



Heart to Heart

Patients' Newsletter for Northway Medical Centre



Our Patients Participation Group (PPG) Newsletters aim to keep you informed about what's going on regarding provision of great health care services at the Northway Medical Centre, and within the Dudley CCG overall.

We hope that you will find these newsletters informative and we welcome any suggestions you may have for future content.

Karen Hindley
PPG Chair

New NHS Prescriptions Ordering Direct ("POD") Service: 01384 465303

Over the past year a small number of GP Surgeries within Dudley CCG have piloted this new and innovative approach for ordering repeat prescriptions, funded by NHS England Value Proposition Monies. Northway Medical Centre have recently joined the scheme, ahead of its roll out into all Dudley GP practices from April 2019.

POD is essentially a centralised call centre handling repeat prescription requests on behalf of GP surgeries for those patients who prefer to telephone rather than use online Patient Access/EMIS system for re-ordering.

The POD approach brings benefit to patients and to GPs as well as being proven to save valuable money for the NHS by reducing waste in prescriptions for medicines that are not being used.

- It will divert calls away from the surgery so that the telephone lines are more accessible for patients wishing to make appointments or contact the surgery on other matters;
- It will free up GP time as the repeat prescription requests will be handled by fully trained prescribing clerks and clinical members of the Medicines Management Team of Dudley CCG who will have access to all repeat prescription records as well as access to your GP practice, should they need to check anything with your doctor for you.

If you have a nominated pharmacy where you usually collect your prescription from, or have it delivered to your home, once the POD team has authorised your prescription it will be sent to your nominated pharmacy.

The POD telephone system is being updated and the telephone number for the service will change on 23rd January 2019 from its original number of 01384 323222 to **01384 465303** - the lines are open between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.



Patients can still use the Patient Access system (EMIS) to order their repeat prescriptions on line, as an alternative to the POD Service.

Didn't We Do Well?

The NHS GP Survey results for 2018 were recently published. The survey is sent out to over a million people across the UK. The results show how people feel about their GP practice.

95% of respondents described their overall experience of the Northway Medical Centre Practice as good (an improvement from 92% in 2017).



94% of respondents said that they found the receptionists at the Northway Practice to be helpful (improving on 86% last year).

90% of respondents were satisfied with the type of appointment they were offered (improving on 88% last year).

90% of respondents said that they waited 15 minutes or less after their appointment time to be seen (improving from 81% in 2017).

86% of respondents described their experience of making an appointment at Northway Surgery as good (improving further on the 78% score for this question in 2017).

80% of respondents said they found it easy to get through by phone to someone at the Northway Surgery (improving on 61% in 2017).

The survey is conducted by Ipsos MORI who send survey questionnaires to a random selection of patients from every GP surgery in England. The survey results are analysed and the results made publicly available, allowing comparison between individual GP Surgeries, or comparison to the average for all of the surgery results within the local CCG, and comparison to the average for all GP surgeries in England. All but one of Northway's results exceeded the averages for both All Dudley and All England.

Our PPG has extracted the information for Northway Medical Centre and presented this in a short report which can be found on the PPG noticeboard in reception. If you would like a copy of that report please let the receptionist know.

If you are able to access information on-line, this link will take you to a very easy-to-use summary of the headline information for a selected GP surgery: <https://gp-patient.co.uk/> (then enter Northway Medical Centre). When you are viewing the summary results on-line, the database is interactive - you can select to see more information or less information, and select different criteria to compare against.

The screenshot shows the NHS GP Patient Survey interface for Northway Medical Centre. The header includes 'GP PATIENT SURVEY', 'ABOUT', 'CONTACT US', 'RECEIVED A SURVEY?', and the NHS England logo. The main content area displays the practice name and address: 'Northway Medical Centre, 8 Alderwood Precinct, The Northway, Sedgley, DY3 3QY'. Navigation buttons for 'Practice overview', 'Patient experiences', and 'Compare practice' are visible. Below this, there are filters for 'Showing responses about all questions' and 'from all patients'. A 'Print this page' button and a 'Showing weighted results' indicator are also present. A section titled 'Your local GP services' highlights that '80% find it easy to get through to this GP practice by phone', with a 'Show breakdown' button. At the bottom, it notes 'Local (CCG) average: 64% | National average: 70%'.

New Minor Eye Conditions Service (MECS)

This new service was launched by Dudley CCG in September 2018, which is great news, especially as Northway PPG has been instrumental in pushing Dudley CCG to join in with the MECS scheme since May 2017.

One of our PPG members first raised the issue that other neighbouring local authorities were operating this scheme with local opticians, but Dudley CCG clients were excluded and required to pay.

Through our PPG we raised this issue directly with Dudley CCG in May and July of 2017 and we then seized the opportunity to raise it again directly with the Chief Executive of Russell's Hall Hospital in April 2018 - highlighting that the MECS approach adopted by other local CCGs could help to reduce the unacceptable waiting times for ophthalmic services that had been reported as part of the inspection report for Russell's Hall Hospital.



