**LUPSET PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP**

**Spring Newsletter** February 2019

Welcome to the Spring 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.

**2018/19 Flu campaign**. It has been another busy flu season which has seen us vaccinate approximately 2,800 of our patients. In line with the UK figures we have seen a steady increase in patients presenting with “flu-like” symptoms which peaked at the 3rd week in January before starting to fall again. Initial evidence appears to suggest that this year’s vaccination was more successful than previous years, and the figures prove that it is never too late to be vaccinated within the season. Please do bear this in mind for next season!

**NHS Long Term Plan**. The NHS recently launched its 10 year plan to improve the quality of care and health outcomes for its patients. There are a number of initiatives involving GPs and their staff and we thought it would be worth highlighting some of the ones that we will be working on in the coming months:

Did not attend (DNA). GPs are going to tackle the number of patients that book an appointment and then do not attend without cancelling. It is anticipated that each year 10 million GP appointments are lost due to DNAs! This is an alarming rate and the patient group is working with the surgery to attempt to reduce this figure locally. We appreciate there will always be genuine cases, but please remember that if you cannot attend your appointment you can cancel this by telephoning (this can be done by leaving a message before the surgery opens), by cancelling on line or in person.

Self-Care. GPs, their staff and volunteers will work with patients who have long term conditions (such as asthma, diabetes and hypertension) to increase their knowledge, skills and confidence to be able to manage their condition and live a more independent life. This is called ‘self-care’ or ‘personalised care’ and we will be working with patients and other NHS colleagues to see how we can improve the lives of our patients.

Care Navigation. The NHS recognises that not all patients need to see a GP straight away, possible not at all in some cases and there may be a more appropriate option. For example if a query is about medication or a change in medication after discharge from hospital they may be better seeing a practice-based Pharmacist who is trained to give advice on medication and its correct use. If their medical issue is relatively minor and has come on suddenly, such as a sore throat or cold, they may be better speaking to their local community pharmacy for advice and over the counter medication if required. If they need specialist advice on subjects such as contraception they may be better attending the Contraception and Sexual Health (CASH) drop-in clinic in Trinity Walk. These and many others can be suggested by the reception staff in the surgery when the patient asks for an appointment . This is called ‘Care Navigation’ and is simply a suggestion by the staff to help you. You do not have to take their advice and are free to still see a GP, but if you do seek more appropriate and often quicker help from other qualified professionals you are saving GP appointments for those that may need them more urgently.

Social Prescribing. Another member of staff that can assist GPs is our Health and Wellbeing Coordinator. She runs a clinic at the surgery on Tuesday and Friday and you can request to see her or be referred by a member of staff. She can discuss any lifestyle changes you may wish to make and then help you achieve this. This may be stopping smoking, losing weight and becoming more active, or simply getting out and meeting new friends through the many local activities. This is called ‘social prescribing’ and simply means that she is giving non-clinical help and support to patients directly within their community.

Digitisation. The NHS is striving towards ‘digitisation’. This means that more contacts with your GP surgery maybe made over the internet should you wish to do so. The plan is to have all new patients *capable* of using on line contacts by April 2019 and all patients by 2020. This means that patients can book and cancel appointments online, order repeat prescriptions online and view some of their health records online. Lupset Health Centre already supports most of this and if you would like to use the online facilities please register with the reception staff.

Once registered online you can request repeat prescriptions at any time of the day. This is more secure, reliable and really easy and means that you don’t have to worry about coming to the surgery to do so. If you were to also register for the electronic prescribing service (EPS) you would be able to order your prescription online and then have it sent electronically to a pharmacy that you have nominated to dispense. This is also much more secure and reliable and means that the paper prescription cannot be misplaced or lost in transit.

Even though the NHS is promoting this as a better service it is patient choice whether it is used. Therefore should you wish to continue requesting your prescription by hand and then collecting a paper copy from us you can do this.