



## **Tutbury Practice Patient Forum Newsletter August 2020**

### **1. A Viewpoint**

We are sitting here, pen in hand wondering, how to write the opening comments for this Patient Newsletter and after giving careful consideration have decided on the following personal views:

This year has seen one of the biggest health pandemics to hit the nation. Yes, we have had major large- scale health incidents before but nothing that has affected the lives of the population and nation in such a way.

Who imagined as we started 2020, we would have been witness to many changes to our day to day living? Our hearts and thoughts must firstly go to those people who have lost loved ones during this time. This is tragic at the best of times but even more so when family could not be present during this traumatic time. We have also seen many restrictions due to lock down measures, effects on the education of our students and young children, economic downturn and resulting recession and from our point of view, major changes in receiving the care and attention from our local health services. Finally, we could also question the lack of clear concise communication from many authorities.

One big question that does require attention is concerning the effect COVID has had regarding the mental health of individuals.

We are aware of people, and both young and old who are scared and frightened of even stepping out of doors and so the general question we have is

1. Who is monitoring this?
2. What assistance will be put in place to help these people?

Our Chair, Jayne Gormley, has tried to put these thoughts of these individuals into the following:

I am anxious all the time,  
don't even realise how bad it is  
until my heart begins to jitter  
like a bird stuck within my chest.

I am nervous much of the time,  
don't cotton on how sad it is  
but just to prove I'm not a quitter  
I'll put herbal cures to the test.

I am depressed some of the time,  
don't know how to show I'm glad. It is  
not a case for Zoom or Twitter.  
What I need is a darned good rest.

I am spaced out half the time -  
don't think about how mad it is.  
I should've made sure I was fitter.  
Yet, despite it all, I feel blessed.

We could go on and on about the negatives and what we could have done differently but in the words of the famous poet **William Blake**, who is known to have said that "Hindsight is a wonderful thing but foresight is better, especially when it comes to saving life, or some pain".

So, let's look at positives and the way forward. Throughout the dark early days of the pandemic our NHS colleagues and other services have worked relentlessly in saving lives and continue to do so daily. In many cases our communities have come together to help their neighbours and local services. People now speak to others in the street, ask how people are, value family life, found better ways of working both within the health and private sector and possibly improved their health by doing things such as gardening, decorating, walking and starting new hobbies.

Technology has been assisting in getting over the issues of getting to see your GP and other health professionals as well as uniting families who couldn't meet face to face. However, we must remember that not everyone has either the technology or the knowledge to use this means of communication.

It is safe to say that no matter what happens in the future we will not see our health services returning to what it was pre COVID.

So, what can we the patients of the Tutbury Practice and members of the Patient Forum do to empower that the patient voice is heard and ensure any future changes have had the view of the patients considered, the negatives/positives learnt and how we move forward in a constructive and meaningful manner that is a benefit to all?

## **2. What we have been doing.**

### **a. Communication.**

Since day one we have been in contact with the surgery and other outside organisations to ensure we get out the appropriate messages to our members and the wider community. At the beginning the messages would have been sparse as the NHS was at its highest level possible, Level 4. This meant that any messages had to either come from control centre of NHS England or be approved beforehand by NHS England. Although we are now at a Level 3, Restoration and Recovery, communication can still be difficult, but we have endeavoured to keep people updated on a wide range of health-related topics.

### **b. Surgery Update**

We held our first virtual Patient Forum meeting during July, and we were grateful that Dr H. Skinner, Partner and Rachael Brown, Practice Manager, were present throughout the meeting.

They were able to give a valuable update on the changes COVID has meant to the running of the surgery and the way services had been affected.

Various systems have had to be implemented over the last few weeks to ensure the service you obtain from the Practice is maintained. This has meant the Doctors, nurses and reception staff all using various technological platforms to contact you, AccurX & video consultations. Our GP's now telephone the patient to consult whereas many patients will be used to face to face consulting. It is not possible to see the number of patients face to face, as they used to, Clinical staff are able to wear PPE for a limited period only, and the viral load of COVID19 means that they can only see patients for no longer than 15 minutes which is why many of the face to face nurse appointments are no longer being offered. There are also restrictions on how many patients can be in the waiting room at any one time and there are strict procedures in place to enter the premises.

We know this is very frustrating for patients and everything is being done to return some services as and when possible. Naturally, the next issues facing the Practice include flu vaccinations, how, when and dealing with the increased numbers, a possible second wave of COVID and the normal winter pressures seen year on year.

The Practice has also seen the retirement of Debra McNair after 21 years and Caroline Rooney, Receptionist leaving the surgery. These has meant current shortage in staff.

### **Latest Update from the Practice Manager, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2020**

#### **Seasonal Influenza Vaccinations**

We have now started to take appointment requests for flu vaccinations, dates available are:

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September - Morning

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September - Afternoon

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October – Morning

The earlier Saturday morning appointments are for those patients who have a Chronic disease and are aged between 50 & 64 years

The later appointments on the Saturday mornings, after 10am, are for those patients who are aged 65 years and over.

