**LUPSET PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP**

**Summer Newsletter** July 2019

Welcome to the Summer 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.

**SMS Contact** We are just about to buy an improvement to our text messaging system so we can communicate better with you about your appointments. As before we can send you a confirmation of your appointment and remind you about it the day before. However you will be able to text us at any time if you wished to cancel the appointment and this appointment is then automatically available for others to book. We will also be able to send you more information including a “Friends and Family” survey about how you thought we did on that appointment. We would encourage as many people as possible to sign up to this new service, so please speak to our staff if you wish to do so. Please note that if you do sign up you will be responsible for telling us if you change your phone number so we send the message to the right phone.

**2019/20 Flu campaign.** No sooner have we briefed you on the last flu campaign than we are discussing the next one. The 2019 /20 campaign has been in the news already due to the delay in delivery of some flu vaccines. This has been caused by the World Health Organisation’s delayed decision on which strains of flu are to be targeted. This means the UK will see a slight delay in flu vaccines being delivered for the under 65s at risk groups. However the over 65s vaccines will be delivered on time. We would therefore ask the over 65s to book in with us as soon as possible and the under 65s to wait until early September. All patients are reminded that if they book their flu with us we can also give them any other vaccinations at the same time (pneumonia, shingles etc) as well as do any outstanding health checks (weight, blood pressure, smoking advice etc). Please ensure that you do have your flu vaccination before the start of the flu season (normally December to March).

**Home Visits**. We have had a number of incidents recently where home visits have been requested when a patient is not housebound, but cannot get to the surgery (for example as they cannot afford a taxi). We would like to remind all patients that Home Visits are only for patients who are clinically housebound and who genuinely require a visit that day. We have recently introduced a process whereby Home Visits should be booked before 10am so they may be appropriately triaged, unless it has become clinically urgent after this time.

**GP Appointments** We have recently been provided with some independent software that helps us predict when we may be short of appointments due to staff absences. By doing so we will be able to forecast more accurately and book overtime and / or locums as appropriate. However please bear in mind that short notice sickness and absences do sometimes occur and we may not always have the capacity to meet increased demand.

The good news is that the software has shown that over the last calendar year we have consistently provided at least 5% more appointments than the British Medical Association (BMA) states that we should do. However you may be aware we cannot always provide sufficient appointments to meet demand.

This is where our patients may be able to help us by:

·  Ensuring that all appointments are attended. If you cannot make an appointment for whatever reason, please cancel it as soon as possible so we can use it for another patient. Please note the paragraph above about text messages and consider this.

·  Ensuring that appointments are for one clinical issue only. This means that GPs will not overrun and potentially can see more patients.

·  Ensuring that appointments are only booked when genuinely required. Some patients do book “just in case” appointments so they are assured a follow up if they need it, and then cancel it if no longer required. We are encouraging patients only to come back to see the GP if necessary (ie their symptoms are not improving) and not for routine follow ups.

·  Accepting a GP telephone appointment rather than face to face for test results discussions. Under a new process a staff member will call the patient to advise them that the GP has received their test results and that they will call the patient to discuss them. This is usually at the beginning of their clinics, but the patient will be given an approximate time. We are encouraging patients to keep their phones nearby and answer the call from the GP. The GP will discuss the results and any follow up actions as before as well as answering any questions. This way a GP can contact many more patients and the patient is not inconvenienced by having to read a letter, phone for an appointment and then coming to the surgery to attend it.