

Latest News

As you may remember, we cancelled our last PPG meeting in July as not everyone could attend. Since then, the practice has been working very hard to secure funding for continuous **SMS** (text messages) and for additional funding for premises renovation using **Section 106** process.

There have been some **Employment Changes** within our own team of GPs, Nursing and Admin.

This newsletter is to bring you up to speed with where we are with the above topics

SMS

Back in June 2015, the Department of Health decided to remove core funding for SMS in general practice. Notice was given to all practices off the removal of this free service from September 2015.

Many practices up and down the country use SMS in general practice to remind patients of their appointment and for non-urgent communication. Removing SMS meant that practice would either have to fund the service themselves or opt to remove SMS all together.

The erosion of GP Funding meant that practices were no longer going to be able to offer SMS.

Wideopen Medical Centre challenged this with our Clinical Commissioning Group as we felt very passionate about retaining SMS,

however, the cost implications out-weighed providing SMS.

After several meetings we managed to secure SMS for all practices in North Tyneside currently using SMS, and from April 2016, all practices will have the option to offer SMS free.

We send approximately 500 SMS messages to patients each month. Some are about appointment reminders and others are relating to reviews due. We view SMS as a very effective way of contacting our patients. We are delighted that the CCG has listened to our concerns and supported our appeal.

Section 106

You may remember a while ago we talked about Section 106 Monies available to businesses in the Wideopen area. I am delighted to inform you that we submitted a bid for premises renovation at Wideopen and our application has just been approved. The work includes building a porch with disabled access door and storage for prams etc... Internally, all rooms will receive new flooring and decorated throughout and new seating configuration in the waiting room. As yet the money has not been released, but we hope to start the project no later than June 2016.

Unfortunately, Section 106 does not include Dudley Surgery; however, we have been informed that development in Annitsford may result in Section 106 for Dudley - Fingers Crossed.

Employment Changes

The practice has seen quite a lot of changes with staff over the past six months. Here's what's been happening.

Dr Juliet Reid left Wideopen in December 2015 to join a practice closer to home.

We have appointed Dr Simon Harrison to replace Dr Juliet Reid who is due to join us mid-February.

Our practice nurse Wendy Campbell, left in October after a very short spell at the practice.

In December 2015, Carol Broadhead joined our nursing team as a permanent member of staff. Carol had been working as a temp nurse at Wideopen for several months and decided that she wanted to stay as part of the team.

We have a practice nurse post vacant and have approached the University to find out if any newly qualified nurses have an appetite for working in general practice. So far 5 potential candidates have expressed an interest. We are hoping to interview in March 2016.

Our secretary left in December 2015 to work for Newcastle Hospital Trust as a secretary in Neurology.

Claire Glendenning has taken over the secretarial role and is available every afternoon from 2pm - 5pm.

The practice is supporting Emily Rayner in her role as practice administrator as part of the apprenticeship scheme run by Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust. At the end of the scheme the practice aims to offer Emily permanent employment.

Patient Online

By 31 March 2016 Practices must offer online access to all detailed information, i.e. information that is held in a coded form within the patient's electronic medical record.

Patient Online is an NHS England Programme designed to support practices to offer and promote online services to patients, including access to records, online appointment booking and online repeat prescriptions.

We may need to ask our PPG members who already use our online system to help with the online access part. If you are interested, please get in touch with either Sam Woodhouse or Mary Mein.

Thank You

I would like to say Thank You to Rosalind Snowdon who is keeping the patient notice board at Dudley up-to-date with lots of interesting topics.

Our next PPG meeting will be Thursday 10 March at 6:15pm - 7:00pm. Please let Sam or Mary know if you cannot come. Thank you.