



The Lighthouse Medical Practice Patient Participation Group (PPG)

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Temporary Chair: Kath Boak

www.lighthousepractice.co.uk

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In This Edition...

Front Introduction by Charles Grimaldi.
Welcome - from Kath Boak.

Page 2 Changes in your Practice Service explained

Page 3 Over the Counter Medicines

Page 4 Dr Tim Caroe reflects on changes
Dr Jeremy Durston answers patients' questions

Page 5 Consultations and Appointments
How you can Consult a Doctor at the Lighthouse

Page 6 Flu and COVID Vaccinations

Page 7 Information & Booking Appointments

Introduction by Charles Grimaldi, Editor

It has been a long time since the last Newsletter in October 2021 and much has changed since then. Covid is still with us, but thankfully the wonderful Covid vaccinations programme has managed to reduce its impact for many to something closer to a heavy cold or flu like symptoms. Your PPG and the Practice are focussing this newsletter on helping everyone to understand how each of us personally can access appropriate medical support as

quickly and as efficiently as possible. This will be done by making greater use of referrals to the enlarged range of support within the Practice team, that is now in place to provide very effective and speedier alternatives to always having a consultation with a doctor. We hope that you find the content helpful and positive in its efforts to make patient care as effective as we all hope that it can be and we look forward to feedback from you, so that we can do our best to continue to develop this more open dialogue in future newsletters.



Welcome – from our new Temporary Chair

Dear fellow patients...

We are very lucky to have a GP Practice which really wants to have feedback on our experiences with them, and to hear our ideas and suggestions. There are 17,000 of us. And we have 90 patients

(5%) who give feedback every month on their experiences, so we know what went right for them and what went wrong. We call those patients 'virtual' members of our PPG because they don't come along to our monthly meetings, just give us their feedback. We have only seven full PPG members. We would love more of you to join us, either as 'full' or 'virtual' members, so do email my colleague Liz Walke on: liz.walke@aol.com if you want to know more.

My own involvement with the Lighthouse Practice didn't begin auspiciously! I moved to Eastbourne with my husband Cliff at the beginning of 2015 when we retired. Unfortunately, my first appointment gave rise to a complaint. I was pleased to be invited to a meeting with Dr Stewart (*Senior Partner*) and Claire Carter (*Complaints Manager*) to resolve the issues. The meeting was extremely positive. I was so impressed that they really

genuinely wanted constructive ideas from patients that I decided to join the Patient Forum.

I was born in the North East, and I have lived and worked all over the country. My main career was as a manager in BT, where I had over 1000 people in my department. I was also an Employment Tribunal member. I have also worked as a Classroom Assistant, and a Citizens Advice Bureau Adviser. Since moving to Eastbourne, I have become involved with a lot of local activities – U3A; walking; dancing of many types - Folk, Ballroom, Bellydancing; the Devonshire Park Theatre group; and the Patient Participation Group.

We absolutely adore Eastbourne - in under five minutes we can walk to the Bandstand and sea (our daily early morning exercise) as well as to two theatres and five restaurants. It is perfect for us and very different from the (too) closely-knit mining villages where I was brought up and the anonymous London suburbs where we've lived. We have made so many new friends here. Old friends and family who joked they were visiting us in 'God's Waiting Room' have left Eastbourne with a completely revised opinion of our vibrant, cosmopolitan town.

Whenever I can tear myself away from Eastbourne, my other great love is Greece. We have now visited over 40 Greek Islands, and hope to see more.

Kath Boak, Temporary Chair.

Changes in your Practice services explained

We accept that patients still have questions about the changes since Covid struck and we propose to include questions from patients in future newsletters starting with this one.

The doctors and staff hope that explaining the changes and how we have added additional support and reassurance in both surgeries, is positive and helpful. In the next newsletter we will continue to explore and explain other examples of how the evolving services in our surgeries are seeking to support all patients to get the best help from our teams in each surgery.

Since the beginning of 2020 when Covid struck, patients across the country have experienced huge changes in GPs surgeries. Many of us have felt confused, frustrated and frightened when access to a GP, in particular, has been difficult and hard to understand. Surgeries have found new ways to provide medical support for their thousands of patients, that go well beyond the traditional appointment to see your GP.

