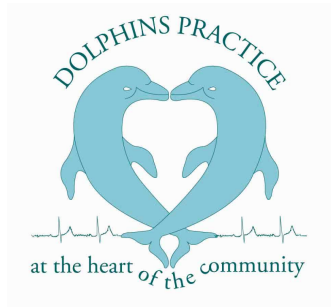


# Health Wise

The Dolphins Practice  
Patient Participation Group  
Newsletter Spring 2015



## *Welcome to Our Spring 2015 Newsletter*

Our Main theme for this Spring Newsletter is the responses to our Patient Survey the key issues being:

- Appointments/Telephone Access/On line Booking
- Access and Parking
- Health Education/Health/Events



## *About Us*

Our group, is called the Dolphin Patient Participation Group (DPPG) and has been set up to provide contact between the practice, its patient and carer population. The group is completely independent of the practice acting as a friendly critic of it. We have no financial support from the practice or any other body having to rely entirely on self -funding activities.

We offer a forum for patients to provide constructive suggestions about the services provided by the practice and the health care of its patients. All comments and suggestions will be passed to the practice management to assist them in the effective and efficient running of the practice. See [www.dolphinspractice.co.uk](http://www.dolphinspractice.co.uk)



## *What We Have Been Doing...*

The Patient Participation Group has been in dialogue with the Practice for some time about the management of the appointments system. We recognise that it is not always possible to obtain an appointment with your preferred doctor, and you are offered the choice of an appointment with another doctor and/or a telephone appointment.

We have learned that the Practice team deals with approximately 1,200 appointments a week, now nearly 50% by telephone from a total of 12,000 patients, naturally this figure fluctuates and can increase or decrease week by week. This heavy workload is of concern and as a group looking after the non-medical interests of all Dolphins Practice patients, we would like to offer some suggestions to smooth this workload and possibly to improve the service offered to all patients. The Practice currently offers personal appointments with doctors and nurses and also telephone appointments. In addition to telephone or personal calls, face to face appointments can also be made through the internet. The Practice asks for our understanding at times of heavy workload, when the receptionist is trying to do the best for us and possibly book a telephone consultation. The receptionists have been trained to ask us for a minimal amount of information in order to arrive at the best solution for us, and ask that we understand that this information is necessary.

It may be possible that our problem could be treated by advice from NHS 111, which is now an extremely efficient and helpful telephone service. It is a fast and easy way to get the right help, and it is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year; calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Alternatively, we may find a visit to one of our local pharmacies helpful as they are now trained to offer a wide variety of impartial advice on minor conditions, and to give us the reassurance and guidance we are seeking.

### ***Why do we have a Telephone Appointments System?***

Essentially the telephone system had been introduced to counter the difficulties of the previous system (particularly on Monday mornings) where 08:00: saw a number of people at the door. All appointments were usually taken by 8.05, leaving countless patients disappointed (plus those trying to get through on the phone)

Prior to the telephone system a patient may have booked in automatically with the doctor/nurse when all that was needed was advice, resulting in a wasted appointment for both patient and clinician, appointment calls are taken right up until midday, thus avoiding the need for an 08:00 'rush', and reducing waiting times on the telephone.

Under the telephone system, all patients receive a call back and are appropriately treated. e.g. if a dressing is required, an appointment with a nurse, rather than the doctor is arranged.

Perception of 'urgent' is not always the same as the reality of clinically urgent and a telephone call is a very good system for identifying these categories thus ensuring that those who need priority do get it. There is a tendency for telephone system to be blamed for the lack of pre-bookable appointments. In fact this is not the case, the situation was previously much worse, all of the slots would be solely on a 'book on the day' basis.

### ***Parking Problems....***

Patients made clear in their survey responses the frustration being felt at the lack of car parking spaces to fulfil our appointments needs.

Both the Practice and the DPPG have for some time been making representations to the authorities about this in an effort to resolve the situation. With the help of your survey responses we have been able to escalate this problem to the NHS Property Services management and the landlord as the practice has a lease that confirms we have the right at all times to the appropriate number of car parking spaces for our practice needs.

A meeting has been arranged for Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2015 to resolve this problem and we will report back to all participants in the survey and the wider patient group as soon as possible regarding how the problem has been resolved.

NHS Property Services have assured us they are taking the problem extremely seriously and the Practice and the DPPG look forward to meeting them in the near future to resolve the problem.

### *Pedestrian Access....*

A significant number of patients who responded to the recent survey suggested that pedestrian access to the practice through the rear of the car park would be helpful as it would avoid having to use the muddy, ill lit and overgrown footpath that links Lucastes Road to the practice.

We wrote to NHS Property Services to progress this proposal and a meeting has been arranged for Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

We will update you on this in future Newsletters

### *Do You Know*



**Dolphins Practice employs an Admissions Avoidance Coordinator** who prioritises patients at high risk of an unplanned hospital admission and manages them appropriately with a personalised care plan.

**Dolphins Practice provides care and support for vulnerable patients** and those over 75 years to remain independent to reduce hospital admissions and provide confidence that there is a care package in place, in time of need.

**Dolphins Practice employs a Care Coordinator** who supports frail elderly patients by being a point of contact for patients/carers at the practice supporting the patient, in their time of need.

### *Health and Wellbeing*

The Dolphin Practice offers Health Checks for all patients between the ages of 40 and 74 who has not been diagnosed with a long term condition. In addition the Mid Sussex Health and Wellbeing Group offer free health checks and advice 01444 477191



### *Please Remember*

When the Dolphins Practice is closed, should you require medical attention please call 111. The Practice is closed on Bank Holidays, so please allow additional time for your prescription request to be processed and where possible, please allow a week between the date of reorder and collection