Well done us!

What is MECS?

The Dudley Minor Eye Conditions Service (MECS) provides assessment and treatment for people with recently occurring minor eye conditions. The service is provided by MECS accredited opticians across Dudley who have specialist knowledge, training and skills. Minor eye conditions that can be treated by the service include:

- Red eye or eyelids
- Dry eye, gritty and uncomfortable eyes
- Irritation and inflammation of the eye
- Significant recent sticky discharge from the eye or watery eye
- Recently occurring flashes and floaters
- Painful eye – Ingrowing eyelashes
- Recent and sudden loss of vision
- Foreign body in the eye

The optometrist will discuss your eye history and the symptoms you are experiencing. You will receive an eye assessment, advice and treatment appropriate to your symptoms. You may need a follow-up appointment, and if so, this will be booked at the end of your first appointment.

If your condition is more serious, the optometrist will book you an urgent appointment at a hospital eye clinic and if you need a routine appointment with a hospital, the optometrist will refer you for this. You may also be advised to make an appointment with your GP if your eye condition is related to your general health.

If you are concerned about your eyes or eyesight, or if you are unsure whether your symptoms can be assessed and treated by the service, contact one of the participating optometry practices who will advise you – a list of the participating local practices can be found at <http://eyecarewm.co.uk/dudley/>

NOTE: If you have an eye condition that is being regularly monitored by your optometrist or hospital eye service (for example cataracts, diabetic retinopathy or glaucoma), this will not be covered by MECS;

Northway Surgery welcomes two new GPs ...

A belated welcome to Dr J Balasundaram who joined Dr Pritchard and Dr Moran as a permanent member of the GP team in the autumn of 2018. We are delighted to announce that an additional GP, Dr Fiona Rose, will be joining them as a fourth permanent appointment from February 2019 and we look forward to warmly welcoming her.

Making appointments to see a GP

Booking on-line via the Patient Access system is very useful for making general appointments over the coming week or two. You will see the same appointments that the receptionists see if they are booking a general appointment for you and you can view what's available with which Doctor, then choose which date and time is best for you.



Urgent Appointments: there are additional appointments available each day for more urgent needs. In such circumstances, when you telephone or call in person at reception, they will ask a few questions about your condition. This is an initial triage assessment which helps to make a judgement about whether you could be seen by a practitioner nurse who can prescribe medicines (for example if you have a urinary infection) or to determine if an appointment is critical. Every endeavour is made to see all patients who need an urgent appointment on the same day. **TIP:** *It's usually better to ask for an urgent appointment in a morning.*

Training Centre for Future GPs: Dr Pritchard and Dr Moran provide mentoring and training to newly qualified doctors (GP Registrars) as well as training First Year and Second Year Medical Students. If you are offered an appointment with one of the trainee students, a longer appointment time is allocated (20 minutes instead of 10). The students will discuss their diagnoses and proposed treatment plan with either Dr Pritchard or Dr Moran – so if you are booked in to see a student doctor, you are not being 'short-changed' – you'll have a thorough consultation and two sets of expertise applied to your case.

- If you have access to the internet and would like to register for Patient Access on-line services, you will need to complete a registration form (available from reception) and bring in three forms of identity – reception staff will be happy to talk you through the process.
- If you have registered to use the Patient Access on-line services but could do with a reminder about how to actually access these, contact reception and they will be happy to organise a mini 'training' session for you.

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Extended Hours: late evenings and weekend appointments

There has been really positive feedback from patients about the extended hours rota that has operated between the four GP surgeries in the Sedgley area (Coseley Medical Centre, Northway Medical Centre, Ridgeway Medical Centre and Woodsetton Medical Centre). Routine appointments can be made for times outside of the normal practice hours, including later evenings as well as Saturday and Sunday mornings. We are very pleased therefore to confirm that this Future Proof Health programme will continue to operate in 2019. The rota for additional extended hours appointments to the end of April 2019 is provided below:-

Mondays to Fridays from 6:30pm to 8:00pm

Saturday mornings from 9:00am to 12:00 noon | Sunday mornings from 9:00am to 11:00am

| From Monday: | To Sunday: | Medical Centre | | From Monday: | To Sunday: | Medical Centre |
|--------------|------------|-----------------|--|--------------|------------|-----------------|
| 07/01/2019 | 13/01/2019 | Northway | | 04/03/2019 | 10/03/2019 | Northway |
| 14/01/2019 | 20/01/2019 | Woodsetton | | 11/03/2019 | 17/03/2019 | Woodsetton |
| 21/01/2019 | 27/01/2019 | Coseley | | 18/03/2019 | 24/03/2019 | Coseley |
| 28/01/2019 | 03/02/2019 | Ridgeway | | 25/03/2019 | 31/03/2019 | Ridgeway |
| 04/02/2019 | 10/02/2019 | Northway | | 01/04/2019 | 07/04/2019 | Northway |
| 11/02/2019 | 17/02/2019 | Woodsetton | | 08/04/2019 | 14/04/2019 | Woodsetton |
| 18/02/2019 | 24/02/2019 | Coseley | | 15/04/2019 | 21/04/2019 | Coseley |
| 25/02/2019 | 03/03/2019 | Ridgeway | | 22/04/2019 | 28/04/2019 | Ridgeway |

The appointment is made via your own surgery and if you are offered an extended hours slot, you will be informed which surgery you should attend for that appointment. Your patient records will be released to the GP for your appointment so that they have access to your recent medical history and prescriptions.