Whilst the newsletter has historically been for the patients from the Patients Participation Group (PPG) the Practice is pleased to also contribute to the newsletter to explain that in addition to GPs providing flexibility with a mix of phone and physical appointments to see a doctor, there is now an increased range of staff with different skills and experience, who are able to help with many issues and conditions that can be resolved more quickly than waiting for a GP consultation.

Also, both surgeries work with a growing group of external organisations that can provide additional specialist help. Pharmacies are an excellent example, as shown in the list on page three explaining 35 different ailments for which they can provide medications without requiring a prescription.

So, the big question is ***“How can I get the best and quickest support from my surgery?”***

The answer is that many patients have inadvertently delayed help, because they didn't explain the issue sufficiently clearly to the receptionist. Receptionist training takes over a year to learn to refer a patient to the best person to deal with their issue. This may be with a doctor on the day, or to arrange a phone consultation, or a date for a surgery visit to see a doctor, or refer you to any of the other support staff such as the specialist nurses, to see you sooner and hopefully be able to help to resolve your concern and if not, refer you.

We understand that it can feel awkward to discuss a sensitive concern with a receptionist, but the benefits of being clear, and as accurate as possible to explain a concern, can make a huge difference to the speed and effectiveness of treatment and support. A recent example from a patient, resulted in an unfortunate delay in resolving what could have become serious, because in his words “I messed up in my explanation to the receptionist”

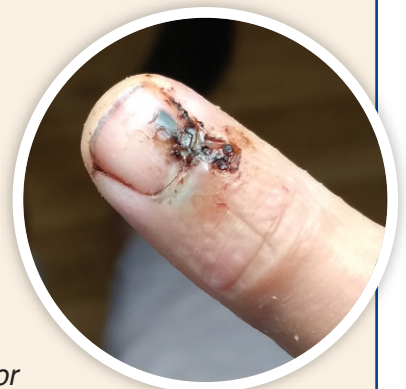
He explained that his puppy bit his thumb nail down to the quick and that it was swollen and very sore. He thought that he needed to see a doctor and asked for an appointment. A week went by before he received an evening phone call from a doctor, and by then his thumb looked and felt as though it had become septic. The doctor said that she needed to see the wound and would do a video call. When she saw it, she immediately prescribed antibiotics to be collected from a late-night pharmacy to enable him to start taking the medication that evening, because few pharmacies would be open during the Bank Holiday. If he had been less insistent initially for a doctor's appointment, and explained more clearly why, the receptionist would have referred him to the wound team and his injury would have been dealt with much sooner and avoided the risk of septicaemia.

So, based upon this example, it is very important to think about how you will explain your issue to the receptionist in the most accurate way that you can. This is likely to result in treatment more quickly than waiting for a phone call or a surgery visit to see a doctor.

It is worth adding that if a nurse, for example, is unsure about an issue, or realises that a prescription is really needed, he or she is likely to knock on a doctor's door while you wait and ask for a prescription for you to take with you straight to the pharmacy.

There is an additional piece of advice...

A photograph of the condition can be very helpful for a diagnosis and can definitely speed up appropriate treatment. If you aren't sure how to send a photo to the surgery, just ask for help.



Charles Grimaldi, Editor

Your GP, nurse or pharmacist will not generally give you a prescription for certain medicines that are available to buy in a pharmacy or supermarket, even if you qualify for free prescriptions.



This applies to treatments for these conditions:

Acute sore throat	Conjunctivitis	Coughs, colds and nasal congestion
Cradle Cap	Dandruff	Diarrhoea (adults)
Dry / sore tired eyes	Earwax	Excessive sweating
Haemorrhoids	Head lice	Indigestion and heartburn
Infant colic	Infrequent cold sores of the lip	Infrequent constipation
Infrequent migraine	Insect bites and stings	Mild acne
Minor burns and scalds	Mild cystitis	Mild dry skin
Mild irritant dermatitis	mild to moderate hay fever	Mild pain discomfort and fever (e.g. aches and sprains, headache, period pain, back pain)
Mouth ulcers	Nappy rash	Ringworm / athlete's foot
Oral thrush	Prevention of tooth decay	Teething / mild toothache
Sunburn	Sun protection	Warts and verrucae
Threadworms	Travel sickness	

Dr Tim Caroe *reflects on changes from a doctor's perspective*



I must confess that I like cake.

