

St Lukes Medical Centre & Greenwood Medical - Newsletter

Goodbye and good luck to Dr Hutchinson

Dr Paul Hutchinson is retiring at the end of March. We would like to wish him all the very best in this new chapter of his life.

Message from Dr Hutchinson:

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the last 4 years working in Brixham and wish those patients who've known me the very best in the future."

Welcome

You may have seen a new face around the surgery during any recent visits. We wish a warm welcome to Dr Richard Pidsley.



Dr Pidsley qualified as a GP locally in 1993, since then he has worked in Australia and from 2002 has been practicing in Paignton.

Appointments

We receive an overwhelming number of calls every day for doctors' appointments and are aware that our patients are struggling to get through on the telephones and once through are advised all of the appointments have been taken.

We apologise for this and understand it is frustrating, it is clear that our current system needs adapting to cope with the ever rising demand in General Practice. We have undertaken significant analysis of this and will be making changes shortly to enable our GPs to manage the needs of our patients. We will provide literature in the waiting rooms and on our website on how the new system works so please look out for this.

Please bear with us during these challenging times, we appreciate your patience. Our overall goal is to provide our patients with a better service and we will be reviewing feedback throughout the change. Thank you.

Self Care Without Needing to see your GP

Many medicines for minor ailments can be brought at low cost over the counter at your local pharmacy without you needing a GP appointment. Most are open late nights and weekends and no appointment is needed.

Your local pharmacy can help with the following:

- Hay fever and allergies
- Eye infections
- Constipation and diarrhoea
- Acne and Eczema
- Minor aches and pains
- Coughs and colds
- Thrush
- Threadworms
- Nappy Rash
- Mouth Ulcers
- Haemorrhoids
- Sore throats



Pharmacies are now able to offer antibiotics for certain problems too, Urine infections and conjunctivitis for example.

So before you make an appointment to see your Doctor think 'Could I treat this myself at my local pharmacy?'

Prescription Ordering

Repeat prescriptions can be ordered in one of the following ways:

- In person via the prescription boxes in either surgery reception
- Via Fax 01803 852637
- Via email—L83078.prescriptions@nhs.net
- Via Patient Access Online—requires registration, please ask at reception.
- Via your local pharmacy (Over the telephone or in person)

Please remember to give at least 48 hours for all prescription requests.

Online Patient Access

Have you signed up to use our online services? It's a simple and easy way to:

- Order repeat prescriptions
- Book routine appointments
- Cancel a booked appointment
- View a summary of your medical record



To use these services you will need to bring 2 forms of ID (photo and address) into reception and we will issue you a unique user name and password. For more information or to ask any questions please speak to a member of our reception team or

Fundraising

On 6th August 2016, our Practice Nurse, Liz Woods, will be doing a skydive for Diabetes UK. If you would like to sponsor Liz, please see reception

For over 20 years I have been working with people who have diabetes and have shared many of their struggles. I wanted a challenge and to take the opportunity to raise money to help those living with diabetes.



Named GP

All patients registered at St Lukes & Greenswood Surgeries have been allocated a named GP. If you are not aware who your named GP is and would like to know or would like to make a change to your named GP please speak to reception.

Having a named GP does not prevent you seeing any other doctor in the practice. Your named GP will not be available at all times and if your needs are urgent, you may need to discuss them with an alternative doctor.

Shingles Vaccination

If you were born on or between the dates below, you may be eligible for a free shingles vaccination between now and 31st August 2016

02/09/1942	and	01/09/1945
02/09/1935	and	01/09/1937

Speak to reception about booking an appointment.

Useful Telephone Numbers & Websites

Well Pharmacy: 883318

Healeys: 858142

Bay: 853368

Boots (Fore Street): 882101

Boots (Bolton Street): 854973

Brixham Hospital: 881399

Torbay Hospital: 614567

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.netdoctor.co.uk

Changed your number?

We are more frequently sending information via text message and email. If you have changed your phone number or email address, don't forget to let us know.

Did not attend!

In January alone 213 appointments were booked by patients that did not cancel and did not attend. This works out to an average of 10 appointments every day.

Please remember to contact us if you are not able to attend your appointment so that somebody else can benefit from this time.

Patient Participation Group



St Lukes & Greenswood Surgeries now have a patient participation group.

If you can spare a few hours a year and would be interested in joining please contact Pat Reeves or Tessa McCooey at the surgery on 01803 852731 or by email to tmccooey@nhs.net

Dear Patient,

We are writing to you on behalf of the doctors and staff at St Lukes and Greenwood about some of our current difficulties in providing a high quality and timely service to you. As you know, from various media, the NHS is experiencing great difficulty with the recruitment of GPs and Nurses to work in primary care.

Dr Montgomery retires at the end of June and Dr Hutchinson, who filled in most of our gaps when he could, retires at the end of March. We have been actively recruiting for over a year now and we are very fortunate to have Drs Goss, Lanary, Pidsley and Dr Scott join the practice - all dedicated and capable GPs who alongside Drs Johnson, Walker and Rowe frequently work 12 and 14 hour days under great pressure, trying to provide the high quality care we believe in. However, the government's policies have meant that the extra doctors, staff and resources we want to provide are simply not available.

