

THE SANDRINGHAM PRACTICE

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NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2011

Hello everyone,

It's mid-October, the leaves are nearly off the trees outside our surgery and it's a couple of months since the last Newsletter. The NHS Health Bill got through the House of Lords last week and so there are challenging times ahead for us in general practice land. In my 37 years as a doctor I have seen many NHS changes/reforms, some for the better and some definitely for the worse, and time alone will be the judge of what happens next. As always we will do our best as a practice to look after your health interests as patients but we are under more and more pressure to keep to strict budget targets. Whatever the weather, keep smiling!

WHERE HAVE ALL THE DOCTORS GONE!

We have certainly had a challenging few months regarding medical staffing here at the Sandringham Practice. For some time now we have been without the services of Dr Sue Turner who has been unwell, but I am very pleased to say that her latest reports to us are that she is improving and hopes to be back with us in November. That will certainly be good news as we have missed her skills in many ways, in particular in the field of specialised joint injections where she is an absolute expert.

We have also been unfortunate in that Dr Kerry Strachan has had time off for a shoulder operation, but the good news is that that operation has gone well and Dr Strachan is determined to be back with us in November, perhaps sooner if all continues to go well. We have missed her skills in female medicine in particular and it has meant one of the other doctors becoming involved in the Baby Clinic on Thursday afternoons.

In August Dr Davinder Singh, who had been with us for a year as a registrar, also left us to join a practice in Rotherham. We were unable to replace him due to a change in our GP training circumstances and in turn this has meant that we have been another doctor short. All this has gone to create what our manager Richard Langthorp has called a perfect storm. It has certainly put a strain on our regular appointment system as the remaining partners, Dr Sykes, Hassan and Mazai, have had to do a lot of what we call duty doctor work, and so have had much less time to have regular surgeries.

THE CAVALRY

We wish to place on record our thanks to those doctors who have come in to the practice from outside to act as locum cover for us at short notice, and to help keep the services going. The aforementioned Dr Singh has been returning on a regular basis to help out with sessions. One of our previous registrars, Dr Emmanuel Okeleke, who works as a GP in Auckley has also helped out. We have been very pleased that Dr Saeed and Dr Tanna have come to the rescue putting on several sessions for us. It does mean that you the patients have had to cope with several new faces and we hope you have been satisfied with the services provided.

DR ANNA KIRKMAN

Now for the good news. We wish to welcome back Dr Kirkman who was with us for a time as a registrar, and is joining us for six sessions a week as a salaried doctor. She joins us to complete her GP registrar training as she has had maternity leave recently, and in a month or so she will be with us on a permanent basis. So if all goes well, some time in November we will have regained the services of three permanent lady doctors and we will all be the better for that.

DR SYKES AND NOVEMBER

For various reasons in November Dr Sykes' availability for clinical matters will be much reduced. This is something that was planned a long time ago and cannot be altered at this stage. From December he will be working three days a week in the practice, remaining as Senior Partner. This arrangement will be for the foreseeable future. His reduced hours will go a long way towards helping maintain his energy and enthusiasm for the time that he is committed to the Sandringham Practice.

STAFF ISSUES

We wish to record our thanks to Danielle Badman who has left us so she can be more involved in family life. Danielle was a behind the scenes worker ensuring that new patient notes were sorted as well as being in charge of turning around legal and insurance reports. We wish her well for the future.

FLU JABS

This is a very important subject. We have already had one round of new vaccines back on Saturday October 8th. The next session for flu vaccinations is Saturday October 22nd. Will all people over the age of 65 please ensure they have a flu vaccine and so make an appointment? This request also applies to anyone who has chronic lung, heart, kidney disease or is diabetic, or has long term neurological conditions, or is a main carer for someone else in their family. If you think you are eligible for a flu vaccine please book an appointment, if you are uncertain then ask one of the reception staff. Last winter, when there was a bit of an epidemic regarding flu, there was quite a lot of panic when vaccines ran short so it is important to get your flu vaccines organised.

PREGNANT LADIES

It is recommended that all ladies who are pregnant, in whatever stage of pregnancy, should have a flu vaccine. Please make an appointment for this.

PRESCRIPTIONS

Please, please, please remember to allow 48 hours for the turn around of your repeat prescriptions. There have been increasingly frequent requests for items on an urgent basis. Some of them are particularly unwarranted with people demanding items such as a cream that they last had a year ago, on an urgent basis. We seem to live in an "I want and I demand" society - there has to be a bit of give and take.

Finally, I personally on behalf of the partners wish to thank the staff for working flat out to try and ensure the smooth running of the practice whilst we have been under-doctored, and I would also like to thank the patients for their understanding of the situation. I know full well that people like to see the same doctor for their illnesses and this has not been possible. We are all human after all.

That's all for now folks.