



Three Shires Medical Practice Newsletter

Spring 2024

Practice Newsletter



Dear Three Shires patients,

I was hoping to write about the current hot topics circulating in the media including the BAFTA appearance of Michael J Fox! He had been diagnosed with early Parkinson's disease in 1991, age 29 and has supported the research into the condition. His documentary Still: A Michael J. Fox Movie is an absolute must to watch, if you are a fan of his or are interested in how the condition affects the human body. It is unforgettable and may give you more insight about people with Parkinson's disease living in our community.

I however must share with you some sobering information about the uncertain future of the NHS General Practice, so you are aware what is currently happening to the GP Practices in the UK. To a huge degree you have been sheltered from this, mainly due to the excellent Practice Staff team and the Partnership of the Three Shires and Dr Greenway at its helm, who made your care their utmost priority and repeatedly went above and beyond to help. You would have heard from friends or relatives registered elsewhere, how things may not be going so well. You would have certainly read articles in the newspapers/online about tragic cases where lives were lost, some due to lack of service provision and articles about closures of practices and pressure on GP services in primary care.

We sincerely hope that the year 2024 will bring some positive changes for General Practice and the NHS UK. It has become harder and nearly impossible to maintain the current status quo, given how squeezed the services have been for a very long time now. With cost-of-living increases, alongside concerns of inadequacy of forthcoming proposed funding, this is likely to affect services and impact on staff retention. Worryingly, we are currently hearing about a real threat of closures of more GP practices in the UK this year.

Our Practice Teams have been working very hard trying to provide care for the ever-increasing number of patient contacts and administrative tasks from other organisations including community services and hospitals (secondary care). **Your Practice Staff Team** is what we need to function and provide your care. **A Practice Team** that knows you, can help to navigate your journey well, given the current 'rocky road' of NHS care.

Your Practice Team is what you need to access care. **Stable Practice Teams** and continuity of care improves your care undoubtedly.

Here are some statistics for one week in February:

Our receptionists took 2,180 incoming calls.

Our clinicians dealt with 1,774 contacts and 1,300 booked appointments.

Please think before you pick up the phone and call with your enquiry. Explore other services around you, so when you really need our help, we can answer that call and have capacity to help you.

The Thread by Dr Steve Taylor @DrSteveTaylor from 14th February provides a good insight for patients into what is happening around them.

[Thread by @DrSteveTaylor on Thread Reader App – Thread Reader App](#)

1.4million people a day have an appointment with GP practices which is up 200,000 appointments a day from 2019.

Katie Bramall-Steiner, our fellow GP colleague and GPC Chair shared some eye-opening NHS statistics you may find interesting:

Since 2015:

Over 1000 NHS GP practices gone

Over 2000 GPs gone

Over six million more patients on the books

Equivalent of 1:2 population seen EACH month

Four hundred million consultations per annum

7-8% of NHS funding for GP Practice work

5% of all NHS staff working in GP Practices.

[GP patients likely to suffer unless Government improves inadequate GP contract offer, warns BMA - BMA media centre - BMA](#)

The Kings Fund report, Making Care Closer to Home a Reality (February 2024) shows in 2023 56% of NHS activity comes from GP practices; add community health services that rises to 69% all for 8% of NHS funding!!

We have shared how difficult things have become with the Practice Patient Participation Group at the recent PPG meeting. Thank you for your ongoing support. Now it is more important than ever before, that your voices are heard via your local MPs to raise these issues now that they are so close to your home and affect change. Please help us, so we can continue looking after you.

Our staff working at our four surgery sites have been working tirelessly and very hard to help provide access to care for you all under very difficult circumstances. They take pride in their job and remain committed and hopeful that their hard work will be recognised in the months to come.

Thank you to all who have been kind and courteous on the phone or face to face. Abuse of NHS staff has risen significantly in the recent years, and we appreciate your kindness.

I do not wish to end on such a negative note and would like to emphasise that we will try to keep the spirits up and do our utmost best to continue to work tirelessly for our community as long as it is possible to do so.

Wishing you a good Easter with hopefully lovely sunny weather. Please try to balance the overload of chocolate Easter eggs with exercise and all the rainbow colour vegetables on your plate.

Best wishes,

Dr Dana Parr

Partner

Member of Parliament Contact Details

Our two MP's that currently cover most of our Practice area are Luke Hall (Thornbury and Yate which includes three of our surgery sites) and James Gray (North Wiltshire). Both can be contacted at the House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA. Luke Hall's constituency office is at 26, High Street Chipping Sodbury BS37 6AH.

Staff Update at December 2023

We said good-bye to Rebecca Loughlan and Lizzie White receptionists.

We also said farewell to Rachel Legg, Practice Nurse based at Colerne Surgery after 20 years with the Practice and wish her a very happy retirement.

Easter Opening Arrangements

All four Practice surgeries will be closed on Friday 29th March and Monday 1st April. Please ensure that you collect any prescriptions, by the end of the day on Wednesday 27th March, and order medication by Friday 22nd March if needed before Easter.

Please telephone 111, if you need a doctor over the Easter holidays.

The Memory Café

Our local memory café continues to meet from 2pm to 4pm on the first Thursday of each month at Doynton Village Hall. It is a relaxed informal free drop in café providing support for people living with a dementia along with a family member, carer, or friend. Various activities are offered along with refreshments, friendly faces, some singing and a monthly theme. For example, in the coming months, themes include, animals, the 50's, 60's and 70's, holidays and musicals. For more information, please call or text 0781 731 1001.

