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**Autumn Newsletter**

September 2018

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Patient Participation Group newsletter. We hope that it contains some useful information about what is happening in the practice and the Patient Participation Group, but if you feel there is anything we should include please do not hesitate to contact us.

2018 Flu campaign. It is hard to believe, but the year is slowly drawing to an end and for many of us this means flu vaccinations. Unlike previous years this year features a number of different vaccinations given to patients depending on their age and clinical requirements. This is in line with advice from NHS England and Public Health England. It is worth outlining what these are and who can receive them:

Children born between 1 September 2014 and 31 August 2016 will receive the nasal flu immunisation which protects against 4 strains of the virus.

Children in an “at risk” group are also eligible for the nasal flu immunisation.

Patients under 65 who are in an “at risk” (eg chronic disease) group will receive the quadravelent vaccination which protects against 4 strains of the virus.

Patients over 65 and over will receive the adjuvented trivalent vaccination, a new vaccination specially targeting the slightly older generation.

To ensure that you receive the most effective vaccination we are going to run specific clinics for each group and we will be contacting you to book you into one of these clinics. Please help us to help you by making sure you attend the nominated clinic.

You may notice that some of the clinics are later than normal this year. This is due to the number of different vaccines being produced and delivered later, but please do not worry. Everyone will be vaccinated in time for the flu season which normally starts in December, so please make sure you attend our clinic at the right time to ensure that you receive the most effective vaccine.

If you have been booked in to a clinic with us and you are offered the vaccination elsewhere please consider this carefully. It is of course your choice, but if you book in with us we will have ordered your vaccine and allocated the clinician’s time. Therefore if you do have it elsewhere please make sure you contact us to let us know so we can cancel your appointment otherwise we may waste time and money.

Community Anchor Coach.  We are delighted to announce that we have a Community Anchor Coach from St George’s Community Centre based in our Surgery on Friday mornings. Sheena is here to bridge the gap between the GPs and our community services. You can be referred to her by a GP or ask for a referral yourself via a member of staff. She can see patients who want help to change their lifestyle, such as stopping smoking, losing weight, exercising more, through to helping in the community to build up confidence and socials skills. She also sees patients who may be lonely, have low mood or recent bereavement and can help patients get out and about and meet new people. If patients can’t attend on Fridays she will be happy to see them at St George’s.

A day in the life of….. The PPG has decided to use the newsletter to explain the various staff roles in the practice to try to help patients understand what goes on. For the first issue we have decided to do “The day in the life of a receptionist”.

I start work at 8am and so arrive about quarter to so that I am logged on to the system ready for the patients. I have a number of roles. I can be on the front desk where I welcome patients, book their appointments and try sort out any issues they may have. If I cannot help them I will see another staff member who can (such as the prescription clerk, pharmacist etc) although I am always considerate of not staying away from the front desk too long. I can also be in the team in the back that answers the calls. This is especially important from 8am to about 8.30 when the majority of patients want an appointment. Usually there are about 4 or 5 us in the team and we answer each call in order. We ask the patients what the issue is and, if we can, we try to suggest the most appropriate person to see them. This may not always be a GP and sometimes might not even be someone in the surgery. For example the other day I advised someone to see an optician as they had an eye problem and this saved a GP appointment, or I booked a medication review with the pharmacist.

I do enjoy working in reception, especially when I can help patients. It can be frustrating though when I cannot help; for example when a patient calls and there are no appointments left. I do try to explain why all the appointments have gone and what the patient’s options are, but it can be difficult sometimes. Some patients do get frustrated and whilst I can understand this I wish they realised I can only book an appointment if it is on the system to use. We do make sure that if a patient feels it is urgent that they are seen on that day that we give them a sit and wait appointment.

Depending on my rota I sometimes don’t finish until 6pm. That can be a long day, especially if there has been a very high demand for appointments and patients are upset that they cannot get what they want! I do still enjoy my job though. We have a great team and I really believe that they all want what’s best for the patient.