Further details on the additional cohort of patients who need vaccinations will be available soon, you are asked to visit the website for more information.

We ask patients to arrive for their appointment at the time given, we must ensure we maintain social distancing, directional floor markers will be visible. We will have 4 clinicians administering the vaccinations and we will operate a one-way system through the building. Patients are asked to arrive at their allotted time to ensure social distancing is maintained and floor markers will be visible. Patients are asked to arrive wearing a short-sleeved garment and to have their arm ready for vaccination. You are asked to move through the building at a steady pace. You will be asked to check in with reception as you pass and confirm your identity. The public toilets will not be available.

#### **Nursing Team**

Senior Practice Nurse Cindy Arnold has returned to work following social shielding however is still at an extremely high risk therefore she will not be seeing patients for the foreseeable future. Nursing appointments are still at a premium and we ask that you bear with us. We are still unable to provide certain procedures to our patients and we ask that you bear with us, we do

appreciate that this can be very frustrating for patients but ask that all staff are treated with respect when you telephone the surgery.

### **GP Appointments**

In accordance with NHS England General Operating Procedure guidelines, the Practice is still offering telephone triage appointment's with GP's. We do appreciate that patients would rather see the GP face to face however this is not possible at the present time. If the GP feels it is clinically necessary for the patient to be seen face to face the GP will advise the patient of a time to come down to surgery. You should not arrive before this time as you will be expected to wait outside until the time of your appointment.

### **Health Centre Doors**

Patients are asked that they continue to use the buzzer located on the left -hand side of the door to speak to a member of the team. If you are not answered immediately it means that the team member manning the front desk at that time may be busy on the telephone or dealing with more urgent situation. We ask that you bear with us, we will answer but it might not be as immediately.

### **Website**

Our Practice Website is currently undergoing an update and we ask that you bear with us during this update.

### **Half Day Closures**

The surgery will be closed in the afternoon on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September for training and Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September, however on this day we will be seeing pre booked patients for seasonal flu vaccinations. There will be no other services available on either of the two afternoons.

### **c. Forum Meeting Dates**

Naturally, under the current situation we have been unable to hold any face to face Forum meetings since the one held in March. However, in July we held our first virtual group meeting, via Zoom, which was successful. We foresee that the rest of our planned 2020 meetings for September and November will have to held in this format. The next one is planned for:

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020 between 6.30pm and 8.30pm.**

The meetings are for any patient registered with the Tutbury Practice and an invitation goes out to all the Forum members we have registered. If anyone else would like to take part, please notify the undersigned and an invitation will be sent out to you. For those who do not have the means of taking part please send the undersigned any questions you would like to have raised and we will endeavour to get any responses back out to you after the meeting.

#### **d. Forum Quiz Nights**

Due to the lockdown and conditions to follow since its easing it is not possible to hold the quiz nights and therefore have had to take the decision to cancel all quiz nights planned for 2020. We hope these will restart during 2021.

### **3. Wider Communication**

The Forum membership is fortunate in having members that sit on the East Staffs District Patient Engagement Group, (ESDPEG), East Staffs Clinical Commissioning Group Patient Board, (ESCCGPB), East Staffs and Surrounds Diabetes UK Patient Network as well as other health related organisations. The Forum are also members of Support Staffordshire.

Through these organisations we have been able to seek information regarding the COVID situation and effect on patient health services.

In addition, we have been able to pass on the patients' views, thoughts, concerns, and comments. This has enabled the patient to have a voice at these levels. As we now are in the Restoration and Recovery stage, we are pushing for patient involvement at the highest levels possible.

As mentioned in the beginning of this newsletter we want to ensure any future changes have had the view of the patients' considered, the negatives/positives learnt and how we move forward in a constructive and meaningful manner that is a benefit to all.

The ESDPEG, which consists of patient representatives from the various East Staffs Patient Engagement Groups, conducted a survey on the effects of COVID throughout July. The final report has been produced and will be available before the end of August. This will be sent to all our current Forum membership but if you wish to also have a copy please contact the undersigned and one will be sent out to you. It was pleasing to note that from the responses at least 18% were patients of the Tutbury Practice and we thank you if you were one of those.

In addition, we are members of The National Association for Patient Participation, NAPP, and distribute their monthly bulletins. We are concerned that they do not appear to be receiving answers from the Government to very valid questions regarding shielding, such as

1. Can you assure us that shielded patients will be involved about the future of shielding, if not why?
2. Will you consider retaining shielding for the extremely vulnerable perhaps in a reduced format?
3. Can you share with us the scientific evidence on which decision to cease shielding was taken?

If you wish further information on any of the above and / or wish to join our membership, please contact the undersigned.

Finally, to all our Tutbury Practice GP's, Nurses, All Staff, Patients, their family and friends we thank you for your support and wish you all to:

**Keep Safe and Well**

John Bridges

Secretary Tutbury Practice Patient Forum

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