Patient Participation Group

Your Patient Participation Group (PPG) continues to meet quarterly, and we are in the process of compiling the results of the patient survey that we published with the Autumn newsletter. Thank you to everyone who sent in a completed survey form.

Members of the PPG are all volunteers and are all registered patients with Three Shires Medical Practice. We are keen now to invite new members on to the PPG.

Our role is to act as a critical friend to the Practice, advising on patient views and issues (hence we now have Marshfield based vaccination sessions), encouraging and participating in the development of support services (the memory café and the bereavement group) and seeking patient views, (hence the survey). We do not deal with complaints as these are picked up by the Practice Complaints Procedure.

Would you be interested in joining the PPG? We meet quarterly in person or on Zoom. Please contact us either on our email 4patientparticipation@gmail.com or call Mike on 07808020745.

Why Do Receptionists Ask Me so Many Questions when I ask for an Appointment?

In our surgeries, our receptionists ask patients to give them an idea of the problem so that they can help navigate the best pathway for you through the various services and clinicians that are available today. They are doing this at the request of our GP partners and are bound by the same rules of confidentiality that apply to all our clinical and non-clinical staff. A brief description can really help to ensure you see the right person and make the Practice run efficiently and smoothly.

Staff at Three Shires that You Might Encounter

Advanced Nurse Practitioners

Working alongside our GPs, they undertake clinical examinations, diagnose, and prescribe, order blood tests, refer to hospital doctors for further investigation, undertake medication reviews and support people living with long term conditions. They receive support from our doctors who can always offer advice if that is needed. They can often be seen at short notice and are an effective and positive first point of contact.

Clinical Pharmacists

Highly trained specialists in medicines, they work with the Practice team to ensure medicines are prescribed safely. They can prescribe and give expert advice on medicines and medical conditions. They can:

- Undertake medication reviews, explain what medicines are for, check they work as intended, and ensure necessary blood tests are carried out,
- discuss side effects of medication and if needed, find solutions,
- explain any changes in medication following a hospital admission.

First Contact Physiotherapist

They do exactly what you would expect from a hospital-based physiotherapist. They are excellent for problems with muscles, bones and joints and can give advice on rehabilitation.

Care Coordinators

Acting as a central point of contact for those who may need extra support, care coordinators can help you navigate what has become a broader, but sometimes confusing, primary care system.

Social Prescribers

Increasingly we are aware of the impact lifestyle can have on physical and mental ill health. Social prescribers connect people with practical, emotional, and social support, along with advice on issues that may affect an individual's wellbeing such as housing and debt.

Carers Leave Act 2023

One in seven people in any workplace will be a carer, which is someone supporting an older, disabled or seriously ill family member or friend who could not manage without that support. Millions of carers juggle unpaid caring with work. A significant number of carers decide to give up working or reduce their hours each month as they try to cope with the pressures of working and caring.

The Carers Leave Act introduces a new and flexible entitlement to one week's unpaid leave each year for employees providing and/or arranging care for a relative or dependent. It applies from the first day of an employee's employment and allows employees to take leave for planned and foreseen caring commitments. The Carers Leave Act 2003 comes into force on 6th April 2024.

Well Done Wick School!

Dr Bhatia was delighted to be invited to Wick Church of England Primary School to explore with students, ways of nurturing our health and wellbeing. In the photos kindly shared, the students are seen learning all about heart health. Together they explored the science of how our cardiovascular systems (heart, blood vessels) work. They also learned how living well with regular daylight, exercise, healthy eating, feeling connected and managing stress can bring out our best!



Sometimes things do not go so well so they also discussed signs and symptoms of disease, what to do if someone has a heart attack and how to use a defibrillator.

"The students and staff did so well, I cannot wait for our next session on how to design a healthy day" says Dr Bhatia.

(Wick C of E primary school has given us permission to use these photos with this article.)

The Measles Outbreak

Since early January there have been outbreaks of measles, particularly in the West Midlands and the London areas. Since then, there has been increased evidence around the UK of a rise in the numbers of children suffering with measles and there has been considerable publicity encouraging parents to ensure that their children are fully vaccinated.

Measles spreads very quickly and easily among children who are unvaccinated, particularly in schools and nurseries. It can be a very unpleasant illness and for some children, it can be very serious; as many as 1:5 unvaccinated children require hospital care.

The vaccine prevents measles and all associated potential risks, so if you are not sure whether you or your child have had the recommended vaccine doses, then please check with the Practice. There is no upper age limit for vaccination so if you have missed out earlier in life, now is the time for vaccination protection. **The vaccine is free, and it is safe.**

Managing Dementia

In our winter 2020 newsletter we featured an article "Are You Worried about Your Memory". Since then, in our Practice, we have seen the development of a Memory Café which meets monthly in Doynton.

There are several different types of dementia, the most common of which being Alzheimer's Disease and vascular dementia. For people living with a dementia and their carers / families and friends there are constant financial, legal, health, care, and welfare challenges.

Benefit information can be found on the Department of Work and Pensions website, www.gov.uk/dwp or telephone 0800 121 4433. The Local Citizens Advice Bureaux and a variety of local organisations such as the local Alzheimer's Society, Age UK or Carers Support Centre can also advise. Thinking ahead, it is a good idea to consider making a will if you have not already done so as well as setting up Lasting Powers of Attorney for both health and welfare and property and financial affairs. www.gov.uk/office-of-public-guardian or telephone 0300 456 0300 for more information. There is a fee charged for each LPA.

The NHS offers a range of support services and social care services can be offered by your local Council; in South Gloucestershire contact 01454 868007, in Wiltshire 0300 456 0111 and in Bath and Northeast Somerset 0300 247 0203.