

Patient Doctor Action Group (PDAG)

PDAG is made up from a number of patients who are registered with the Practice and who have volunteered to be members of the Group.

The aim of PDAG is to act as a liaison between the Practice and the patients. We meet every 6-8 weeks and the Practice is always represented by at least one doctor and either Linda Lawson (Practice Manager) or Maddie Matthews (Head Receptionist). This gives both the Practice and the Group the opportunity to exchange information and provide feedback.

Members of the Group also attend meetings outside of the Practice such as the Patient Panel of Berkshire West PCT and the public meetings of the Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust.

We can assist patients who may have a problem that they do not wish to discuss directly with a member of the Practice staff by bringing this to the attention of either the Practice Manager or one of the Doctors. This would be done in strictest confidence and without any names being divulged unless we are specifically requested to do so. If you would like to use this facility please leave your details in a sealed envelope with a member of the Reception staff. Please address the envelope to the PDAG Committee and mark it Confidential. It will then be passed on to one of the Committee members who, in turn, will make contact with the patient.

If you have any other type of message that you would like us to pass on to the Practice on your behalf email us at Thatcham.PDAG@hotmail.com or drop a note into the PDAG suggestion box which is situated on the wall just beyond the end of the reception desk. Alternatively leave it at Reception and it will be forwarded to a member of the Committee. We are of course more than happy to pass on any compliments that patients have in their dealings with the Practice.

We are also responsible for producing this newsletter, so if there is anything that you would particularly like to see featured please let us know by using one of the contact methods referred to previously. Sadly, the Group is very small in comparison to the number of patients who are registered with the Practice. If you are interested in joining the Group, please leave your details either in the suggestion box or with Reception and we will contact you, or just email us.

Repeat Prescriptions

Please note that it may take up to 48 hours to process your request for a repeat prescription!

Prescriptions may be collected from our reception. Alternatively, you can arrange for your prescription to be forwarded to a local pharmacy of your choice but you will need to allow additional time for your prescription to be dispensed - perhaps up to a week).

Please ask at Reception for further information, or contact Vicky Thomas (Prescriptions Clerk) telephone **867171**.

New Telephone System

Our new telephone system was installed in May and after one or two hiccups seems to be working well.

We are currently working on streamlining the message and number of options.

Staff News

Several changes are taking place within the Practice.

Dr Sharma has left but there are two new doctors starting. Dr Foulkes, is joining as a partner and will take over Dr Sharma's patients. Dr Woolley is joining as our new GP Registrar. Also, Dr Rabia is returning.

Both Drs McKinnon and Sahota are on maternity leave. This will be covered by Drs. Lane and Yeung. Dr Smith will be reducing his consulting hours from October 1st.

Patients affected by the permanent changes above will be notified personally by letter.

Qualifying Success

Congratulations to **Janet James** and **Debbie Stanway** two of our nurses who passed the Extended Nurse Prescribing Qualification.

Extended Opening Hours

We have extended our opening hours for a trial period whilst we await further guidance from the Department of Health.

Although subject to change, the extended hours are for booked appointments only at present between

- 7.30am and 8.00am on Monday to Thursdays
- Alternate Saturdays between 8.00am and 12.00pm
- One evening every four weeks between 6.30pm to 8.30pm.

We have also been able to provide additional blood clinic appointments on some mornings. In addition, nurse appointments are available on one Saturday a month that we hope in future will include travel vaccinations, cervical smears and contraceptive services.

All appointments are bookable in advance. The surgery will remain closed for other services during the extended opening hours. The emergency 'out of hours' service between 6.30pm and 8.00am on weekdays, weekends and bank holidays continues to be run by WestCall (0118 978 1811).

So far we have trialled the extended opening hours for three months. During this time we have provided 115 extra appointments per week but disappointingly 1 in 10 patients did not keep their booked appointment! Don't waste an appointment - call the cancellation number 01635 295445! Another patient could make use of this valuable appointment.

Flu Vaccination Clinics

Saturday morning clinics dispensing flu vaccinations will commence on 11 October.

How do you know if you need one?

- If you are 65 or over or, if you have any of the following problems - whatever age you are:
 - A chronic heart or chest complaint, including asthma
 - Chronic kidney disease
 - Diabetes
 - Lowered immunity due to disease or treatment such as steroid medication or cancer treatment.

To make an appointment or for further details please contact the Treatment Room.

Family Planning and Sexual Health

Debbie, Liz and Nina are three of our Practice nurses trained in contraception and sexual health advice. They hold nurse led family planning clinics on Monday afternoons and all day Tuesday. Appointments may also be available at other times. Leaflets on all methods of contraception are available from the treatment room.

