



HONITON SURGERY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2008



www.honitonsurgery.org

Honiton Surgery has an active Patient Group who meet regularly with members of staff at the surgery to discuss current issues. If you have any queries, concerns or feedback (positive or otherwise) please do not hesitate to contact one of the members listed below, they will be pleased to hear from you:-

Mr Alf Boom – 01404 548745

Mrs Val Royle – 01404 44463

Mrs Meg Pipe – 01404 850855

The Build

There have been a number of alterations to the fabric of the existing building to form new access points as the old front and rear doors are no longer useable. The most obvious of these is the new front door which now comes through Dr David Seamark's old examination room. This new door is capable of being operated electronically as well as by being manually opened.

The waiting room has also had some fairly major alterations that have changed the ambience as well as taking away the childrens play area. The new entrance to the pharmacy is now through the waiting area which has meant a general increase of pedestrian traffic through the surgery as people access the pharmacy.

The works to the new extension have started and the foundations for the new steel frame have been successfully installed despite the quite appalling weather we had at the time. The steel frame for the new building is due to arrive on site week commencing 7th April and will be erected over the following couple of weeks. This erection process will involve a large crane which will be used to lift the various elements of the steel frame into place.

Once this has been completed the roof from the existing two storey building will be taken off and the new roof to this area and the steel frame will be formed.

Unfortunately the works to the old two storey part of the surgery will affect the enjoyment of both waiting public and the reception staff due to the inevitable noise and general building works that will

be going on behind the temporary wooden screen that have been put up to separate the site from the surgery.

This noise and nuisance will be controlled as much as it can but I'm afraid there will be some disruption during the coming weeks.

Improving Practice Questionnaire Results

We have recently received the results of the patient survey which was completed in January 2008.

In general there remain high levels of satisfaction.

We were however, disappointed to find that telephone access still remains a problem in spite of changes which we have made to our telephone system and new initiatives such as our telephone triage system. The Practice Manager is continuing to monitor and suggest improvements.

We are also launching a new review of reception working practices in response to some of your comments to see if we can effect positive change.

Many of the other less favourable comments about the waiting area, confidentiality in reception and a children's play area will be improved with the new building. There were also many comments about opening hours. This remains the subject of both local and national negotiations. Dr Janet Ward, the GP representative on the patient group has promised to keep the group updated with the latest developments.

A very big thank you to the patient group for helping us to administer the survey.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is my doctor always on holiday?

The Honiton doctors do take a reasonable amount of annual leave as their jobs are demanding and stressful and it is generally felt that if people take breaks they are able to perform better when at their jobs. However just because your doctor is not in the surgery today does not mean that they are having a holiday!!! As well as taking holiday leave the doctors all have to keep up-to-date with their medical practice and developments. This often means attending courses and meetings and you may be told your doctor is on leave when they are attending such a course. This is becoming more and more important with all the changes in the NHS and advances in modern medicine.

I have seen my doctor in the surgery today but have been told that I cannot have an appointment with them.

Although seeing patients in surgery clinics is one of the main parts of a GP's working day, there are also a lot of other areas to be covered. Within the practice there is a lot of management and administration that needs to be done. Some of this is to do with changes and advances in clinical matters and new procedures and protocols have to be set up. Sometimes the doctors are involved in training others or undertaking training themselves. There is also a lot of work that has to be done to check that we are offering the best service to patients and auditing the results of the service. The doctors have administrative roles in the surgery and responsibilities as employees of the staff.

Why does my doctor always have a day off in the week?

None of the doctors offers a surgery clinic on every day of the week. Some of the doctors work in a more part time capacity anyway (see part time GPs). For all the doctors they need days to catch up on the paper work and administration involved in looking after their patients and in keeping up to date clinically. So although your doctor may not be offering a surgery that day they may well be working elsewhere.

Part-time GPs.

The work in general practice has changed a lot over the last 20 years. GPs now take on a lot more of the clinical responsibility for their patients. Hospital doctors are much less involved in many of the conditions and diseases that they used to look after so GPs have become responsible for ongoing care of many conditions such as diabetes, thyroid disease, hypertension (High Blood pressure), heart disease. Many more GPs are also now female and all GPs may have other commitments in terms of children and families.

