



SPRING / SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Patient Survey 2018

Every year, NHS England conducts a national survey of patients. The survey is largely centred around patient access to appointments and we have been aware for some time that this has been adversely affected by increasing demand, poor levels of funding to general practice and lower numbers of doctors training to be GPs.

The Patient Participation Group (PPG) and the practice were keen to identify ways in which we could have a positive impact on access and to this end, we undertook our own practice based survey during the summer of 2018 to help understand local patient knowledge about aspects of our service that may improve the patient experience. In this article, we share some of the results from our survey and provide some insight into how patients can help themselves to improve access to health services.

Did you know the Practice has its own Website?

87% of our patients have access to the internet, but...

64% of those with internet access were unaware the practice had a website or don't use the website.

You can use our website to access "Systmonline", where you can:

- ✓ Book appointments with a doctor.
- ✓ Order your repeat medication.
- ✓ Access a summary of your medical record, including test results.

You can also download the Systmonline app from your app store. Please note that you must register for this service in person at reception.

Our website also contains useful information that may answer your query without the need for you to contact us.

What other services do our patients use for minor ailments or less serious problems?

- 88% said they would speak to a local community pharmacist
- 33% said they would look on the NHS Choices website

HOWEVER...

- ✗ Only 13% said they would look at the practice website

Self-Care

Both the NHS Choices website and our practice website have a wealth of information about common ailments, many of which are self-limiting and do not require an appointment to see a health professional. Please take a look at our practice website...

www.thevalleymedicalpartnership.nhs.uk

Our self-help section includes a page about self-care. On this page, you will find links to other useful websites (including NHS Choices) as well as links to handouts about specific ailments and leaflets the doctor or nurse may have referred to within a consultation.

Did you know you can self-refer to an increasing number of services without first seeing a Doctor?

There are many services available that are better positioned to help our patients than a traditional appointment with a doctor or nurse. It can be wasteful of NHS resources and unnecessarily time consuming for patients to see a doctor, just to be referred to someone else. In some cases this is necessary to ensure a referral is the most appropriate course of action, but all of the following services can be accessed directly by patients without needing to see a doctor first:

- Physiotherapy
- Audiology (hearing)
- Podiatry (feet)
- Counselling
- Weight management
- Stop smoking
- Family planning
- Citizens' Advice

With exception of Physiotherapy (55%), less than 50% of patients surveyed knew they could self-refer to these services. Contact numbers and details of how to access these services are on the self-referral page of our website.

No access to the internet? Please collect an information sheet from our waiting room or ask the receptionist for a copy of the relevant leaflet.

Can you tell me a little more about your problem please?

- ✘ 23% of patients told us they would rarely or never be prepared to discuss their request or symptoms with the receptionist.

We realise that it may not always be appropriate to discuss medical problems with our reception team, however we would encourage patients to do this when asked. Our reception team are not medically qualified and we do not ask or expect them to make clinical decisions. However, by giving them as much information about your enquiry as possible, this enables us to provide the most effective care.

Seeing a Doctor or Nurse may not always be the best or most effective solution for your problem.

- ✓ There are many occasions where the receptionist may be able to ask the doctor a question on your behalf using our messaging system, saving the need to wait for an appointment or a phone call from the doctor. The reception team will often be able to phone you back with an answer in a much more timely fashion.
- ✓ Our reception team may be able to direct you to a more appropriate service for your needs (for example self-referral), saving the need for an appointment with the doctor and an unnecessary delay.
- ✓ Our reception team may know the answer to your query themselves.
- ✓ Our reception team may be able to arrange a more urgent face to face appointment with a clinician for certain urgent problems, where they know that an urgent telephone call from the doctor would be inappropriate.
- ✓ If you do need an appointment, we can ensure you see the most appropriate clinician.

Our reception team have appropriate access to your record and abide by the same confidentiality guidance as the clinical team.

Why should I see a GP Registrar?

Despite having been a training practice for many years, we still hear that some patients prefer not to see a GP Registrar. This isn't a surprise because, in our survey, 39% of patients failed to correctly understand the role of a GP Registrar.

- GP Registrars are fully qualified doctors.
- They have completed a minimum of seven years' training.
- As a GP Registrar, they complete a further three year's training to become a GP.
- Patients are normally allocated longer appointments when seeing a GP Registrar.
- Our GP Registrars discuss their consultations each day with one of our GPs, meaning patients get the benefit of input from two doctors!
- GP Registrars also spend time working in specialist hospital departments and as a result, bring a wealth of additional knowledge to our practice for the benefit of our whole team.

By being a training practice, we are helping to train the GPs of tomorrow. At the same time, this improves our appointment availability, ensuring reduced waiting times for patients.

Did you know you can now see a GP at our practice until 8pm on weekdays and on Saturday and Sunday morning?

