

WASHINGTON HOUSE RUNNERS IN THE PINK



On a bright Sunday morning on 9 March, 30 runners from the Surgery ran in the Banbury Fun Run to raise money for charity. Runners included doctors, nurses, reception, dispensing, and admin staff as well as some willing spouses, children and mothers to help spur on the not-so-fit. Over the past month pa-

tients at the surgery have been buying raffle tickets to support the runners and so far we have collected £..... in raffle and sponsorship money.

The money raised will be divided between the Cottage Hospital and the Sylvia Wright Trust for sick children in southern India (www.sylviawright.org/).

Dr Jane Cassidy will be visiting the Trust's hospital in April (see related story) to deliver the money raised personally.

Thanks to Charlotte Charles for organizing us all and to the partners who supplied the pink tee-shirts. *(Does this also count as a Surgery Health Promotion Programme??—Ed.)*

PATIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

We would like to thank the patients who completed a satisfaction survey in November. We have had the results and analyzed and we have discussed them with the Surgery's Patient Group and staff. The survey placed us as

about average compared to national results (we scored 65/100 overall; the national average for the same size practice was 61/100).

There are clearly things you think we do very well (the competence of the doctors was rated well

above average) but some things not so well, such as waiting times, and information about our services. A full report is included on the back page, and any patient can ask to see a copy of the report by asking at Reception.

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Special points of interest:

- Patients can now make appointments online
- Surgery offering extended hours
- Did you know we have a Patient Group who represent your views
- Surgery Telephone system rated better than average

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A PRESCRIPTION

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A REPEAT PRESCRIPTION.

(The 48 hour process)

How to apply:

- By posting your request in the grey post box wall mounted in the surgery foyer.
- Request by e-mail
- Web site application (www.whsurgery.co.uk)
- Snail mail!

What happens next?

Reception staff process all requests for repeat prescriptions in preparation for the Doctor's authorising signature.

- The post box is emptied regularly throughout the day.
- E-mail requests will be acknowledged by return e-mail. * If you do not receive such an acknowledgement you should resubmit your request stating clearly it is a resubmission.

Web site applications are printed for processing by the reception staff.

Prescriptions without complication or query:

These are then given to the doctor at an allocated time to be signed and authorised for issue by the relevant pharmacy for the patient's collection.

Examples of complications or queries:

- Medication review overdue
- Requested item is not on a repeat prescription
- Requested item has not been previously authorised
- The item requested has only recently been issued and is not yet due for re-issue
- The requested item has not been issued for a long period of time

In these instances, the reception staff will notify the Doctor of the problem. A doctor will then check and authorise if they are satisfied. If they are not

satisfied they may ask to see the patient to discuss the request. The reception staff will then make contact with the patient to advise.

If certain items on the prescription are authorised, only they will be issued.

The reception staff then distribute the prescription to the relevant pharmacy for issue.

How you can help.

Make sure your requests are not submitted at the last minute. Include your name, address and date of birth if you are not using a repeat prescription form.

Be certain to let us know if your collection arrangements change.

If you need to request more than one months supply, please state a valid reason.

INTERESTING FACT

The Surgery issues on average 11,000 prescriptions per month!

DR CASSIDY ON SABBATICAL

Dr Jane Cassidy will be going on sabbatical from 25 March until 9 June. In that time she will be visiting the Sylvia Wright Trust for orphaned and sick children in Southern India. She last visited the Trust 20 years ago, when she was training to be a GP, and spent several months working voluntarily in the Trust's various projects.

Dr Cassidy will be away from the end of March until June. Dr Stimson will be working additional sessions during this time.

Partners in the Surgery are allocated a sabbatical every five years with the aim of refreshing their skills and renewing their sometimes depleted energy levels! We wish Dr Cassidy a very rewarding sabbatical and look forward to interesting comparisons between the Indian healthcare system and the

British NHS system!

In her absence, Dr Amanda Stimson will be adding additional sessions to her week, and Drs Stevens, Harrison and Parsons will be extending their surgeries to cope with any additional demand.

We hope our patients will understand the benefits to our GPs from having sabbaticals and will be supportive while Dr Cassidy is away.