This means that working patterns have changed and more GPs work in a part-time capacity. Although we call this part-time many will be working more hours in the week than would traditionally be considered part-time in other jobs. Even the most part-time doctors would spend about 30 hours a week working for the practice.

What Else Do The Honiton Doctors Do?

Honiton Hospital

All the doctors at the surgery provide the medical cover at Honiton Hospital. There is a medical ward there for patients who are unwell, but do not need to be in the RD&E and can be looked after nearer to home by their own GP. Certain tests, investigations and treatment can also be undertaken there. Each day a doctor does a ward round at the hospital. At times we also have to look after patients from other areas particularly if RD&E is over full. This also takes up a quite a lot of our time.

The GPs also provide cover for the nurse led Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) and if the nurse is concerned a patients may be referred on to a GP.

The GPs also provide some cover for the maternity unit and undertake the newborn baby checks.

Teaching

Honiton surgery has been involved in teaching and training for many years. It was one of the early training practices for general practice training. In more recent years since the start of the Peninsula Medical School (PMS) in 2002 we have students coming for placements with us. Dr Janet Ward leads on this, but all the doctors will have students sitting in with them at some times. You will always be informed if a student is present and there will be the option for the student not to be present if you would prefer that.

As well as teaching in the surgery many of the doctors teach students and other health professionals in other settings such as at the PMS and on courses.

Research

The Honiton Group Practice has been very involved in research over the last 15 years and has been an NHS recognised research Practice. Many papers have been written and presentations made from work in the practice and by the doctors. Dr David Seamark leads in this area and Drs Clare Seamark and David Ward have undertaken Masters Research degrees and Dr Clare Seamark was also awarded her doctorate in 2003. The doctors have to attend meetings each year to present their research work and collaborate with colleagues. If you are interested in this we can give you more information on the research being undertaken. At times you may be asked if you would like to take part.

Emergencies Out Of Office Hours

As many of you will be aware we are currently trialling an exciting way of seeing people urgently through our telephone triage system and by working in conjunction with the Minor Injuries Unit nurses at Honiton Hospital. This project however is only active during the daytime until 6.15pm. After that time if you need urgent attention we would still ask you to ring the usual number when you will be put through to the Devon Doctors on Call duty doctor to discuss your problem and arrange to be seen. If the problem needs attention more rapidly then you must dial 999 for an ambulance in the usual way.

If the problem is a simple minor injury then you can walk into the Minor Injuries Unit at Honiton Hospital where the nurses will attend to you without an appointment although you may have to wait to be seen.

Appointments

Please can you inform us if you are unable to make your appointment.

Over a 3 month period (1st January 2008 to the end of March 2008) 17,249 appointments were made available for patients to see their GPs, Treatment Room Nurse or an appointment for a blood test, 985 of these appointments were lost due to patients not attending for their appointment.

Tannoy

An announcement should be made over the tannoy system if your GP has been called out for an emergency or if they are running late due to the above. If you have been waiting for more than 30 minutes and no tannoy announcement has been made please enquire at reception.

Please Note

Please can patients be careful when dialling the surgery as we have had a patient advise us that messages are being left on his business answer phone causing him great inconvenience. The surgery number is **01404 548544**.

Complaints / Compliments Procedure

We have a robust complaints system and information leaflets are always available from reception. Initially please make contact with the Practice Manager with your comments, suggestions or complaint.

Written acknowledgement of a complaint should be sent within 2 working days. Progress or a final report should be sent out within 20 working days where possible.

All complaints are taken seriously and fully investigated. In house procedures are followed.

We always seem to hear about things that go wrong and we would very much like to receive feedback when things go right. We keep a file of positive feedback which is shared with the team at various intervals throughout the year.

Prescriptions

If you take medication on a long term basis, you will be issued with a repeat prescription slip. You may request repeat prescriptions by ticking the items required on the slip. Once your request has been received at the surgery we will need two working days from receipt of the request for this to be dealt with by your doctor. Your prescription can then either be picked up from the surgery or we can send your new prescription to your chosen pharmacy. Please allow a further 24 hours for this to be dealt with by the pharmacy before picking up your medication.

Do we have your correct contact details?

Let us know if you change address or telephone number.