



The Lighthouse Medical Practice Patient Participation Group (PPG)

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Chair: Liz Walke

www.lighthousepractice.co.uk

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Liz Walke - Our new PPG Chair and PPG Virtual group Lead

My name is Elizabeth Walke, but most people call me Liz. I have been involved in the Practice PPG for over ten years. I have been Vice Chair for many years but now I am Chair of the PPG and I also run the PPG Virtual group. The Virtual Group comprises of patients from the Practice and feeds into the Practice PPG mainly with feedback on patient experience of the Practice, but they also feedback on local NHS services including the hospital. We realise that there is often overlap when related to health care, and to you or me, it's often not clear who is responsible. The PPG is great for patients and the Practice alike, as it sorts out numerous issues arising, which the doctors or patients may be completely unaware and can be sorted.

Outside of the PPG, I am a self-employed book-keeper and also work in a voluntary capacity previously as Chair of the Save the DGH Campaign, which fights to keep essential (or sometimes known as core) hospital services at Eastbourne DGH, and as the Hospital's Champion for Eastbourne Borough Council. As a Christian, I am on the leadership of the new River Of Life Community Church, previously Langney Community Church, that has joined with The Well Community Church, which now meets at St

Barnabas Church next to Langney Shopping Centre. I am also a Street Pastor, which I thoroughly enjoy. The team I am in (of at least three people) go into Eastbourne Town Centre from about 10pm to 4am on a Friday or Saturday evening watching out for the vulnerable and helping where we can, just like Jesus would do. Teams normally go out every four weeks on a rota basis, with some prayer pastors who don't go out but pray, whilst their team is out.

I have been married for 37 years to Dave and have four grown up boys – one is a GP, another is an Accountant, a third is involved in Electronics and one is an Insurance surveyor. I also have five grandchildren. Last but not least, I am an identical twin to Rose Bunn, so if you see someone looking like me and she blanks you, it's likely to be her! I love it!



Profile

Patients' praise for The Lighthouse Medical Practice

I would like to thank all the nurses in the Lighthouse Practice who are **always cheerful and very helpful** even when very busy! I have had various problems recently which involves seeing them regularly.

Very good service at Lighthouse Medical Practice - needing info from prescriptions and left a voicemail - and had a fulsome and helpful text back very promptly. **Very, very efficient and helpful.**

Last week, Xxx was in need of a call with her doctor at the Lighthouse for an issue following six months of chemo, the consultant and the ward told it was a doctors issue and not the DGH's. We called on the Monday in the morning and spoke with Dr. Nicholles in the afternoon and by 5 o'clock was on new medication and four days later Xxx was in such a better place and all is now fine. **We felt it was important to share a positive** with so many other issues happening at the moment.

How to get help from the Lighthouse Medical Practice

Contact us Monday to Friday, 8am – 6pm (*excluding bank holidays*)
Outside these times? Call 111 or 999 (*depending on medical urgency*)

Online

Contact us electronically via our website using 'Engage Consult'.

www.lighthousepractice.co.uk

Telephone

College Road Surgery: **01323 735044**

Ian Gow Surgery: **01323 766358**

The Patient Services Team will:

- Read and triage your message the same day if sent before 3pm, or the following day if sent after 3pm.
- Respond online or by phone to your message within five working days. They may:
 - Convey a response from a GP or clinician, by phone or by electronic message
 - Arrange a clerical response, for example for a sick note request or repeat prescription request.

Or if appropriate, they will:

The Patient Services Team will:

- Answer your call as soon as they can, ask you to identify yourself and ask how they can help.
- For medical assistance requests, ask for a brief description of your problem and what type of help you think you need
- Offer you CARE NAVIGATION advice about services or information sources which may be appropriate for your needs (see page 3).

Or if appropriate, they will:

Book an appointment for you with an appropriate clinician

How to get help from the Lighthouse Medical Practice – *continued*

GP Appointments

- Most GP appointments are initially by telephone
- If you believe you need a face-to-face appointment, you can discuss this during the initial GP telephone appointment or inform the Patient Services Team.
- If the GP believes a face-to-face appointment is clinically necessary, they will of course arrange this.
- Per day, each GP has 10 book-in-advance and 16 book-on-the-day telephone appointment slots, and four book-in-advance and six book-on-the-day face to face slots (TOTAL = 36).
- Typically there will be 3-4 GPs working at each site each day, in addition to GP Registrars.
- They may also do additional home visits and urgent additional appointments.
- It is not uncommon for GPs to do around 40 consultations per day each.
- Routine appointments can generally be booked up to 4 weeks in advance.
- The typical waiting time for a routine book-in-advance telephone call is 1-2 weeks.
- You will be offered an appointment with your registered GP where possible, or another GP if your problem cannot wait for your own GP for medical reasons.
- You may also be offered appointments through our local GP Federation (Extended Access Appointments), which may be in the evening or on Saturdays.
- Once all our appointments are filled, if your problem is medically urgent, the Patient Services Team will request more medical information from you and add your details to our APPOINTMENT REQUEST LIST for the day. Your request will be reviewed by a GP the same day and the practice will contact you with a plan of action.