Sadly, so do my children and since we have a limited supply of cake in the house, I often find that I go to the cupboard and find it bare. Someone else has got there before me and it's all gone.

In a world with limited resource, how do you best align need with availability? When its only my need

for cake, I can just shrug my shoulders when there is no availability and remind myself that it's probably for the best considering my middle-aged waistline. When it is access to healthcare, it is much more complicated.

In the past, the usual way to get help from a GP practice was to make a face to face appointment with a GP. The key problem with that system was that once all the appointments were gone, what happens when someone says that they need one and is told that there aren't any left? What happens if they needed one more than someone else who got there first? It is not fair to give face to face appointments on a first come, first served basis. It causes a race to be the first to get through to the practice each morning. We should be prioritising people according to their need, not on who can dial the fastest. We can't give priority to a request from someone who has

contacted us digitally in the time that someone else is waiting for their call to be answered.

How useful is face to face as the standard anyway? Is it really necessary for someone to take time away from work/childcare, travel all the way to the surgery, and wait in a room full of people to be seen face to face? Could we perhaps deal with the matter more easily by phone, or text, or video call, or online? This is often greener, more convenient, and crucially leaves flexibility for the doctor to see the people who really do need to be seen physically.

Lastly, we are working now in a much broader world. Does the GP really need to be involved? We work with pharmacists, and physiotherapists, and nurses, and optometrists, and chaplains, and social workers, and care co-ordinators, and physicians associates, and paramedics to name a few. Many issues are brilliantly handled by our non-GP team, meaning our GPs can focus on what only they can do.

So if you ask to see a GP face to face, and our team ask you for some more information, it is so that we can together work out the best person to help, at the best time, and in the best way. Hopefully, if we all work together to do that, we might just be able to have our health cake, and eat it.



Dr Jeremy Durston answers patients' questions

with more to follow in future newsletters...



1 Why does it take a week or more for a phone call from a doctor?

Answer – It doesn't. Around two-thirds of our telephone appointments are book on the day. This means that for around 2/3rds of our telephone appointments take place on the same day as they are booked. Around 1/3rd of our routine telephone appointments are book in advance with a typical waiting time of 1-2 weeks.

2 Why don't the doctors give a specific time for a phone consultation, or in a window of one hour when they have had booked time slots for 10 mins consultations successfully for years?

Answer – We do not have specific appointment times for telephone consultations. However patients

are booked into morning and afternoon sessions and most patients will get a call back within 5 hours, often less. Patients can specify times when they are not available during the day, and many patients take advantage of this every day. This system enables GPs to prioritise the order of their calls in accordance with clinical need, and enables them to spend the time needed with individual patients without having to adhere to a fixed appointment length or running late. This is safer for patients, less stressful for doctors, less irritating for most patients, and is a more efficient distribution of clinical resources for the whole practice population. Many patients prefer it as it allows them to get on with their day without having to wait at a specific time. If a patient doesn't answer a call, the GP leaves a message and can speak to the patient later in the day. They can move straight on to their next call, without any wasted 'Did not answer' time, whilst waiting for the next appointment time to arrive.

Consultations and Appointments

If you need help with a medical problem, contact us online or via telephone (see further information on both methods below) explaining what your problem is and what help you think you need. Our clinical support team will then help guide you to the most appropriate source of help.

If contact with a GP is required, the GP will consult with you by telephone or video call initially, and may arrange a face-to-face appointment if needed. You can request a

morning or afternoon call, or let reception know times when you are unavailable and we will endeavour to accommodate this. We will leave a message asking you to call back if we are unable to contact you. Even when we have reached maximum appointment capacity for the day (around 36 appointments per GP), if your problem is medically urgent we will request further details from you and our GPs will arrange a same day assessment if this is indicated, based on the information you have provided.

Further Information

On-line via Engage Consult

If you have access to the internet, you can use the 'Engage Consult' facility on our website to tell us about your problem including symptoms. If you do this between 8am and 3pm you will get a response on the same day. You will either be given advice, or be prescribed medication, or be contacted for further information and given a telephone appointment (you can request am or pm). If your symptoms are urgent that appointment will be the same day. If not, it will be within two weeks.



