

Newsletter

Issue 12

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Practice News – Dr Nicky Shiell

As I write this we are starting to see sunshine, which appears to be more like summer, thank goodness. The long winter, with extreme weather and high number of flu cases and other respiratory viruses, has meant primary care and the whole NHS has certainly felt the strain in the past few months.

Summer weather brings its own challenges, however. Please remember to drink plenty of fluids and apply sun cream and wear a hat! Hayfever is also a seasonal problem. There is lots of information on this on [NHS Choices Website](#) and your pharmacist is perfectly placed to advise on this and recommend over the counter treatments, saving on the need for a prescription.

We are pleased to welcome **Dr Elizabeth Dowling** who will be with our team for 6 months. She is our GP registrar and grew up in the North East. This is our second trainee GP and we are so impressed by their abilities and knowledge. We also welcome **Dr Rebecca Cross**, who joined us recently, and **Dr Swati Sheth** back from maternity leave. We now have 18 GPs working at the practice.

We are constantly looking at new ways to provide more access to medical care for our patients – we now have a new telephone system which allows you to queue, rather than redialing. This is in response to patient feedback and we hope it is helpful. We are also introducing more pre-bookable routine telephone appointments with GPs, plus more online booking. We are also reminding people of their appointments by text message and trying to get more and more prescription requests dealt with electronically. You can help by letting us know in good time if you are unable to attend your appointment, so someone else can use it. Please make sure your contact details are correct too, especially phone numbers.

PRACTICE OPENING HOURS:

- ❖ **Main doors are open, Monday to Friday, from 0800-1830. Appointments available 0810-1750 (GPs) some nurses available to 1800.**
- ❖ **The reception is open but there is no clinical cover between 12.30-1.30**
- ❖ **Main telephone number: 01670 542630 AND 01670 355080 Telephone lines are open from 0800-1830 Monday to Friday – (includes prescription line option - available from 0900-1600)**
NB You can still phone either practice to make appointments
- ❖ **Out of hours phone: for Medical Emergency 999; for routine medical assistance 111.**
- ❖ **Website: railwaymedicalgroup-blyth.nhs.uk**

Practice News

(contd)

- ❖ **Care Navigators**
- ❖ **NHS 70th Birthday Party tea**

We know that people don't always need a GP appointment, but are not sure where to access the right help, we have started getting our staff trained as **Care navigators**, so please don't be worried when the reception staff ask for more information when you ring – it's just to make sure you are pointed in the right direction for the help you need.

This July marks the **70th anniversary of the NHS**, we hope to have celebration to mark this amazing achievement, details to follow.

We would welcome constructive feedback on the NHS choices website www.nhs.uk (search for Railway Medical Group), if you have any concerns please speak to a member of staff.

Trial Collaborative Patient Service Update

Extended opening hours

Extended opening hours: 1830-2000 hrs, Monday to Friday

The practice is well aware of the pressure on all health care provision in the area and since October 2017 a trial has been underway with GP, health professional and support cover, allowing extended opening hours from 1830 to 2000. **This service is currently available at Blyth Community Hospital.**

This service will be operated by Railway and Marine in an attempt to relieve A&E visits in the evening. Its effectiveness and longer term feasibility will be reviewed on 31 March 2019.

Saturday 0800-1200 appointments will continue to accommodate working patients who have difficulty attending appointments during the normal week working hours.

Meet the Team

The GP and professional team at Railway

We currently have 18 GPs to serve our patient community and carehomes 23,609 individuals.

Meet the Team - Railway Medical GPs, their special interests and roles

Dr Peter McEvedy - Senior Partner, Prescribing Lead (Area Prescribing Committee), Palliative care Lead (Joint), GP for complaints. *The Oaks* named GP.

Dr Sam Gittins – special interest in Dermatology

Dr Carol Henderson – Staff/HR liaison GP, Minor surgery. Adult Safeguarding Lead. DOLS lead.

Dr Marie Imlach – Nurse-team lead (joint), Minor Surgery and Joint Injections, Extended hours lead, Child Protection Lead (joint). CCG Representative, Learning Disabilities Lead.

Dr Nicky Shiell – Information Governance lead, Designated manager - CQC. Salaried GP Liaison. LMC Representative. Second Finance Partner, Lead for in-house education (joint), Paediatric Bloods

Dr Grace Watts – GP Trainer, Child Protection Lead (joint), PREVENT lead, Women's Health Lead (fits coils, pessaries, implants, pipelle biopsies), South *Bebside Care Home* Named GP, Lead for in-House Education (joint), Nursing Team lead. Paediatric bloods.

