

# THE ARLINGTON ROAD MEDICAL PRACTICE NEWSLETTER



July - August 2017



## *New Telephone System*



**W**e are having a new Telephone System installed in July/August. Phase one will take place on 17<sup>th</sup> July, when all the hardware will be replaced and should not affect patient's access to the Practice, except for a few minutes during the lunch hour. Phase 2 will take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> August, when our telephone lines will change from the current ISDN2 lines to modern SIP lines (internet based telephony). Our new telephone provider, is confident that downtime will be kept to an absolute minimum (minutes not hours!), and we have chosen an afternoon when the Practice will be closed for Staff Training.

Some of the benefits of the new system will include...

- An extra option on the main menu (both in and out of hours) to cancel an appointment. This will take you to a voicemail where you can leave your name, dob and details of your appointment. The voicemail will be checked regularly and your appointment cancelled by a receptionist
- After pressing any option from the main menu you will be told where you are in the queue.
- A new option on the main menu to book or change an appointment. This will mean you will queue directly to speak to the appointment line without first speaking to the switchboard operator and needing to be transferred. This should make getting through to appointments line quicker and keep the switchboard more available to deal with other calls.
- We have added some additional phone lines dedicated to outgoing calls to ensure that when we make calls we are not blocking the incoming lines, keeping them free for patients dialling into the Surgery.
- From 22<sup>nd</sup> August all of our calls will be recorded for training and quality purposes. This will be announced each time you call the surgery on the main menu.

Patients sometimes complain that the recorded message you hear when they first phone the Surgery is too long. However, we hope that you will understand that by adding extra options for you to select, this will benefit all service users in helping us to better streamline and manage our calls.



## *Forthcoming Surgery Closures*

We will be closed for Staff Training...

Between **1.45 & 5.00pm on Thursday 27th July & Tuesday 22nd August**

Should you require urgent treatment or advice during the **above** Staff Training Events, please telephone 727531.

**Monday 28th August - Closed**

If you require urgent treatment or advice over the **Bank Holiday Weekend**, dial 111.



## SMS Appointment Reminder Service



Many of you will have already benefited from our new SMS appointment reminder service. For those of you who are not familiar with the service, this is a free text messaging service that sends all patients, who have registered a mobile telephone number with us, a confirmation of their appointment and then a reminder of their appointment 1 day prior to their appointment. This also gives the patient an opportunity to cancel the appointment if they no longer require it. To cancel the appointment, simply reply CANCEL (texts will be charged at your usual network rate). Please do not include any other text in the reply as this will prevent the appointment being automatically cancelled from our system. **To benefit from the service, please ensure that you have given us your current mobile telephone number.**

The other benefit of the text messaging service is the ability to remind patients of, and give them the opportunity to complete, the Friends and Family Test. We are very grateful for the feedback we have received. Please note that any reply you send is limited to 160 characters. If you exceed this number the message will be truncated and we will only receive part of your message.

### Wasted Appointments

We were pleased to find the SMS Appointment Reminder Service had had a positive effect on the number of appointments patients had failed to attend in May. However, we would like to see this improve further and were disappointed to see that numbers had risen slightly again in June.

Please do have the courtesy to cancel appointments that you no longer need. Appointments are in high demand and it is very frustrating to see so many wasted appointments that could have been given to other patients in need.

Appointments can be cancelled in the following ways...

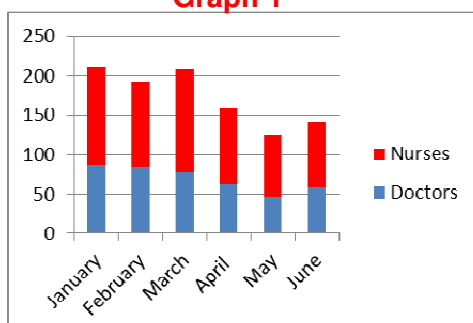
- Calling the Surgery and speaking to the receptionist
- Replying CANCEL to your SMS Appointment Reminder
- Logging onto your Patient Online Services Account
- Calling the Surgery and selecting the Cancellation Line Voicemail option (from mid July)

Please note the latter 3 options can be done at any time of day or night, the Surgery does not need to be open to utilise these options.