Telephone

Between 8am and 6pm you can phone the Practice. The Receptionist will need to

ask you similar questions to those used in Engage Consult to enable a GP to decide whether you need a telephone appointment that day or within two weeks.

Flowchart

A flowchart detailing these two methods of contact is shown below...

Tips for getting the most out of your appointment...

1. **Make a list of what you wish to discuss.**
Put the important facts first.
2. **Have a notepad and pen to take notes,** so you don't forget points.
3. **Be honest.** Tell your GP if you feel embarrassed about talking about your problem and they'll try to help
4. **Don't be scared to ask questions** if you don't understand or need reassurance.

How you can Consult a Doctor at the Lighthouse Between 8am and 6pm Monday-Friday

Two ways to do this – via Engage Consult or Telephone us

Online via the Practice Website

- Click Engage Consult for the site you are registered with
- Login and Choose Service Engage Consult – Consult online
- Detail the problem including symptoms and upload pictures of any (non-sensitive) areas which can aid in the diagnosis.
- Receive confirmation by email that the message has reached the Practice if raised before 3pm. If outside these hours your message will not reach the Practice and be confirmed until the start of the next working day

- Your message is saved automatically in your medical record
- Alert of message received by Triage GP.

Triage by Duty GP

- **If you are acutely unwell**
A GP or relevant healthcare professional will telephone you the same day. Then, if necessary, they will book a face-to-face appointment.
- **If you have a non-urgent issue**
The GP will ask for a routine telephone appointment to be made.
You will be informed of the telephone appointment (by telephone, text or email).
- **After your initial telephone appointment**
with either a GP or health professional, a face-to-face appointment will be made, if necessary.

Telephoning Reception at Your Site

Care Navigation Our Receptionists will ask you for a brief reason as to why you require a GP contact
We need this **to ensure you are booked with the most appropriate person** (this may not always be a GP)
We will also check with you if **your problem is a new or pre-existing one** and how long you have been experiencing this for.
Patient is advised that a member of the team will telephone, text or email them with the outcome of triage and next step.

- Receptionist notes problem to your medical record.
- Alert of message received by Triage GP.

Frequently Asked Questions Flu and COVID Vaccinations

Our reception teams are extremely busy, so please use this guide rather than phone the Practice.

QUESTION

If I cannot attend the flu clinic at the date and time in the text/email invite, should I call reception to rearrange my appointment.

Answer

NO – Please try not to call reception or send a message via Engage Consult.

It is ok if you attend later or earlier on the date or attend a later clinic. Please do not turn up at an earlier clinic as this may cause a shortfall in supplies. However, you may have to queue. The most important thing is that you get your flu jab.

QUESTION

If I do not want the flu jab, do I need to let you know?

Answer

YES please, via Engage Consult if possible. This will stop you receiving Texts or Letters inviting you for the flu jab

QUESTION

If I've forgotten my flu clinic appointment date and time, how can I find out the details?

Answer

A reminder text or letter will be sent before your clinic date. If you mislay these details, you can still turn up at a clinic, however, you may have to queue. The most important thing is that you get your flu jab.

QUESTION

My spouse, partner, parents/ other household members have been invited to different clinic dates and /or times. Can we all come along together as a group at the same time?

Answer

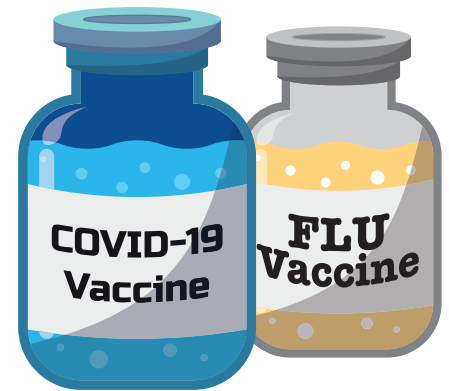
YES – Please come as a group to the latest clinic date you have been given to ensure other patients booked in get the jab on their given date where possible. You may have to queue. The most important thing is that you all get your flu jab.

QUESTION

If I have an appointment at the surgery before the flu clinic, will I be given the flu vaccination at the appointment instead?