Salaried GPs

Dr Hilary Ainsley

Dr Laura Corrigan

Dr Rebecca Cross

Dr Pepper Atkinson - Medical Student Lead, Joint Injections, Paediatric Bloods.

Dr Helen Harman - Joint Injections, Coils and Implant, Dementia Lead.

Dr John McHugh

Dr Ruth Parr - Diabetes Lead and diabetes nurse supervisor.

Dr Swati Sheth

Dr Georgina Smith – Frail elderly lead, Palliative care lead (joint), Named GP for *Crofton Court CH and Waterloo House Care Home*

Dr Emma Stewart

Dr Alex Van den Bos – Joint Injections, Named GP *South Quay Care home*

Dr Hayley Yarrow – Paediatric Bloods

GP Registrar -We are a training practice and hope to have GP registrar at the surgery as much as possible. Dr Grace Watts is the GP trainer in the practice.

Promoting Health

In every issue we will highlight a particular health topic.

This issue covers **Promoting Self-Help**

Promoting Health

Promoting self help

Everyone knows of the pressures facing the NHS all over the country. Every GP practice has to deal with increasing numbers of patients, with the same or sometimes reduced resources. [Help the GPs to help you when you really need them.](#)

Sometimes visits to the GP for common ailments which can be dealt with elsewhere can clog up the system and reduce appointments available. Here are some self-help guidelines which may help you know what to do.

Ear ache

Sore ears are very common particularly in children and usually are caused by a harmless virus. Most will get better within a week with simple painkillers and do not need antibiotics. Even ear infections due to bacteria do not usually require antibiotics.

Ear Ache (contd.)

When do you need to speak to or see a doctor?

- **If the ear is discharging fluid or blood**
- **If you have a temperature above 38c**
- **If the pain is very severe and a combination of paracetamol and ibuprofen is not making any difference**
- **If you have had symptoms for over a week**
- **If you have other symptoms such as vomiting/loss of balance/a new rash on the ear**

What can you do to get yourself better?

- Painkillers - a combination of paracetamol and ibuprofen relieve the pain which is the main problem with ear infections (antibiotics do not relieve pain)
- Do not put anything in your ear particularly cotton buds!
- Sometimes ear ache is due to problems with your teeth - in young children teething is a common cause of earache and should be managed with pain killers. in adults if you have earache and pain in your jaw or teeth make an appointment with your dentist.

Coughs

Coughs are very common problem and can be either acute (come on suddenly and last for 3-4 weeks due to an infection) or chronic (last several weeks and due to an underlying lung problem such as smoking/COPD).

Acute coughs occur more in the winter and the average adult will have 2 episodes of coughing every year with younger children experiencing up to 5 times a year or more.

Most acute coughs are due to viral illnesses, will last 3-4 weeks and do not require treatment from a GP.

When do you need to speak to/see GP?

- **If you have a high temperature over 38 c**
- **If you are coughing up blood**
- **If your cough is making you very short of breath**
- **If you have chest pain with your cough**
- **If your cough has lasted over 3-4 weeks particularly if you a smoker**
- **If you are experiencing a lot of wheezing**
- **If you have lost weight unexpectedly in the last few weeks preceding the cough**

What can you do to get yourself better?

- Simple home remedies –make a drink of warm water with a teaspoon of honey and the juice of a lemon is very soothing
- Try not to cough too much - our desire to cough can be influenced by our brain
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Some people find that cough lozenges soothe their cough. There is little evidence that cough medicines help the cough but some people find that they are soothing. However do not expect them to stop you coughing
- If you smoke, **STOP** smoking.

It happened to me...

It could happen to you?

PROSTATE CANCER

A personal perspective from one of our patients

As a regular topic we include an anonymous article from one of our patients about their own very personal experience with an illness. This is their own experience, in their own words and not a professional view, but it might be of interest to help fellow sufferers or their carers.

It happened to me – Prostate Cancer

In 2003 I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. I was aged 59, fit and led an active life.

We had been holidaying with a friend who was recovering from a Radical Prostatectomy operation (the removal of the prostate gland and surrounding tissues) for an aggressive prostate tumour. Having listened to his story, at my wife's insistence, I had a PSA blood test (Prostatic Specific Antigen) at the doctor's surgery when I returned home. A raised PSA can help to detect prostate cancer. Shortly afterwards I was surprised to be contacted by the doctor and informed that my PSA was raised. On examination by the doctor at the surgery I was told my prostate gland felt normal, but I would have to be referred to a consultant urologist at the Wansbeck Hospital because of the raised blood test.