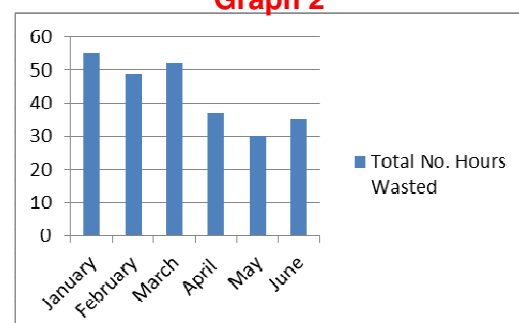
**Graph 1** shows the number of missed appointments for the first 6 months of the year. We started using the Appointment Reminder Service in late April.

**Graph 2** shows the numbers of hours of wasted consultation time this equates to. Some special GP appointments and many of the Nurses appointments are longer than an average 10 minute appointment – some of them can be 30 minutes.

**Graph 1**



**Graph 2**



## *Kieran - Paramedic Practitioner*

In May Kieran Cambell, Paramedic Practitioner, joined Arlington Road as a permanent member of the clinical team. Kieran is a great asset to the Surgery and works alongside our Doctors, providing appointments, visiting housebound patients and triaging some of our urgent calls.



To ensure you are booked in with the most appropriate clinician, and to enable us to safely and effectively prioritise calls and appointment requests, our receptionists may ask for a brief idea of the reason for your call.

In addition to Kieran we also have Paramedic, Adam Healey with us from 12<sup>th</sup> June for 8 weeks on a Paramedic Practitioner Placement. Adam is a fully qualified Paramedic who is currently undergoing training to become a Paramedic Practitioner to enable him to take on a role similar to Kieran in General Practice.

## *New Nurses*

Following Sue Kitchener's retirement at the end of April (featured in our March/April Newsletter) we have recruited two new members to the Practice Nursing Team.



Nicole Cunningham is a Treatment Room Nurse working one morning and four afternoons per week.

Jane Mackley is a Phlebotomist, working three mornings per week. We welcome them both to the team.

## *Dr Lofts Sabbatical*

Dr Lofts is currently on 3 months sabbatical leave (returning at the beginning of September).

During her absence her patients are being looked after by Dr Celine Inglis who is working Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays until Dr Lofts' return.

## *Registrar Comings & Goings*

Dr Jenani (ST3) has now passed all of her exams and finishes her training with us on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> July.

We are delighted to announce that after a short break, she will be joining the Practice in the Autumn two days per week as a Salaried GP

Dr Louise Christou (FY2) finishes her four month placement with us on 2nd August and returns to Hospital Medicine. We wish her well in her future career.

Dr Denise Gosling (ST3) joins us for 12 months on 2nd August under the supervision of Dr Mark Jones.

## *Beat the Heat*



**Looking after yourself  
and others during hot  
weather**

Whilst we hope for warm weather during the Summer months, it is important that we all take steps to look after ourselves and the wellbeing of others around us, especially the elderly and vulnerable and those with long term medical conditions.

Heatstroke can be fatal and here in England, where we are less acclimatised and adapted to living in a hot climate, people can quickly become seriously ill.

Continued overleaf...

**F**or top tips on measures you can take to keep yourself and others around you well and symptoms to look out for, read the [Beat the heat: Staying Safe in Hot Weather Leaflet](#), produced by Public Health and check out the [Keep Cool at Home Checklist](#).

