

Falkland PPG Newsletter



Spring 2023

Welcome to the latest Patient Participation Group (PPG) newsletter, for Falkland Surgery

In this issue

- The Surgery Open Evening
- Changes to the Appointment System.
- Staffing changes
- Under-the-Bonnet.
(Changes to GP contracts)
- Loneliness & a Local Directory of Services

Falkland On-line

Don't forget that the surgery has its own Facebook page where you can get up-to-date information as well as post your own comments

And there's also the website of course:

www.falklandsurgery.co.uk/

Surgery Open Evening

There will be a journey into the world of prescriptions at Falkland PPG's **Open Evening on Monday 24th April, 7pm** at the surgery. As well as hearing about the processes for dealing with prescription requests, this should be an opportunity to learn about repeat and batch prescriptions and how to get a medication review.

This is also a chance to hear the latest updates from the surgery.

There will be a raffle, and tea and coffee will be available.

Changes to the Appointment System

The Practice's appointment system changed from 23rd January, to have the bulk of requests going through the e-consult system. Many requests were already going through this route, so patients may not have noticed much of a change.

All of the requests for appointments are reviewed on the same day (if the practice is open) by two doctors. The e-consult form, a national system, asks enough questions to ensure any really serious issues are noted and the patient can be advised to take immediate action such as going to A&E. For all the others, the GP can make a decision on the priority depending on the symptoms. Patients get a call back within 72 hours. Sometimes a telephone conversation is enough, but often they will be called in for an appointment.

A large part of the problem is the increase in demand – up 11% since before the pandemic – without any extra resources to meet it. That means streamlined systems are needed to ensure everyone gets the help they need, as soon as possible, according to how serious their condition is.

Staffing Changes

There are now three prescribing pharmacists.

A new care co-ordinator is due to start in May, doing home visits, looking after frail elderly, doing dementia reviews etc.

There are now three days of MSK physio (musculoskeletal physiotherapy) a week, with diagnostics on Tuesdays and Thursdays and treatment on Friday. There are also physio sessions on Monday evenings.

Under the Bonnet

A look 'behind the scenes' at what is going on in our Health Care System

The Government has imposed a new contract on GPs after negotiations with the British Medical Association (BMA) broke down. The BMA had been looking for more support for GP practices in the light of increased pressures after the pandemic, such as more patients seeking appointments and more complex conditions. They had been looking for more than the 2.1% pay uplift for GPs and practice staff, given the current level of inflation.

This is the last year of a five year overall contract period designed to revolutionise general practice. The biggest change of that visible to patients is probably the new roles, such as pharmacists, social prescribers and physio therapists. The new contract adds more roles including advanced clinical practitioner nurses, and a second mental health practitioner (across the Primary Care Network (PCN) which for us, is Falkland, Burdwood and Thatcham practices).

NHS England's main aim, in the changes appears to be to improve patient access, with more of the funding directed towards that. It is not clear how the changes will impact on Falkland patients, but among the new requirements are:

"patients should be offered an assessment of need, or signposted to an appropriate service, at first contact with the practice", meaning practices will "no longer be able to request that patients contact the practice at a later time"

Patients should automatically be given access to their health records by 1st October (the requirement is just for the records from that date, alt-

though Falkland patients can, on request, already see their historical records as well)

When they change telephone systems, practices will have to purchase a cloud based system (Falkland fairly recently changed its phone system)

Loneliness, and a Local Directory of Services

Loneliness is not only draining and distressing for those experiencing it, it is also bad for your health (equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day, according to one study).

Falkland's Dr Berry, is therefore making use of a two-year GP Fellowship scheme to tackle the problem. Her goal is to compile a directory of local services, that can then be published as a leaflet, to help people find places they can go to find companionship.

There is an existing West Berkshire Directory (directory.westberks.gov.uk) but this covers the whole of the district and is only available online. Booklets on local services have been produced elsewhere, so Dr Berry is learning from what is already done.

Although it sounds simple, this is a huge undertaking and any help that can be provided by anyone in the area would be gratefully received. Help would be particularly welcome with:

- *Compiling a list of services, days, locations, prices and contact details*
- *Using IT skills to format the above into a booklet, inserting pictures/logos etc.*
- *Securing funding for printing and researching printers for the best deals and quality*

Anyone interested in helping out with this project should email falklandppg@gmail.com.

We are always looking for volunteers to join the Falkland Surgery Patient Participation Group (PPG) which acts as the voice of the patients by feeding people's views to the doctors and managers and passing on information. If you'd like to receive emails from the PPG, or join the committee, please email: falklandppg@gmail.com