking into ways in which we can enhance our repeat medication process and maximise the potential of having a pharmacy on-site.

Quality and Outcome Framework

You will possibly be aware that over the past 4-years the practice has been part of an assessment Framework, aimed at scoring the achievement of the practice both clinically and organisationally. We have never updated patients on our progress. Our results are as follows: -

- 2004/5 (1002 points out of 1050)
- 2005/6 (1036 points out of 1050)
- 2006/7 (984 points out of 1000)
- 2007/8 (978 points out of 1000)

As such, we are extremely pleased with our achievements.

Patient Opinions

Patient opinions and contributions are always welcome at the practice via the practice manager. Many will recall the changes we made last autumn as a result of our practice survey regarding access to services, appointment availability, telephone access to a GP and our extended opening hours over lunchtimes and early evening. We continue to make changes to the way we offer services and welcome patient involvement in this process. In the coming months the practice will be looking to set-up a patient and public involvement group and would be pleased to hear from anyone who might be interested in becoming involved?

"We continue to make changes to the way we offer services and welcome patient involvement"

Extended Hours

Many of you will have heard in the press since late 2007 that the Government is keen on extending opening hours to GP practices based on patient opinions. Unfortunately, what is often omitted from the debate is that practices are being expected to implement these changes with no extra resources. General practice has had no increase in budgets for the past 3-years and at times, we struggle to meet these increasing expectations.

In our most recent practice survey, 76% of our population said they were happy with our current opening hours with 33% suggesting that no alterations to opening hours were necessary. However, when asked what other opening hours would you welcome 56% of our population said they would appreciate either later evening or weekend opening and the Government is intent on ensuring general practice do this. We are not necessarily of the opinion that this will increase clinical effectiveness, but as a practice we are happy to make changes that may be welcomed by patients.

3-years ago the Government gave practices the choice as to whether or not they wanted to opt out of providing Out-of-Hours services. Those opting out had their budgets cut accordingly, yet are now being asked to re-open for additional hours, with no extra income. In fact, we stand to lose a substantial amount of income if we do not extend our opening hours.

Whilst we are unhappy about this imposition, the practice is of the opinion that given our survey results, many patients would welcome some additional opening. As such, we have begun offering a Saturday morning service from 3rd May at our Ecclesfield site. This is a non-urgent/pre-book-able service primarily aimed at those patients who find it difficult to attend during hours in which they may work or for patients who require a carer to bring them to surgery. **The service is available for Margetson patients, but again, they will need to pre-book appointments and attend at Ecclesfield.**



Health Care Assistant (HCA) & Phlebotomy

Many will be aware that unfortunately, shortly after the turn of the year we lost both our phlebotomists in quick succession. This has created a difficult period for the practice and patients alike in terms of blood appointments whilst we have tried to find some short-term cover. We again apologise for any inconvenience caused, but we are pleased to announce the arrival of Diane Appleton as HCA and Claire Grierson as Phlebotomist. Claire will provide a phlebotomy service at both sites, whilst Diane in addition to her phlebotomy service will also offer new patient checks, height & weight measurements, blood pressure management and spirometry. Patients are reminded that it is not always necessary to see a GP and are reminded to ask staff if they feel their health matter could be dealt with by our Health Care Assistant. Diane is also now our practice contact for those wanting advice on 'How to stop smoking.'



Integrated Practice Team

For many years now the practice has employed staff dedicated at each of our practice sites. As we move the practice forward, many of our reception staff will in future be seen working at both our sites and we are keen to promote integrated working to all of our patients, regardless of whether this be our Ecclesfield or Margetson site.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind patients that Margetson is a branch of Ecclesfield Group Practice, not a separate surgery.

Communications

Can we ask that patients do their best to update the practice with changes to any personal information, particularly address and telephone numbers? Many of our patient records have out of date information which causes us difficulties when trying to contact you. We have slips in the practice to hand into reception and you can also do this electronically via the practice website. We have also attached a tear off slip to this newsletter if you would like to complete this and return it to the surgery.

We are also keen to try and increase patient communications via our website, particularly with updates, newsletters and practice leaflets, so please do let us also have your e-mail address, if you so wish, in order that we can send any relevant information to you electronically.



Patient Details

Name: _____

Address: _____ Postcode: _____

Household Members (Please List) _____ / _____
_____ / _____

Contact Numbers

Tel No: _____ Work No: _____ Mobile No: _____

Next of Kin: _____ Next of Kin Contact Number: _____

Ecclesfield Group Practice

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Please return this form to the surgery. Thank you