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Pulborough Medical Group

Pulborough Primary Care Centre

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PRACTICE UPDATE

Dear Patient

We have great pleasure in presenting to you our new Pulborough Medical Group (PMG) Practice booklet which, for the first time, we have posted to all 7000 households registered with our practice. Within it you will find useful information about every aspect of our services including how to book appointments and order medication, but it also contains some very valuable advice to enable you to keep yourself well. Much of the information is expanded in our recently updated and commended website at www.pmgdoctors.co.uk.

Although PMG is a large Practice, we like to feel that the benefit of our size is seen in the range of services we can provide and the expertise that you will find on offer here. Certainly much has happened since we moved into our new health centre in August 2007, when we last produced a practice handbook, and the partners thought this was a great opportunity to update you regarding some of our key developments and changes.

The GP Team

During the last 3½ years, Dr King and Dr Gibbon have retired, both after 30 years of service as GPs in Pulborough, and the PMG partnership has now been joined by Dr Jonathan Serjeant and Dr Guy Mitchell. Within the rest of our excellent GP team, Dr Amelia Bolgar has been welcomed back following her maternity leave and, along with Dr Ann Summersgill and Dr Jaideep Jadav, we have been joined by Dr Selma Stafford who works regularly on Wednesdays. Although we are all, by definition, medical generalists, we have developed a range of specialist skills to increase the range of treatments we can handle within the practice. These include joint injections, minor surgery, (including cryotherapy), family planning, sexual health clinics, and vasectomy operations.

General Practice Specialist Training

PMG is committed to being a centre of medical learning, and one of our major achievements has been the introduction of GP specialist training into our practice. Each year, one of these doctors spends a whole year with us (currently Dr Sara Bella) and we also have doctors on 4 month placements (currently Dr Shaz Choudray). Each of these Doctors receives a great deal of support so that not only can they can develop their own very high standard of general practice medicine, the whole of the PMG team is focussed on maintaining high standards of excellence. It has been very good therefore to hear that PMG is already a much-sought after posting.

Pulborough Patient Link (PPL)

Within the envelope you will find an information leaflet from our patient participation group, known as Pulborough Patient Link (PPL). With the new government's changes to the NHS, patient involvement is set to become increasingly important in defining what services the NHS should provide locally. Our PPL group is recognised as a leading example of how this can be done in a constructive manner. Although the membership of the PPL is steadily growing, we would like to take this opportunity to encourage as many of you as possible to join it, so that we hear even more clearly how we can best use the available resources to keep you well and help you when you are not. Becoming a member of the PPL has the added benefit of being able to receive the PPL Newsletter and news of other PPL events (the last one held in October, 'Matters of the Heart', was attended by more than 170 people) either for free by e-mail or as a hardcopy with a £3 charge for postage.

Appointment System and Continuity of Care

General Practice everywhere is getting busier and we are no exception. Listening to your feedback, we understand the need to improve access; we have therefore reviewed our appointment system, with the aid of the much-respected Primary Care Foundation, and have very recently improved the balance of appointments, whether on the telephone or face-to face, that can be booked well-ahead or available on the day.

Some of the key changes are as follows:

- To promote continuity of care, we have introduced a system where those with long-term conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease and mental health issues, are able to be offered appointments with a GP up to two or three months ahead.
- Our receptionists are able to offer on-the-day appointments to patients who are very young or have acute medical problems, albeit not always with the GP you normally see.
- To aid those restricted by working hours we run some clinics starting at 7am on Monday, Tuesday and Friday. Please note that, the Monday evening clinics have been withdrawn.
- We will continue our work on developing the appointment system in the New Year.

PMG Nursing Services

Nursing is becoming an ever more important aspect of primary care and our nursing service has also developed greatly over the last few years. Under the leadership of Pippa Keatley, we now offer advanced-care diabetic, respiratory illness and travel clinics and continue to run a very successful chronic skin ulcer clinic with our District Nurse colleagues (who are employees of Sussex Community Health). New services include that for minor injuries, which is increasingly well-used with more and more patients having minor lacerations glued and dressings applied at our surgery - all of which help to avoid a 4 hour wait in a Casualty department 20 miles away. However, the team continues to fulfil the vital role of administering an ever-increasing number of immunisations (in excess of 5000) to our practice population very year, thereby preventing, not only 'flu, but also a wide range of serious childhood, respiratory, travel-related and even cancer-causing infections.

Corden's Pharmacy

We have invested in our local pharmacy to ensure it can provide additional NHS services such as Stop Smoking, and our pharmacists are trained to offer clinical advice and some are able to prescribe medication. Corden's Pharmacy is an outstanding example of the way in which 'high street' chemists can also provide a great deal of medical help to patients and we encourage you to make use of their skills, particularly for minor illnesses.

Additional Services Closer to Home

Although we only refer 10% of our patients on to hospital care, the cost associated with each of the services provided in hospital is enormous and, in the light of the NHS funding challenges, it is important that both patients and GPs work together to avoid all unnecessary hospital admissions. Towards this end, in Pulborough, we have worked hard to provide a range of some twenty-five different NHS services, in addition to those specialist services offered by the Practice, to provide you with advanced care closer to home. These services are listed on our website, but they include a wide variety of consultant clinics, musculo-skeletal and mental health therapists and screening.

Constructive Feedback

We are grateful for all the feedback you give us, but we would like to encourage you to pass onto us even more of your constructive comments about our services at PMG. With the support of the PPL, we are therefore going to introduce, early in 2011, a 'Real-Time' Feedback system that will enable you to comment on our service just at the time you receive it. 'Real-time' feedback involves the use of a touch-screen system that will be installed permanently in the waiting room area and we will have a portable version for those who cannot access this screen. Questions will be set by the practice, in conjunction with the PPL, and the results will be posted on the plasma information screens in the waiting room and health centre lobby. This innovation does not replace our existing feedback systems, and we will be pleased to continue to respond to your comments in writing or on the phone, and to meet with you in person when necessary.

Practice Management

At the end of 2010, we have said a fond farewell to Liz Coulthard, who for the last 10 years, has so ably lead our wonderful team at PMG, and served the practice and our patients. In her place, we are very pleased to welcome Alan Bolt who we are confident will be able to build on all Liz's good work.

And finally

The NHS is a remarkable organisation and all of us at PMG feel it is a privilege to be working within it. We very much hope therefore that you will find your care from Pulborough Medical Group meets all your expectations and more and that you will support us in making even better use of this excellent primary healthcare facility.

With our best wishes for 2011,



Dr Tim Fooks on behalf of the Partners of PMG