

# Bartley Green Medical Practice

## PPG Newsletter Autumn/Winter 2024

Welcome to the Autumn/Winter edition of the Patient Participation Group (PPG) Newsletter for 2024. This edition looks at the various ways that technology can be used to improve the efficiency of the practice and to make the communication between the surgery and its patients simpler and more convenient.

We do realise however that many of our patients do not use modern technology and traditional methods of contacting the surgery such as land-line telephones and personal attendance are still important and available to those who prefer these methods.



Another important development is in the issuing and dispensing of prescriptions and the article below will go a little way to explain how prescribed medicines get from the doctor's surgery to patients medicine cabinets!

*The PPG would still like to recruit new members and any patients who would like to have more of a say in how the practice operates and would like to contribute to discussions are very welcome. The next meeting is on Monday 9th December 2024 at the surgery - why not come along and see what happens!*



### Did Not Attend (DNA) figures

The practice continues to be concerned by the number of appointments that are missed by patients. From 1st June to 19th Sept 2024 (100 working days) the number missed were:-

**174** GP appointments.

**208** Nurse appointments

This equates to over 33 hours of wasted doctor appointments and 55 hours of nurses time! Please remember to inform the surgery if you cannot attend - this can be done by phone apps, the NHS site and by phone at off peak times or by replying CANCEL to your reminder text.

## From the doctor to the medicine cabinet - Electronic Prescriptions

Have you wondered how it is that a doctor can issue a prescription and it magically appears on the Chemist's shelf ready to pick up? Long gone are the days of an unintelligible script written in a long forgotten language on a notepad! Concerns over security and fraud along with a requirement to improve patient convenience led to the NHS developing a



system called the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS).

Although there are personal situations which require alternative solutions, 95% of prescriptions follow this practice. Prescribers, whether doctors or care workers issue prescriptions

electronically and send them to a central server known as the NHS Spine. Repeat prescriptions ordered on-line are handled in the same way.

Patients are required to nominate a preferred pharmacy from which they will pick up their medication. This is done in a patient's NHS account via the NHS web site or phone app

that access your records. (See later article in the newsletter). This preference can be changed at any time by the patient.

A pharmacy will then download any prescription on the NHS Spine which has that business as the preferred dispenser. This is be done either automatically, for example during an overnight process or manually at various times during the day. Once the prescription is downloaded the pharmacy will dispense the medication and it is packaged ready for collection by the patient.

Once dispensed, that prescription is considered to be completed. However, should a patient be unable to collect that medication from their nominated pharmacy, the patient can request that the prescription be returned to The Spine and the medication is returned to the shelves. The patient can then use an alternative pharmacy and ask them to download and dispense their prescription.

## Electronic Prescription Service ...PPG feedback and concerns

There are many advantages to this free system including convenience, security, confidentiality and also economic saving for both medical practices and pharmacies. During the PPG meeting there were questions raised about the system and about our local pharmacy (the branch of Knights in Curdale Road). Comments about this business were mostly favourable although some issues were raised. The management at Knights kindly answered some of the queries.



- The pharmacy is closed at lunchtime 1pm - 2pm Prescriptions and most over-the counter medication can only be dispensed when a pharmacist is on the premises. If the pharmacist is at lunch and the shop is open this could lead to customer dissatisfaction. Knights management decided it is more practical to close at a specified time for clarity.
- Your prescription hasn't arrived yet" Understanding how the EPS system works should avoid any misunderstanding however the manual downloading and dispensing of prescriptions can take a little time and patients may be required to return at a later time to collect prescribed medication. To avoid unnecessary trips, a text message service is available from the pharmacy to inform patients when their medication is ready.
- Free Delivery of prescriptions Medication is still delivered to patients who are in need of that service but free general delivery was a feature of COVID lockdown and was funded by the NHS. That is no longer the case so now the service is only available to those with registered mobility issues or are housebound.

*It is important to note that our local branch of Knights is part of a larger group and that operational decisions are often made at group level and are out of the hands of the management of the local branch.*

### *What else can a Pharmacy provide?*

**Pharmacy First** - Pharmacies now offer many other services which can be more convenient and more readily available than a GP appointment and will relieve pressure on the practice.

Launched in January 2024, pharmacy first is a set of services and consultations that can be offered to patients with certain conditions. There are currently seven conditions on which pharmacists can advise and treat. These are:-

**Insect bites, shingles, sinusitis, sore throat, urinary tract, ear problems and impetigo.**

GPs are informed after the consultation and pharmacists are able to issue prescription only medication to treat issues where appropriate.

Further information is available from pharmacies.

### *NHS Apps and On-line Sites*

A number of smartphone apps are now freely available to communicate with the practice. The functions available include viewing your medical records, re-ordering prescriptions, getting test results, booking (and cancelling) appointments and several other services.

Although there are several apps available, the preferred app and most comprehensive is the official NHS app. The NHS web site also provides the same services as does Systonline on the web.

The apps all access the same records but do so in different ways and it is a personal choice which to use. The PPG are investigating ways to help patients who wish to use these electronic methods but are not confident with the technology.



### **And Finally...**

- ◆ The practice is now booking patients in for Flu Vaccinations.
- ◆ Child Immunisation - Get your child vaccinated. Whooping Cough is on the rise!
- ◆ Get your Covid booster vaccination. Booking is via the NHS web site
- ◆ Bartley Green Medical Practice has a Facebook page - follow for the latest updates and news from the practice
- ◆ Visit the BGMP web site <https://bgmp.digipractice.org>