EXTENDED HOURS

Patients will be aware that GPs have been in discussion with the Department of Health about Surgery opening hours. It now looks likely that each GP Surgery will either lose income or chose to extend their hours in order to 'earn the money back'.

Washington House has offered extended hours since last September, with Drs Harrison and Cassidy extending evening appointments until 7.30 pm each Wednesday. These later ap-

pointments have proved very popular with patients of working age, who are often reluctant to take time off work for a routine appointment.

We are still waiting for the details of the national agreement, but when they are released we will be looking at the new requirements and will



We are open until 7.30 on Wednesday evenings for pre-booked appointments.

hopefully be able to accommodate them.

The Government are again in the process of surveying patients on their experience of GP services. We encourage anyone getting such a survey to respond. Patients are also currently being

canvassed on their experience of the 'Choose and Book' system of referral to hospital.

HOW TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

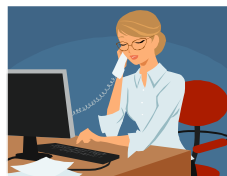
One of the most important aspects of our organization must be how patients access our services, and making an appointment is at the top of the list. We are always looking at way in which we can improve and over the last year we made several changes.

We invested in two extra telephone lines to enable a greater number of calls at any one time. We also added additional Reception hours across the day to ensure the calls could be answered. We have also extended the Receptionists day, by switching the calls from the OOH service to our own at 8.00 am instead of 8.30 am.

We have had a larger than normal turnover of staff with some retirements of long-serving members of staff. A period of high staff turnover is a chal-

lenge for any organization and we are proud that our all staff have managed the change so well. In the recent Surgery patient survey, our overall rating for telephone access was 59/100 where the national average was 48/100.

Many patients are still under the mistaken impression that to book an appointment they have to ring on the day. This is simply not the case: Patients can book a **routine** appointment with a GP of their choice up to **three months** in advance. We reserve about 1/3 of all appointments for re-lease **48 hours** in advance for those falling ill with **short-term illnesses**, and we have about 1/3 reserved for **booking on the day** those with **urgent** problems that occur overnight or that



have suddenly become worse. One doctor each day is kept free of routine appointments to see these urgent or 'acute' illnesses. It is not always possible to offer a GP of choice for urgent appointments and patients will be fitted in with the GP on the 'acute' rota. Similarly we keep some evening appointments as urgent so that we have even cover and GPs do not end up consulting from lunchtime to bed time! Patients are asked to follow this system and not ask for an urgent appointment for a routine problem.

Our Receptionists are highly trained and are expected by the GPs to ask patients questions in order to allocate the right appointment for the right problem.

HOW TO COMMENT ON OUR SERVICES

The Surgery has notices posted telling patients how they can comment or complain about our services, but many still do not know how to go about doing so, or what reaction they will get if they do complain.

We are always open to hearing from patients about our services, and we take each opportunity to look at how we deliver services and

Our Practice Manager, Helen Robins, is the first point of contact for any patient complaint or comment.

improve them where we can. Patients can contact the Practice Manager by writing or phoning, and she will investigate the issues you raise.

The PCT also have a designated complaints process where patients can take a complaint or comment if they are not satisfied with the Surgery response. The PCT will reply to each complaint within 28 days and will liaise with the

Surgery where appropriate.

If you wish to make a complaint to the PCT, address to write to is:

Complaints Manager
Northamptonshire Teaching Primary Care Trust

Bevan House
Kettering Parkway South

Kettering NN15 6XR

Tel: 01536 480343.

Fax: 01536 480383

Email: sue.field@northants.nhs.uk

PATIENT GROUP

In September 2004, the Surgery encouraged the formation of a Patient Group to enable patients to have a more direct say in the provision of health services and the local impact of the national changes to the NHS. Since then it has met every three months at the Surgery and continues to be an important vehicle for canvassing patient views.

The Patients Group has organized

health education talks by the surgery doctors on the Future of Health Services in Brackley, The Case for HRT, and Diabetes, among others issues. Another talk by Dr Parsons entitled '10 Tips to Reaching Your Century' is planned for the next few months. Those wishing to attend (limited to 30 spaces) can leave their names with Reception and we will contact you when a date has been fixed.