At my hospital consultation I had a repeat PSA blood test and was informed if it remained raised I would have to have further investigations. It had remained raised and a few weeks later I had an ultra sound scan of my prostate gland. I was told appeared to be normal, and biopsies were taken from the prostate gland. I was shocked and surprised when after a few weeks I was contacted, and at the consultation with the consultant informed that all five biopsies were malignant (cancerous) and I had a moderately aggressive tumour that would have to be treated.

Options of treatment were discussed and I chose to have a radical prostatectomy. I was informed that this operation would be performed at the Freeman Hospital as it was specialised surgery. I was referred to an excellent consultant who first carried out tests and a bone scan to eliminate any spread of the cancer outside the prostate gland, in which case he advised me that surgery would not go ahead.

Eventually I had the operation and was in hospital for nine days. I believe they now do this operation by key hole surgery and the patient recovery is much quicker. It was explained to me prior to my operation that they would try to prevent nerve damage to the surrounding area, to help prevent the risk of impotence, but I could be left with temporary urinary incontinence after surgery, which I did have for a while.

I had a straight-forward recovery and was followed up at the Freeman Hospital for ten years. I had a PSA blood test at each consultation/ which I am pleased to say has remained at a normal level since my operation. I now have a yearly PSA with my GP. My sons have been advised to have a yearly PSA test after the age of forty.

I am aware that a lot of research is being carried out into the early diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer, also that there are different schools of thought regarding the reliability of a PSA blood test.

All I can say is a PSA blood test saved my life.

Did you know?

Signposting Local Support and Social Networking Activity Groups in the community



- living with sight loss

Support group sessions for people living with loss of sight and their carers. Informal groups discussing many topics related to sight loss.

Did you know?

Signposting Local Support and Social Networking Activity Groups in the community

Northumberland County Blind Association Supporting blind and partially sighted people

Confidence Building Course - living with sight loss at Northumberland County Blind Association

In February 2018, Northumberland County Blind Association (NCBA) successfully delivered a Confidence Building Course for people with a visual impairment, in collaboration with the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB).

The course was facilitated by Kirsty Ferguson from RNIB and Laura Valentine from NCBA and it was delivered over four consecutive Mondays, in a relaxed atmosphere at Reiver House, in Morpeth.

Many participants attended along with family members and friends. As well as hearing from a number of organisations about the support that is available for people living with sight loss, there were also opportunities for participants to share experiences, offer advice and hear how others have overcome the everyday challenges of living with sight loss.

The following sessions were facilitated by guest speakers who kindly agreed to take part in the courses:

- Mobility, getting out and about - delivered by Mike Dooly from the Guide Dogs Newcastle Mobility Team,
- Welfare rights - presented by Alison Bell from the Age UK Northumberland,
- Assistive technology - covered by Christine Dodds, volunteer IT specialist and Surj Singh from the RNIB,
- Eye health - delivered by Andrew McGregor from McGregor Opticians Ltd in Ashington,
- Leisure facilities - presented by Michelle Watson from Culture, Heritage and Libraries Active.

During the sessions, Laura and Kirsty also spoke about the services offered by RNIB and NCBA, including tips and gadgets for everyday living. They used the equipment displayed at NCBA's resource centre to demonstrate how low vision aids could benefit everyday living.

Did you know?

Signposting Local Support and Social Networking Activity Groups in the community

The course received great feedback with participants telling us:

- "The experience gained by attending this course is life changing."
- "Very interesting course. It let me know the range of organisations and individuals who can help people with a visual impairment in Northumberland. I also found interesting the new technology that is now available to assist with reading documents, bills, etc."
- "Enjoyed attending and appreciated the information."
- "I found the course useful as I found out about groups who can help people with a visual impairment."
- "This is a good social and information course."
- "People were so nice and friendly."

RNIB and NCBA would like to thank all participants and guest speakers for taking part and making this first course a huge success.

Due to its popularity additional courses were held:

16th May to 6th June at NCBA, Reiver House, Staithes Lane, Morpet, Northumberland, NE61 1TD

And further courses planned:

- Autumn in the Alnwick area (venue and date to be decided),
- Winter in the Hexham area (venue and date to be decided).