**T**hese leaflets are both available on our website under 'Latest News' and include advice on how to look after yourself, including listening to the weather forecast and planning ahead, drinking plenty of water and avoiding caffeine and alcohol, dressing appropriately, slowing down and avoiding heavy activity, knowing how to keep your home cool, symptoms to look out for and how to get help.

For more information visit [www.nhs.uk/heatwave](http://www.nhs.uk/heatwave).

## *MenACWY Vaccine*

**W**e are writing to invite all patients who were born between 1.1.98 - 31.8.99 to come to the surgery for the MenACWY vaccine. This vaccine helps protect against meningococcal disease which can cause meningitis (inflammation of the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning). These can kill in hours and those who recover may be left severely disabled.

**S**ince 2009, there has been a large increase in group W meningococcal (MenW) disease in England, resulting in several deaths in teenagers. Older teenagers and young adults who are not vaccinated are at risk of getting MenW disease, so being vaccinated will protect against this. Vaccination helps protect those vaccinated and others around them. The vaccination is free.

**T**his age group is targeted as they may soon be off to university and it is advisable to have the vaccination before leaving to go to University.

**P**lease note, patients aged up to 25 years old who have not previously been vaccinated with MEN ACWY vaccine are also eligible to be vaccinated.

**P**lease contact the surgery today on 01323 727531 and book an appointment with the Practice Nurse to arrange vaccination against this serious disease.

## *Prescription Process Time*

**W**e aim to turn around routine prescription requests in 48 hours. Please note this does not include the time it will take for your chosen pharmacy to dispense your medication.

**I**f you have nominated a pharmacy to collect your prescription on your behalf, this will be ready for [them to collect from us](#) after 48 hours. The pharmacy may then require a [further 48 hours](#) to dispense/deliver your medication. Please consider this when allowing enough time to order your medication.

## *Arlington Road Pharmacy*

**F**rom Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July the Pharmacy will be operating under a new contract with reduced opening hours. Their new opening hours will be...

<b>Monday - Friday</b>	<b>08:30 - 18:30</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>09:00 - 13:00</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Closed</b>



*Thank you!*

**A** big thank you to one of our patients who has kindly planted & tends to the geraniums which brighten up our front flower bed!



## *Firearms Licensing*

If you apply to the Police for a Firearms License, your GP will be contacted by the Police who will request general medical information and ask the GP if they have “concerns” regarding the issuing of a firearms license. If the Police do not receive a response from the GP within 21 days, they will draw the inference that the GP has no concerns.

The Police do not offer a fee to the GP for the report, which they have no contractual obligation to complete without a fee.

GPs can decline to provide a report because they have a conscientious objection to the holding of firearms. Our conscientious objectors are Drs Lofts, Davison and McFadden.

All other GPs in the Practice will complete the report if the applicant is willing to pay the fee. In this case a reply will be sent back to the Police informing them they will receive the report once we have received the fee from the applicant. This will ensure that the delay arising from requesting and receiving a fee from the applicant cannot be misconstrued as the GP not having any concerns about the applicant possessing a Firearm.



# ***THE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP NEWSLETTER***



**July 2017**

If you have visited the practice recently, you may have noticed posters and leaflets on the tables about reducing the amount of unused medicines.

It is estimated that unused medicines cost the NHS over £300 million a year. Obviously too much time and money is being wasted on the supply and disposal of these unused prescription medicines. Just imagine what this money could be used for:

- More hip and knee replacements.
- Better drug treatment for cancer and Alzheimer's patients
- Recruitment of more community nurses.
- More scanning equipment.

The list is extensive, but there are many ways in which you can help reduce this waste of money. For example:

- Think carefully before using your repeat prescription form.
- Only order those medicine you really need.
- Let your GP and your Pharmacist know if you have stopped taking any of your medicines.
- If you are looking after an elderly relative, check that he/she is taking the correct medicine at the correct time and are not stockpiling medicines.

If you have any further questions about reducing the amount of unused prescriptions, please have a word with your GP, practice nurse or Pharmacist.