Nursing Team Appointments

- Nurse appointments cover a wide variety of needs, including wound care, blood tests, ECGs, diabetes, asthma and COPD reviews, contraceptive reviews, warfarin monitoring, NHS healthchecks, vaccinations and much more.
- Our Patient Services Team can advise you on the most appropriate appointment type so please work with them to explain your needs.
- Nurses undertake face to face and telephone appointments depending on need.
- Our Nursing Team Members have a wide and varied range of skills. You may see a Practice Nurse or a qualified Health Care Assistant depending on your needs.
- Our nursing team members work across both sites
- We also have specialist wound care nurses who work within the practice.

Home Visits

- You can request a home visit if you are housebound.
- Being housebound means you cannot leave the house either permanently or temporarily due to an acute illnesses. Our Patient Services Team will ask you to confirm this is the case if your records do not already indicate that you are housebound.
- Please note that if, on visiting, it is apparent to the clinician that you are not housebound, you will be asked to explain why you requested a home visit. With resources under such strain, it is vital that only those patients who are genuinely unable to come to the surgery for medical or frailty reasons request home visits.
- The Patient Services Team will ask for some brief medical information about your visit request. This helps GPs to triage your request and ensure you are seen by the right clinician in the right timeframe.
- Our visits are generally undertaken by Paramedics who work in Primary Care (rather than for the 999 ambulance service). They may be done by our own paramedic, or by one of the paramedics working for our local GP Federation, of which we are a member.
- All visits undertaken by paramedics are discussed with a GP afterwards.
- You can request home visits in advance or on the day.
- For on-the-day visit requests, the earlier you request the visit the better. Please do not delay. As soon as you think you may need a home visit, call the surgery to request one.

Care Navigation

Our Patient Services Teams are trained in Care Navigation

The NHS is a complex network of services, and it can be difficult to know what help is available, and how to access it.

If you explain what your problem is and what help you think you need, they can help you get faster, more appropriate care.

For example, if you have an eye problem, then can direct you to the Minor Eye Clinic Service for a detailed ophthalmic assessment usually within 24-48 hours.

They can refer you to the minor illness pharmacy service.

They can direct you to self-referrals for services such as NHS psychotherapy via Health in Mind and iRock, Maternity referrals, the Sexual Health Clinic, Physiotherapy, CAMHS and more.

The Nursing Team Explained

By Caroline Howells, Lead Practice Nurse

Since the beginning of 2020 when Covid struck, patients across the country have experienced seismic changes in the world of GP practice care.

Over a series of Newsletters, we want to look at all the roles that are available and help patients to understand what these roles are, how patients can access help from them, which in turn leads to more efficient and effective care.

In this Newsletter I am focussing on the clinical team employed directly by the Practice.

The Lead Practice Nurse has a Nursing team that work alongside the GPs. They provide a broad range of treatments and procedures that are different to those offered by a GP. Patients often don't realise that the Nurses have skills that the GPs do not always have and, therefore, patients can sometimes skip the need to see a GP and can be seen more quickly and efficiently than requesting a GP appointment. For example, the Nursing team carry out Diabetes, Asthma, Spirometry and Smear tests. They also give contraception advice, carry out wound care and minor injuries care, as well giving many different vaccinations.

If patients provide sufficiently detailed information to the receptionist, this can then enable the team to book them the appropriate nurse treatment. So, it is definitely worth asking the receptionist whether there is anyone in the nursing team who could help you, as you could be seen sooner than by a doctor.



The Practice also has a **Health Care**

Assistant (HCA) who supports the nurses by doing parts of their work including NHS health checks and various other routine checks for patients with underlying conditions. These are done by invitations generated by the Practice.

The Practice team includes an **Associate Practitioner**. This is a Health Care Assistant (HCA) who has undertaken additional training. This allows them to do more procedures than an HCA and work more closely with the Nurses.

Taking blood comprises a big part of daily work for the Practice. The Practice has a dedicated **Phlebotomist** who specifically does this. If needing blood tests coincides with the doctor requiring a blood pressure test too, that is done by a different member of staff as a Phlebotomist only takes bloods. This can be done during the same visit, so long as patients know that both are required, so please remember to ask for both tests at reception, or on the telephone. That way the team can assist them in coordinating appointments.

The Practice has a **Paramedic** who works closely with the GPs and shares home visits. Some paramedic students also join the surgery as part of their structured training.