Emergency contraception is obtainable free of charge from the triage nurses, GPs and Boots (depending on the available pharmacist). It is most effective when taken within 12 hours, but can also be effective up to 3-5 days later.

The high rates of chlamydia are of concern at present with approximately 1 in 12 young women nationally being infected. It affects both men and women, may be show symptoms and is easily treated with antibiotics. If you are concerned you may be at risk of having chlamydia or any other sexually transmitted infection you may speak to family planning nurses, your GP or Newbury Sexual Health Clinic at West Berks Community Hospital, which has walk in appointments on a Saturday from 09.30 - 11.30.

On Thursdays from 1.30pm - 5.30pm The Zone Young Persons' Clinic at 21a Craven Road, Reading deals with all contraception and sexual health issues, for those aged 19 and under.

Dr Lisa Bawden

It is with great regret that we have to pass on the news of the death of Dr Lisa Bawden.

Soon after Dr Bawden left the practice to take up a partnership post in Wokingham she was diagnosed with cancer. Over the past year she became progressively unwell and died peacefully in a hospice in Cornwall last June. All patients who knew her will remember her as a very caring Doctor with a wonderful sense of humour. She will be sadly missed by all.

If you would like to make a donation in her memory you can make this direct to the address below or hand it in to reception. Cheques should be made payable to Cancer Research UK.

Ken Newcombe Funeral Home, Bucklers Lane, St. Austell, Cornwall PL25 3JN.

Thatcham Volunteer Bureau

Do you need transport to get to an appointment such as to the doctor, hospital or dentist?

If the answer is yes, then The Thatcham Volunteer Bureau can help by arranging transport for you with a volunteer driver. The office is open Monday to Friday between 10.00 am and 12.00 noon. Please phone 01635 862306, (answerphone after hours). Please try to give at least 2-3 days notice, so that a driver can be sourced. Clients are asked for a donation to cover petrol costs (tokens taken).

Human Papillomavirus Vaccination (HPV) for the prevention of cervical cancer

HPV vaccination will be introduced into the national immunisation programme in September 2008, for girls aged 12-13 across the UK.

Then, starting in autumn 2009, a two year catch up campaign will vaccinate all girls up to 18 years of age. This catch up campaign will offer to vaccinate:

- girls aged between 16 and 18 from autumn 2009, and
- girls aged between 15 and 17 from autumn 2010.

By the end of the catch up campaign, all girls under 18 will have been offered the HPV vaccine. When the HPV vaccination programme begins in 2008, women over the age of 18 will not be vaccinated as it would not be cost effective in preventing cervical cancer. This is because as soon as a woman becomes sexually active, she is at risk of infection with the virus. It will be many years before the vaccination programme has an effect upon cervical cancer incidence, so women are advised to continue accepting their invitations for cervical screening.

For more information call the HPV Helpline on **0845 602 3303** or visit www.immunisation.nhs.uk/vaccines.

Practice Based Commissioning

The Practice is a member of Newbury and District Commissioning Group. If you would be interested in hearing more about the work of this group please contact Linda Lawson, Practice Manager.

Patient Information Point (PIP)

Have you visited the Patient Information Point (PIP room) in West Berks Community Hospital?

We hold information on:

- support groups
- local transport
- information leaflets on various illnesses.

A computer is available to access other information. You can phone us on **01635 273324** (we have an out of hours answerphone). Alternatively, you can email us at pip.enquiries@berkshire.nhs.uk.

You will find us on the right as you enter the hospital and the service is free.

Cervical Cancer Screening Programme

The programme aims to reduce the number of women who develop invasive cervical cancer and those who die from it. It does this by regularly screening all women at risk so that conditions which might otherwise develop into invasive cancer can be identified and treated.

Who is eligible for cervical screening?

All women between the ages of 25 and 64 are eligible for a free cervical screening test every three to five years. The NHS Cervical Screening Programme now offers screening at different intervals depending on age. To find out more call **0800 707 60 60** or visit the cancer screening website www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk.

NHS Bowel Cancer Screening

Are you over 60? Did you know that bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in the UK?

If you are aged 60 to 69 years you will shortly receive an invitation to participate in the NHS bowel screening programme. A letter will be sent from the cancer screening programme advising that you will automatically receive a test kit in a week's time. Full instructions will be provided and the kit should be returned in the freepost envelope provided.

For further information call **0800 707 60 60** or visit the cancer screening website www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk. If you are aged 70 years or over you can call the above number to request your free kit.