Answer

NO – It is very unlikely that you will be offered the flu at an appointment before the flu clinics as our orders will not have arrived and we need to maintain vaccine orders for the flu clinics.



QUESTION

Will all patients aged between 50 and 64 get flu jabs again this year?

Answer

YES, we hope so. This will be offered in line with NHS guidelines after those over the age of 65, and those with underlying health conditions and will also depend on the national availability of enough vaccines.

QUESTION

Should I go to a Pharmacy for my flu jab?

Answer

We would prefer that you came to us. It is your right to go to a Pharmacist if you wish. However, at the surgery we will have your medical records available and so can provide you with individual advice and guidance where needed.

QUESTION

I have already had the flu jab this year at a pharmacist or other healthcare provider, do I need to let you know?

Answer

NO – If you've had the jab at the pharmacist or another healthcare appointment we should automatically be notified.

If you've had the jab at work, YES please, via Engage Consult if possible.

QUESTION

I am housebound, will get the flu jab?

Answer

YES – However, if you are able to get to a flu clinic we advise that you do so, as this will be sooner. If you have been designated as Housebound by your GP this is because you can never leave the house and your flu jab will be given to you by South Downs Health and Care Services.

QUESTION

Will I be able to get a Covid vaccination at the surgery?

Answer

NO – Please do not contact the Practice about this. As in previous years, Covid vaccinations will be managed separately by SDHC at our centre in the Harbour. Any information we have will be posted on our website.

Your PPG Needs YOU

If you would like to participate in contributing to the excellent care we receive at the Practice, why not join the Patient Participation Group to help shape the ongoing development.

For more information, please email:
Liz.walke@aol.com

Information and Contacting the Surgery

Surgery Information

Opening Hours

Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm

Due to the pandemic, to contact us you can use **Engage Consult, the online medical symptom taking tool** that allows you to get a message to the Practice, or telephone us. Currently, Patients can only enter the Practice buildings to attend a pre-booked appointment arranged by the Practice team.

Times for Contacting a Doctor

Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm

Out of Hours

If you need assistance between 6pm-6.30pm on weekdays, please call the out-of-hours service on: **0300 555 5252**

At all other times, please call the **NHS on 111** (all calls are free).

Practice Website – take a look!

www.lighthousepractice.co.uk

Practice Facebook 



Managing Your Appointments

If the Practice has your mobile telephone number, we will text you an appointment reminder of your appointment 24 hours before. You can then cancel by texting back one number. If you know earlier that you cannot make your appointment you can **text CANCEL to 07903 594390** as an alternative to either telephoning or cancelling online via Patient Access.

Before calling an ambulance,
you can call **111** for advice



Be Septicaemia AWARE

Call the Practice immediately, or 111, if you have possible early signs of sepsis, as this requires quick treatment and without this it can lead to multiple organ failure or even death. Sepsis symptoms may include a high fever or low body temperature, chills or shivering, fast heartbeat or fast breathing. Call 999 promptly and ask for an ambulance if more severe symptoms of septic shock develop.

These symptoms include severe breathlessness, severe muscle pain, feeling dizzy or faint, vomiting, a change in mental state such as disorientation, not urinating or a loss of consciousness.

Repeat Prescriptions

for patients who are not on Electronic Repeat Dispensing

Our service is three working days from the time that you request your prescription to the time it is sent to the Pharmacy or printed for you to collect from the Practice where you will have to wait outside for a Reception team member to bring it to you.

The Practice is not contracted to run an emergency prescription service. If you need your prescription urgently, please ask at your Pharmacy who can issue emergency medications in many instances if there is no health risk.

Disclaimer notice: Any opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily of the Partners of the Lighthouse, but we have tried to ensure the information contained is correct. They cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies.

Services Available at Your Local
Day Lewis Pharmacy, Eastbourne

- 
- Advice on how to use new medicines
 - Medicine use reviews
 - FREE repeat prescription collection & delivery service
 - Betterlife - Mobility & independent living aids

+ many more!



2 Furness Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 4EY

We are opposite the Lighthouse Medical Practice!

Call us today on:
01323 734 448

Opening Hours:

Monday - Friday: 9am - 6pm

Saturday: 9am - 12pm

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