There are also other Practitioners who are not employed directly by the Practice, but who work as part of the extended team. This includes **Pharmacists, Care Coordinators, Health and Wellbeing Coaches, Social Prescribers and First Contact Practitioners**. We will discuss these roles in more detail in our next Newsletter.

Finally for this newsletter, when you request help from a receptionist, it can make a big difference if you prepare in advance how you think that you can best describe the condition for which you want help, so that you state your request as accurately and briefly as you can. This includes if you are doing it on line on the Engage Consult system and if practical, please add a photograph/s. This will help you to get your request to the appropriate doctor or nursing staff member.



Dr. Andrew Stewart - Senior GP Partner

Why did you decide to become a GP?

I had decided before medical school that I wanted to be a GP, then during medical school I was tempted by Palliative Medicine (hospice), but realised a GP could do both. The only hospital specialty that I seriously considered was ophthalmology – and once I finished my GP training, I did a six month post in ophthalmology at the DGH to “get it out my system”. I chose general practice because I like the continuity of knowing patients, helping improve their health and supporting them through medically difficult times; the variety of medicine adds to the variety of my career.

What are your main responsibilities at work?

First and foremost, the main responsibility is to ensure patients who consult with me receive the best possible care. Beyond that, but to the same end point, I have responsibilities to support the smooth and efficient running of the practice, and to support patients through the maze of NHS and private healthcare to achieve the best outcome.

What are the biggest challenges you face on a daily basis and how do you overcome these?

Increase in patient demand and expectations can be overpowering but, with communication, most patients will understand the difficulty in achieving everything for everyone immediately. I rely on our team to signpost to non-GP services (eg dentists, minor eye condition clinic, social prescribers and the multitude of new non-GP primary care workforce).

What are your biggest achievements as a GP?

Having a splendid team at the surgery who share my aims and who share in bringing ideas into the mix to further develop our practice.

How do you prioritise tasks?

The tasks for a GP involve patient contacts (phone, video-call – yes, I still have patients who request them), face-to-face, contact from another health professional eg our nursing team, our paramedic, etc), correspondence from patients or hospitals, prescription requests: prioritisation of patient contacts is paramount and is based on information supplied by the patient to reception, which is why sometimes reception will contact a patient or care home back, if insufficient information is given. Prescription requests and hospital letters tend to get done at the same time as each other, due to the slow computer system and how to maximise good use of time.

How do you manage to switch off from work when you leave the surgery?

It can be very difficult as emails can follow me home, colleagues contact about work-related



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issues, and part of my ongoing development as a GP means I reflect on difficult cases (as well as joyful ones!) outside of my working hours. Living out of Eastbourne helps demarcate work from relaxation (provided I keep away from my phone!) – I ensure a non-medical programme plays on my car radio. Family, church and charitable work are social things I do; cycling and trying to keep up with the seasonal changes in our garden are my “clear my head” things.

What is the hardest task you undertake on a daily basis at the practice?

Trying to fit everything in.

How do you motivate staff?

I try to give positive feedback and support to the team when I see them – sometimes, though I don't see the staff from one end of the day to the other (apart from our regular doctor team meetings online).

If you could improve one thing in the practice what would it be?

New, bigger building, increasing accessibility and creating more room for all the primary health care team.

What is the key success to keeping patients happy?

Communication. But even with that, sometimes the external constraints mean my view is the same as the patients – and we're all unhappy!

How have you improved the lives of your patients?

You'll need to ask them!

Referrals Service

by Amanda Sayer, *Practice Manager*



Following on from COVID there are long waiting times for referrals to other services.

Once you have been referred by your GP and your referral leaves the Practice, your referral will be in the hands of a different, or possibly a new service provider.

The Practice sends hundreds of referrals each week and patients need to chase up their own appointments with the service provider. The GP Practice is not usually given any information about your appointment until after you have had it, when a letter is sent to the GP with information about the outcome of your appointment.

We hope that this guide will help patients navigate chasing up their referrals.

If patients have been referred to East Sussex Health Trust (ESHT), usually Eastbourne, Bexhill or Conquest hospitals, then there is this a link on their website, which gives approximate waiting times for routine appointments. If you can please use this link, which will give you an idea of how long you will be waiting:

Average wait for routine first Outpatient appointment – East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (esht.nhs.uk)

The web address is:

www.esht.nhs.uk/average-wait-for-routine-first-outpatient-appointment

Electronic Referral System (ERS)

If a patient has been referred by the ERS (electronic referral system) when the Practice secretaries process it, they will send the patient a letter with the booking details and contact number. Patients can use those details to find out more information about their appointments and waiting times.

Non Electronic Referral System Referrals

Patients will hear directly with regards to their appointments. If they wish to chase up appointments and find out more information and they have been referred to ESHT, then they can contact the appointments centre on **0300 131 4600**.