The Patient Group also helps with the annual Patient Survey, discusses the results with us and helps to devise the action plan for the coming year and reviews progress.

The Group is chaired by Dr Parsons, as there is currently no patient volunteer for this post, If you wan to join the Group, you can contact the Secretary, Sonja Black by e-mailing

Sonjablack1@aol.com.

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Stop press.....

*The Surgery raised over £1000
for the Cottage Hospital and the
Sylvia Wright Trust. Thank
You to all who supported us*

We are on the web!
[Wwww.whsurgery.co.uk](http://www.whsurgery.co.uk)


A WHS production

STAFF CHANGES

Patients who collect their prescriptions from our **Pharmacy** will have noticed that we have a new Superintendent Pharmacist in place. , Marcia Matos. Marcia comes originally from Portugal, and has worked in the UK for several years, previously managing branches of Lloyd's. She is developing new services for patients and you may be invited to discuss the most efficient ways of taking your medicines with her or with one of her staff.

We are also joined in Pharmacy by Amy Waller, a student at Magdalen School, who will be training as a Counter Assistant.

On the **Reception** team, we have Tracey Feist and Dinah Treadwell as new members. Sarah Ducker is on maternity leave until January 2009, but we enjoy having her back occasionally for her 'Keeping in Touch' days.

Angela Nicholls, a long-standing member of staff has completed her **Phlebotomy** training and is now taking her own blood clinic on Wednesday mornings. Sadly we will be losing her from the Reception team, as she will also be support-

ing the doctors in the role of **Medical Secretary** two days per week.

Our Senior Secretary, Moya Mansfield left for a term-time only job at her local primary school, and will be replaced by Sam Jesson at the end of March. Sam is an experienced medical Secretary coming to us from Shennington Surgery. She and Angela will share this role and will be the first point of contact for patients who have been referred to hospital or to other specialist services.

As a **training** practice, we have a constant stream of doctors training to become GPs. Dr Amanda Webb has been with us for four months on her foundation training, and will be replaced by Dr Tim Cuminos in April. In June we are joined by Dr Julia Bartley, a Registrar under the guidance of Dr Harrison. Dr Bartley will be with us part-time for about 18 months.

Patients may also see Dr Joe Robson about the Surgery from the end of April to July. He is a fully trained GP and will providing additional sessions as a **locum**.

AND FINALLY..... THE PATIENT SURVEY RESULTS

As part of the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) for delivering patient services, surgeries are encouraged to undertake an annual patient survey with one of two Government approved schemes. We use CFEP, which is part of Exeter University, and they analyse the questionnaires and produce overall scores, which we can then compare to national scores.

The practice **overall score this year was 65/100** (national average for a similar size practice was 61) as opposed to 64 (national average 62) last year and 65 (national average 62) the year before. We remain therefore broadly in the average range set against practice scores nationally. As in previous years, the doctors scored very highly and mostly well above average, but some practice-related questions attracted lower than average scores.

The gains we made over last years score related to the improvements in

telephone access and are well deserved by the Reception staff, who can field over a 1000 calls per week at peak times. They have made great efforts to improve the telephone answering statistics. We now regularly answer 85% of all appointment calls within 7-8 seconds, and we have for the second year put extra resources into our telephone system. We have paid for two more lines making a total of 10 lines all together. We are pleased that the improvement has been acknowledged in the survey by marking us 11 points above the national average.

The **ability of patients to express concerns** to their doctor was another aspect rated well above average. The practice is a successful teaching practice with all GPs participating in

training registrars, F1s and F2s, as well as medical students. It is good to know that our GPs display the skills they teach! We remain very pleased to be 7 points above average.

We have discussed the results with staff and the Patient Group and we have drawn up an action plan for the following:

- Reduce waiting times for all appointments
- Better information about the range of appointments and how to book them
- Involve the Patient Group in writing a newsletter
- Advertise the ability to make complaints/compliments more widely
- Further strengthen telephone access.

The full report can be viewed at Reception.