To reserve your place on one of the above courses, or for further information please contact Laura Valentine at NCBA on 01670 514316 or e-mail info@ncba.org.uk



NCBA is a well-established local charity that provides information, advice and support services to blind and partially sighted people living in Northumberland. Services provide people with the knowledge, confidence and skills necessary to increase independence and fulfill life potential.

- Home visiting service
- Counselling service
- Low vision aids assessment
- Volunteer drivers
- Clubs and Support Groups
- Sight line (peer telephone support)
- Computer Training Courses

Signposts...

- **Pharmacy First**
- **Dental Treatment**
- **Prescriptions**

THINK PHARMACY FIRST

Did you know many medications for simple health problems are available from your pharmacists without a prescription?

Make the pharmacist your first place to go for :

- Simple rashes and eczema
- Thrush
- Threadworms
- Mild aches and pains/ strains
- Constipation
- Verrucae / athletes foot
- Hay fever
- Conjunctivitis
- Coughs colds and sinusitis
- Paracetamol/ ibuprofen for children – GPs no longer prescribe these

Dental problems

Did you know your GP is not trained or allowed to treat dental problems?

If you have toothache, a mouth or dental problem you should ring your dentist. We will no longer prescribe antibiotics for dental problems. If you cannot get a dental appointment, ring 111 who will find you a dentist.

Prescriptions

To request a prescription in person, forms and a 'post box' are now situated in the outer lobby of the entrance to the surgery.

Repeat prescriptions – you can sign up to request these online. Ask at Reception how to do this.

To telephone for a prescription ring:

01670 353586 (former Waterloo patients)
01670 542630 (former Station patients)

NHS 70 Birthday Party

JOIN US FOR A FANTASTIC TEA PARTY

As part of the celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of the NHS Railway Medical would like to invite all patients to come along to the surgery on Thursday July 5th between 2.00-4.00 pm for a cuppa, some cake and a chance to have a chat with Practice Doctors and Staff (present and past), other patients and friends.

Take part in our raffle to raise funds for the 'Calendar Lads' charity, a local group of hospital staff, raising money for 'Bullying UK' and 'Family Lives'. Prizes have been donated by Blyth businesses and patients.

Recipe – Bacon Scones

Bacon Scones

60 ml milk	2tbsst grated parmesan cheese
1 tsp dried yeast.	1tbsp caraway seeds
250g streaky bacon	120g butter
500g plain flour, plus some for dusting	2 large eggs
1 tsp baking powder	120ml soured cream
½ tsp salt	Beaten egg to glaze

Method:

1. Gently heat milk in a pan until it is lukewarm, then pour it into a jug and stir in the yeast. Leave it for 15 mins or so to get it working and froth up. Meanwhile fry the bacon bits until crisp and golden. Remove from the pan and leave to cool.

2. Sift flour in a bowl and mix with the baking powder and salt. Stir in the Parmesan and caraway seeds. Put butter in a small pan over a gentle heat and allow it to melt until it is just liquid. Remove pan from heat, allow to cool, then stir in the soured cream and add the beaten eggs – if the butter is too hot the eggs will scramble. Add the crispy bacon and stir in the yeast and milk.

3. Pour the eggs and bacon mix into a large bowl, then add the flour and other dry ingredients a little at a time until everything is combined. Turn the dough out onto a floured work surface and knead for 5 mins or so until elastic. You can do this with a mixer and the dough hook if you like. Put the dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover with oiled cling-film and leave it in a draught-free place for about an hour and a half until it has doubled in size.

4. Turn dough out again and knock it back. Dust dough with flour and roll it out to about 4cm thick, Cut out rounds with a scone cutter and place on a sheet of silicone baking parchment on a tray. Cut a criss-cross pattern on the top of each one, then leave to rest for 30 mins. Preheat the oven to 200 degrees C, brush with the beaten egg glaze and cook for 25-30 mins. Eat them warm, split in half, spread with butter.

Enjoy!

Delivering a service for approximate 24,000 patients in the Blyth area

Please use the Suggestion Box on Reception and PPG to voice your views.

Newsletter: We welcome ideas for topics of interest from all ages, and would especially like to hear from young people.

The Patient Participation Group (PPG) is made up of volunteer patients who attend meetings approximately every two months with practice staff, often a GP and the Practice Manager, to give feedback from/to represent all patients. They take a proactive role in building the relationship between the Railway Medical Group and their patients.

The PPG produce this Newsletter for the practice with input from patients, practice staff and external health related groups.

We would like to represent **all members of the community and all ages.**

If you would like to be involved, particularly if you are 18-30, we would like to hear from you. Ask at reception if you would like to get in touch with us.