As part of a national programme to offer evening and weekend appointments, The Valleys Medical Partnership is providing this service on behalf of the five local practices in Dronfield, Eckington & Killamarsh. All of the appointments are offered at our two sites and are available for booking by telephone. We only offer a small number of appointments and so we ask that patients only request these appointments if they are unable to attend during our normal opening hours.

Hay Fever

Hay fever is usually worse between late March and September, especially when it's warm, humid and windy. This is when the pollen count is at its highest. Symptoms of hay fever include, sneezing and coughing; a runny or blocked nose; itchy red or watery eyes; itchy throat, mouth, nose and ears; loss of smell; pain around your temples and forehead; headache; earache; feeling tired and if you suffer with asthma you may also have a tight feeling in your chest; be short of breath and wheeze and cough.



Hay fever can last for weeks or months, unlike a cold which usually goes away after 1 to 2 weeks.

How to treat hay fever yourself: there's currently no cure for hay fever and you can't prevent it, but you can do things to ease your symptoms when the pollen count is high.

DO

- Put Vaseline around your nostrils to trap pollen
- Wear wraparound sunglasses to stop pollen getting into your eyes
- Shower and change your clothes after you've been outside
- Stay indoors whenever possible; keep windows and doors shut as much as possible
- Vacuum regularly and dust with a damp cloth; buy a pollen filter for the air vents in your car and a vacuum cleaner with a special HEPA filter

DON'T

- Cut grass or walk on grass
- Keep fresh flowers in the house
- Smoke or be around smoke - it makes your symptoms worse
- Dry clothes outside - they can catch pollen

A pharmacist can help with hay fever. Speak to your pharmacist if you have hay fever. They can give advice and suggest the best treatments, like antihistamine drops, tablets or nasal sprays to help. It is often cheaper to buy this medication over the counter from your pharmacy or supermarket.

See a GP if: your symptoms don't improve after taking over the counter medicines from your pharmacy or if your symptoms are getting worse.

Travel Vaccinations

If you require any vaccinations relating to foreign travel you need to make an appointment with the practice nurse to discuss your travel arrangements. This will include which countries and areas within countries that you are visiting to determine what vaccinations are required.

It is important to make this initial appointment as early as possible - at least 8 weeks before you travel – as several appointments may be required with the practice nurse to actually receive the vaccinations. These vaccines have to be ordered as they are not a stock vaccine.

Some travel vaccines are ordered on a private prescription and these incur a charge over and above the normal prescription charge. This is because not all travel vaccinations are included in the services provided by the NHS.



Safety in the Sun

Sunburn increases your risk of skin cancer. Sunburn doesn't just happen on holiday - you can burn in the UK, even when it's cloudy.

There's no safe or healthy way to get a tan. A tan doesn't protect your skin from the sun's harmful effects.

Aim to strike a balance between protecting yourself from the sun and getting enough vitamin D from sunlight.

Sun Safety Tips

Spend time in the shade when the sun is strongest. In the UK, this is between 11am and 3pm from March to October.

What factor sunscreen (SPF) should I use?

Don't rely on sunscreen alone to protect yourself from the sun. Wear suitable clothing and spend time in the shade when the sun is at its hottest.

When buying sunscreen, the label should have:

- a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 to protect against UVB
- at least four-star UVA protection



UVA protection can also be indicated by the letters "UVA" in a circle, which indicates that it meets the EU standard.

Make sure you:

DON'T

- Get sunburnt

DO

- Cover up with suitable clothing and sunglasses
- Take extra care with children
- Use at least factor 15 sunscreen

Make sure the **sunscreen is not past its expiry date**. Most sunscreens have a shelf life of two to three years.



Live Life Better

You might have decided that 2019 is the year you finally give up smoking and/or eat more healthily. Please don't forget that we are here to help and can offer you assistance with what can be, for many people, a real struggle.

If you think you might need help to stop smoking, or you want to discuss how you might stop and what's out there to help you, for example, using nicotine patches, nicotine replacement gum/tablets you can self-refer to 'Live Life Better'. Please see the leaflets in the waiting room, contact them on:

0800 085 2299 or 01629 538200

or visit the website:

www.livelifebetterderbyshire.org.uk

With the average cost of a packet of 20 cigarettes at £8.40, if you smoke 20 per day over the whole year you could be spending something in the region of £,3000. If that's not a good enough incentive to quit the damage to your health should be. Did you know.....smoking is the biggest cause of preventable deaths in England, accounting for nearly 80,000 deaths each year. One in two smokers will die from a smoking-related disease.

If you could see the damage, you'd stop.

'Live Life Better' can help with weight management and are happy to advise you on eating a healthier, balanced diet. If you would like to discuss lifestyle changes, please contact them. Eating more healthily does not mean depriving yourself!