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Really Useful Sources of Information

At our PPG meetings we share information relating to health issues that other members of the group might find useful to tap into, and we thought it would be a good idea to pass this on to the wider patient group through our PPG Newsletters. At our December meeting we saw a demonstration of two useful websites:-

Which? *Later Life Care Website and Care Services Database:*

The consumer group Which? has recently launched a new website with information about later life care - information about choosing a residential or nursing care home or home care provider (including a care services database that you can search to find providers near to you); living with dementia; best simple phones; personal alarms; and much more.

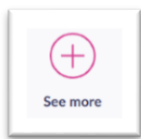
This information can be accessed via <https://www.which.co.uk/after-life-care> and it is a tremendously useful asset for anyone who may be faced with needing to access these types of services. You can also sign up to receive monthly emails from Which? on Later Life Care – free expert guidance on caring for older people. (NB: This information does not require a Which? subscription)

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New Patient Access System Expert Health Articles, Tips and Information:



When you are logged into the new Patient Access System, scroll down the screen – below your appointments and repeat medication requests – and you will see some topical articles to read, to the right of which will be a plus symbol in a circle which says *See More*



If you select the + button, it will take you into a wealth of patient information and an online Health Symptom Checker. You can also opt to subscribe to receive regular email updates on health issues that you may have a particular interest in – you will be given the opportunity to indicate the type of topics that you wish to be updated on and how often you would like to receive emails from Patient.info

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We're looking for sponsorship funding/memorial gift/donation – can you help?

The PPG would very much like to acquire a useful self-service health monitoring station, to be located in the reception area of Northway Medical Practice. Patients will be able to use it to check their blood pressure and pulse as well as to record their height, weight and BMI - with the information printed out on ticket at the end of the process. The health monitor that we are particularly interested in (the Keito M8) will also integrate with the Patient Record System.

A new machine costs around £5,000 and whilst the surgery would be able to cover ongoing future annual maintenance costs, we need to find funding for the initial purchase of the machine.

We are mentioning it here in case your company could help? Or perhaps you might wish to sponsor the purchase of the monitoring station in memory of a loved one ... as people do with a parkland bench? Maybe you might be aware of other funding streams that you could suggest for us to approach? (We have been unsuccessful in our bids to a couple of big supermarket community funds ☹ ...).

If you have any ideas on this front, please contact either the Practice Manager at the surgery, or the Chair of the PPG - northwayppg@outlook.com



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Why Don't You Join In? ...

Your Patient Participation Group

Any patient registered at Northway Medical Centre is welcome to join the PPG and attend our meetings, which are held roughly every two months in the conference room at the practice.

Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) are established at most GP practices. At Northway Medical Centre, our PPG has agreed the following mission statement and focus to guide what we do:

to promote and support the Practice and provide a voice for patients

- Communicating with the wider patient group to keep them informed and to hear their feedback
- Supporting the GP practice to encourage take-up of services that will help to make the Practice run better
- Providing useful information and contacts to promote good health and well-being

More information about Northway's PPG can be found on the noticeboard in the reception area of the surgery. If you wish to speak to a member of the PPG, please either leave your telephone number at reception and ask for a PPG member to call you or send an email to northwayppg@outlook.com.

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Awareness Raising Events

The PPG organises for Doctors and other healthcare professionals to talk to patients about particular topics to raise awareness about the causes, possible self-help and prevention, treatment and support. They are usually short sessions of around 90 minutes, held in the early evening at the surgery conference room. Next events include 5th March 2019 - Fraud & Scams Awareness and (date to be confirmed) Know Your Numbers – Blood Pressure Awareness.

The events are usually advertised within the surgery, but If you let the Practice have your mobile phone number, they can send you useful text message reminders about one-off events etc that might be relevant to you as well as reminders about your forthcoming appointments and information about any health screening, flu jabs, etc.



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Our Healthy Walks



Our PPG members have been meeting up to walk and chat, enjoy the local parkland and keep healthy. We meet every Monday (except Bank holidays) at around 12:45 at Northway Medical Centre Reception: the walk starts at 13:00 and is usually around an hour.

Anyone can join in – often there are two groups – one walking at a slower pace and following a shorter trail than the other group, so you can choose your own pace. We'd love to see you!

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If you would like to have our PPG newsletters sent directly to you, please send your email address to northwayppg@outlook.com and we will add your name to our mailing list.

Northway Medical Centre

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