Musculoskeletal (MSK) Referrals

If a patient has been referred to MSK they will hear from them directly, but they can chase and get more information by contacting them directly on **0300 333 0003**

Radiology Referrals

If a patient has been referred for an x-ray, ultrasound, CT scan or MRI and they have been referred to East Sussex Hospitals, then they can contact the switch board at the **Eastbourne District General Hospital** on **0300 131 4500** and ask to be put through to radiology appointments.

If they have been referred to an outside service run by the community, then they can contact them directly for information. The GP should have advised them where they are being referred to.

Mental Health Referrals

For all mental health referrals patients can contact Sussex Partnership on **0300 304 0100**.

This is the list of the most common places we refer to, although clearly there are a whole lot more and service providers are subject to change.

If patients have waited some time and tried to chase up their appointment with the relevant service provider, but have still not got an appointment, they can contact the Practice with details of when and who they chased, and what was said. We will then do our best to help.

We would, however, request that patients first try to chase their own referrals. We have 17,000 patients and an extremely busy and overstretched patient services team, so this would help us enormously.

We are, of course, always happy to help patients who have a genuine need of support, for example patients with learning difficulties, who are elderly vulnerable and frail, have dementia and/or have no carers or family support.

The link below also offers a very useful guide to support while you are waiting for a referral:

#Support while you wait – Sussex Health and Care (ics.nhs.uk)

The web address is:

www.sussex.ics.nhs.uk/your-care/support-while-you-wait

Private (non-NHS) Referrals

If you request a private, non NHS, referral we will prepare this letter for you and send it directly to you. This will enable you to send it to the Consultant and site of your choice. This allows you to discuss appointment times and how you are paying for your appointment/treatment directly with your Consultant's Secretary.

Questions & Answers...

We have a virtual PPG. Each month we ask them for feedback on services. The key themes are then collated, and in each Newsletter we will answer questions on these key themes.



Q. *I have found Engage Consult very difficult to operate recently.* I could not get into it on several occasions, because it did not accept my passwords. It seems to have become more complicated! I spoke to the Lighthouse reception team and they were as helpful as they could be, and following their advice I managed to get a message to the practice. They admitted, however, that the system was managed independently, but could not tell me who to contact if we need help. Since then I have had more problems, which the system says is due to “technical difficulties”. As this is the only way to contact the practice (apart from phone) the system needs to be reliable, and if there is a problem, please can we have details of IT support.

A. Engage Consult is run by an independent business called Engage Health. There have been problems with password acceptance and the system has annoyingly locked patients out. If this happens to you again, click the option to reset your own password and then Engage Health will email you a link. If you continue to experience difficulties, the Engage Health team will help you. Their website is www.engagehealth.uk/contact. It gives their phone number (01263 834648 Monday-Friday 8am-5pm). There is also a live chat service, or you can just log your problem and Engage Health will get back to you. As a result of patient feedback about Engage Consult, the Practice and PPG are proposing to meet the company and prepare a user guide to publish in a future newsletter.

- Q.** *Are GPs still doing home visits?* I am not able to get out and my last visit was from a paramedic.
- A.** All requests for visits are put into a computerised form by reception staff. The requests are then looked at in a visits meeting by GPs and given, where possible, and if appropriate, to the Paramedic. GPs still do some visits and are aware of all visit requests, but most can be dealt with by a Paramedic.
- Q.** *What is the best app to put on my mobile to access my GP and hospital medical records?*
- A.** NHS APP links to records at the surgery but hospital records are not all computerised. The hospital has offered some patients to be part of the Patients know Best Scheme which means you can log in and see hospital letters. Hopefully, this will result in everyone being able to access their hospital records, although we don't know yet when this will happen.

Thanks to all those who have sent comments and questions. If you know of anyone who belongs to the Practice who would like to be a part of this Virtual Group or would like to join the PPG, please email me at: liz.walke@aol.com



Working Together Kath Boak – Acting PPG Chair, 2022

The aim of your Patient Participation Group (PPG) is to make the ‘Patient Experience’ within the Lighthouse Practice as good as it can

possibly be, within the constraints the Practice is given. We use feedback from you to try to do this in two ways:

1. By working together with the Practice to change processes where necessary.
2. By communicating clearly current processes or changes to these, usually via our newsletter, but also using the Practice website.

We intend to share at least one example of how this is done every quarter in our Newsletter, and this time I have chosen ‘Appointments and Consultations’.

We have included a flowchart to try to explain this clearly. You may also be aware that the Practice website has been updated in the heading ‘Services’.

This update was as a result of patients telling us they didn't understand how the appointments system worked any longer after covid.

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

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.

Information and Contacting the Surgery

Surgery Information

Opening Hours

Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm

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.

Please note that our phone lines are extremely busy especially from 8am-11am, so if your query is non urgent please call at other times.

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



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.