

# THE SANDRINGHAM PRACTICE

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## NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2012

Hi everyone,

It's a cold, wet, dark, dank morning as I dictate this letter in mid-January. The good news of course is that it is mid-January and the days are beginning to get longer and before we know it Spring will be here with us. So hey, let's be happy and we wish you a happy New Year and thanks to all of you who sent cards and presents over the festive season, as well as good wishes and thanks for services rendered. Believe it or not we are only human here at the practice and so we do like to receive favourable comments or letters from our patients as it does boost morale, but also I should add that if you do have concerns about the services we provide, then likewise you should make comment or send in a letter.

### PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

For several weeks the Practice Manager Richard Langthorp has had posters in reception about a patient participation group, the idea is that this group of people will help us in our plans for looking after our patients' wellbeing, services etc. This will be mainly an email group and we have had a good response from our older population. This group will be well represented but it would be very helpful if some of the under 45's and people from the "minority" groups would like to participate. If so, please leave your name, address and email address in particular at reception so that our Practice Manager, Richard can get back to you. The participation group will be up and running shortly and we look forward to the group's development.

### WHO TO SEE, WHEN?

Everyone wants to be well, everybody worries about what happens when the practice is closed and there are health issues. Please remember the following:-

Your local pharmacist is perfectly capable of advising on what we call minor ailments, such as coughs, colds, skin irritations, rashes as well as nuisance conditions such as head lice, worms etc. They can supply indigestion remedies, treatments for diarrhoea as I am sure most of you will know. Certainly you should consider your local Pharmacist as a first port of call for health problems.

When you are making an appointment via reception please remember that many ailments/illnesses can be seen by our well qualified and well trained Practice Nurses. They do an excellent job and will always refer to a doctor if they feel it is necessary. The doctors at the practice would expect patients to see the Acute Illness Nurse if advised by reception to do so, this then frees up the doctors to see the more complicated issues for which the doctors are well trained.

Of course, when you have made your appointment it is very important that you attend that appointment. There are still far too many people who fail to turn up which is incredibly frustrating. If you feel you cannot make an appointment then we would strongly urge you to let us know, either by ringing the practice or sending a text to 07521665649.

### WHAT TO DO WHEN THE PRACTICE IS CLOSED

If you are acutely ill and the practice is closed, and if you feel it is important that you seek medical help rather than go to one of the many pharmacists that open late, then you should ring the GP Out of Hours service. To contact them ring 761172 which is our emergency line, and you will be put through to the service. This service is available every night and all weekend. You will get a fully qualified doctor who works in the area ringing you back. An alternative is the 8 to 8 Centre which now runs from the Flying Scotsman Centre on Trafford Way close to the Railway Station. This is open every day of the year, from 8.00 in the morning until 8.00 at night and is general practice structured. This service is particularly useful when we are closed at weekends or in the early evening. The phone number for the 8

to 8 Centre is 645544. You may of course seek advice from NHS Direct and their number is 0845 4647, but the service is being re-evaluated and we will let you know if the number for that changes.

## **ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT**

We sometimes forget that Accident & Emergency Department is precisely that, it is for accidents of serious nature and emergencies, again of serious nature. The Casualty Department is always overworked and overused. We have been asked to make sure that there are fewer attendances at A&E Department. It is extremely important that Casualty is not used for minor issues. It is extremely important that people contact the GP services before going to Casualty unless it is potentially a life-threatening emergency. As a practice we do get charged for every Casualty attendance and this is a persistent drain on our budget and it is frustrating when we know that many such patients could have been treated either at the practice or by the Pharmacist or by our GP Out of Hours services. If you have ever sat for hours in Casualty waiting to be seen it always surprises me that people go there before contacting any of the other options that I have outlined. As I said earlier Accident & Emergency is just that.

## **STAFF CHANGES**

Dr Sykes (ie me) has reduced his hours to 3 days a week. I made this decision quite a long time ago and my new timetable started in December. Although I have had health problems in the past I do feel fit and well at the present time, but have felt it important to reduce my working time so as to avoid the old "burn out". As all you older folk have told me that once you have cut your hours down they are automatically filled by other things, but I do feel somewhat refreshed and more energised and will be remaining in the practice for the foreseeable future. Of course, in the last 3 months we have been able to welcome Dr Anna Kirkman who is young, bright, extremely intelligent and full of energy despite having 2 children at home and commuting from Sheffield. Anna worked here as a GP Registrar but is now working with us permanently and is an extremely welcome addition to the medical staff at The Sandringham Practice.

As many of you will already know Karen Pearson, one of our Phlebotomists is leaving, Karen has done excellent work within the Practice but is leaving to concentrate upon her chiropody work. This is a big adventure for her and we hope it works out well. Karen will be sorely missed as she has build up somewhat of a legendary status that she can take blood when the hospital Phlebotomists cannot. My own daughter will attest to that. Karen leaves us at the end of March and obviously will be missed. However Carol and Jo are building up their reputations as Phlebotomists within the practice and we have an advert out looking for extra help in that department.

## **COMMUNICATION**

More and more we do like to get hold of people to contact about blood results, medication, whatever. We would like as many people as possible to give us their up to date landline and mobile phone numbers so that contact is easy. We would also like to develop a texting service to remind people about forthcoming appointments, mainly in the Minor Operations and Chronic Disease Management Clinics. Please ensure that your contact details are up to date. It can cause us no end of problems if we are trying to chase somebody about important results if we haven't got good contact details.

## **DECORATING**

We have got the decorators in. It is now 5½ years now since the building was opened and some of the corridor walls and the walls behind the chairs in the consulting rooms have plenty of scuff marks etc., so painting is going ahead. Please, when you are wandering around the practice try not to run into the walls especially those with scooters and buggies etc. It is always good to have the decorating done, it makes everywhere feel new and shiny and positive. It may even make some of the doctors tidy their rooms up, but the reason the room is untidy is because they have so much work to do that there is no time for any tidying in the first place.

## **FINALLY**

It is still raining outside and the traffic is going round our little roundabout ad infinitum. Being January it is time to get fit. How about walking instead of using the car, now there's a thought.

That's all for now folks.