

BRIDGE LANE GROUP PRACTICE - PATIENT GROUP**PATIENT BRIEFING**

Our most recent Briefing was in the Practice on Wednesday 22 March and was open to all patients of Bridge Lane.

Dr Pearson, GP partner, gave an update on the practice in terms of staffing and activity, and took questions.

Jenny Dupreez is a physiotherapist, employed by Surrey Physio and allocated to Bridge Lane. She described her role in the practice and how patients can access her clinic.

Bridge Lane is part of Battersea Primary Care Network, which employs 5 pharmacists. One of those is Sarah Zebari who explained her role in the practice, and why you might be asked to see her.

There is currently not a date for our next Patient Briefing, but what would you like to see on the programme? Please contact our secretary and let him know!

GP APPOINTMENTS

Most of the questions and comments sent to our committee are about appointments with GPs so we decided to look at the process of making appointments in this edition.

Context: Firstly some comments about our situation. The NHS does not have enough resources in terms of finance and manpower to meet current demand on primary care. Inflation has eroded what its funding can purchase. The population has increased numerically as has its age. It is estimated there are now 135,000 vacancies in the NHS in England. The GP/patient ratio in practices has never been higher. The BMA has calculated that on average, each GP is now responsible for 300 extra patients than in 2015. NHS England is trying to deal with this by planning 26,000 new staff in primary care to support GPs. In our recent patient briefings and newsletters we have been explaining how this works by describing the roles of physiotherapist, pharmacist, social prescriber, dietician, care co-ordinator and physician associate.

Opening Hours: The surgery is open 8.00 to 18.30 on Monday, Wednesday & Friday; 7.00 to 18.30 on Tuesday & Thursday; Saturday 8.30 to 11.00 alternate weeks; Sunday closed. Appointments with GPs can be made for these hours, either face to face or by 'phone.

NHS England has instructed GP practices to offer appointments from 8.00 to 20.00 seven days per week. Appointments outside practice opening times can be booked through reception, and will be at a neighbouring practice with an unfamiliar GP. Please note this is not a walk-in or emergency service.

Appointments with GPs can actually be made by (1) telephoning the practice on 020-3538-0882 (2) in person at reception. Receptionists will ask the reason for the consultation in case they can book you directly with a member of staff who can treat you directly and quickly, eg a physiotherapist or pharmacist. Same day appointments are usually limited and usually available at 8.00 Monday to Friday.

PATIENT GROUP

The Patient Group is organised by a committee consisting of Zenobia Cowan-Davies (chair); Jamie Gillespie (secretary); Julia Rossman; Barrie Temple; Laura Roberts and David Herbert.

It acts as a link between Bridge Lane Group Practice and its patients and works to (a) contribute to the improvement of services (b) ensure the Practice is responsive to the needs and wishes of patients (c) help patients take more responsibility for their health. We appreciate your messages and suggestions - please keep them coming.

*Contact us on
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What Can You Do Online: You can make appointments with practice nurses, health care assistants and physiotherapists. You can also raise non-urgent medical issues with practice clinical staff. And of course you can order repeat prescriptions. You can not make an appointment online with a GP.

Preparation: Appointments usually last 10 minutes or so, and can easily flash past without getting to the root of the problem. It is sensible to prepare for the consultation and mentally rehearse what you are going to say and ask - there are many excellent articles/guides online which we could recommend if you are interested.

New Telephone Line: There is a new 24 hour automated booking option to see practice nurses and healthcare assistants on 020-3375-6260.

New Telephone Service: The practice has purchased and installed a new system which hopefully will improve the booking of appointments. It should remedy the annoying fault of cutting out while in a queue for reception.

Remember: you can bring along a relative or friend to support you through a consultation. You can also request a chaperone to be present if necessary when an intimate examination is required.

Activity: During April, Practice staff saw 2,156 patients face to face and held 597 phone consultations. The practice list stands at 14,261.

PRACTICE NEWS

Dr Emmanuel has now left and the practice is constantly advertising and networking for new GPs. However there are more vacancies nationally than applicants.

What is your experience of the new telephone system? Please let us know!

If you want to be certain of receiving this newsletter regularly, please make sure Reception has your latest e mail address, and you have given permission to be contacted by us.