Across the country, general practice is at the point of collapse and this is due to many factors.

- Since 1998 there has been a 24% increase in GP consultations: the average patient sees their GP 6 times per year, compared to 3 times per year in the mid '90s. Over 90% of the work of the NHS occurs here in General Practice.
- Our funding has reached a new low, standing at 8.5% of the total NHS budget compared to nearly 11% in 2007.
- Since 2008 demand for GP services has risen by around 15%
- With no extra resources and shrinking manpower, many doctors are taking early retirement and another proportion are moving to work overseas while junior doctors are not choosing general practice as a career and many training posts are left unfilled, creating a deepening shortage of GPs.

The GPs left in the system feel over-worked and under-valued. It is a vicious circle which saps morale and causes frustration, because we can't offer the kind of service that we want to give our patients.

To give you an insight into an average day in the practice, a GP can have up to 40 appointment slots that are timetabled. This is the basic appointment load, but on top of this, we then see urgent and walk in patients as well as up to 10 telephone consultations. In addition, we undertake up to three home visits each, more if the need arises, plus emergency visits later in the day and after the practice closes. This is just the clinical workload; fitting in around this is the need to process and action daily blood test results and up to 100 hospital letters. As you can see, there is no extra capacity in the system, despite our best efforts.

What can we do to improve the situation?

We have listened to what you want from an appointments system and tried to link that to what we can provide in a sustainable way. We plan to introduce a new system which will involve most same day appointment requests being passed to one of the doctors, who will phone you back as close as possible to an agreed time in the early part of the morning; we hope this will be a doctor you know as often as possible. You can then discuss what you need from the appointment that day and agree the best way of achieving that, whether by a discussion on the phone, coming in to be seen, or perhaps being referred to another health care professional who is best placed to help, perhaps a physiotherapist, counsellor, nurse, or others.

Not all problems need a GP appointment and can be looked after by other healthcare professionals.

We are in the process of trying to recruit at least one nurse practitioner – these are nurses who have substantial extra training and have skills in managing problems that in the past would have been dealt with by a doctor – they are especially good at advising about things that you may not be sure how serious they are, such as infections and various aches and pains. We hope they will share the phone call assessments with the doctors. By doing this, we hope to free up scarce GP appointments for more complex problems.

So if a receptionist asks for a brief summary of your problem, this is so that the more urgent cases needing a fast response time can be highlighted to the doctor and so that if someone other than a doctor is more suited to helping you, that person can be put in touch with you. We are happy to phone you on your mobile, so that you can get on with your life while waiting for the doctor to return your call. We prioritise children if they are poorly, and we always speak to patients first about requests for home visits.

How can we help each other?

GP appointments are a valuable asset, so if you have to make a cancellation please make sure you do it as soon as possible, so that it can be offered to someone else.

Here are some ideas on sources of help other than a doctor – you can refer yourself directly to them and the reception team will be able to give you contact details for all of these:

- Pharmacists can often help with coughs colds, sore throats, aches and pains, prescription queries and emergency prescriptions when running out. (Please remember that when you request a repeat prescription, it will currently take two working days to prepare).
- The Physiotherapy team at Brixham hospital are the first port of call for all musculoskeletal problems especially knee hip shoulder, and back. You can refer yourself – the receptionist can give you the contact details.
- Brixham Minor Injuries Unit will deal with all minor injuries, wounds, etc.
- The Depression and Anxiety Service (DAS) for mild to moderate anxiety, worry, panics, phobias, depression or low mood.
- The Drug and Alcohol team provide services in Brixham for those having difficulties with the use of drugs or alcohol.
- The Sexual Health Service provides a range of bookable and walk-in clinics for any concerns including infections and contraception, through the Bay and including at Brixham hospital.
- The Midwife can advise about anything pregnancy-related.
- The Health visitor for advice about caring for the under-5s e.g. behaviour, diet, development, some minor illnesses.
- The School nurse for the over 5s can advise about a range of problems e.g. hearing difficulty, behaviour, development.
- Blood pressure checks can be done in the surgery 'pod' in reception or at many pharmacies.
- The reception team at the surgery can pass on messages about administrative issues such as medical certificates/fit notes etc.

We appreciate that trying to book appointments can be stressful. After making multiple calls, sometimes over a few days, it is not surprising that patients get frustrated and angry.

Our reception staff take the brunt of patient frustration many times a day. Although they can understand the sentiments, it makes a hard job even harder. On occasion, our staff become very upset after being verbally abused about a situation over which they have no control. Please bear in mind when phoning the surgery that the person on the other end of the line is doing their best to help you! We don't want to lose our best staff to other employers because of their stressful work environment.

Our patients are at the heart of everything we do, we have a strong vision for the primary care service our patients deserve and would like you to know that we are doing everything in our limited power to exert pressure to allow us to deliver this for you all. We would be grateful if you could bear with us as we try to care for you in what are extremely challenging times. We will continue to do our best and any help you can give us will be very much appreciated.

Thank you.