



Practice 'first' helps dementia patients

Our practice is the first in the country to appoint a full time Admiral Nurse to support dementia patients and their carers.

Beth Goss-Hill is transforming the lives of hundreds of families who are coping with the condition, helping them access swift diagnosis, treatment, services and relieving the pressure it brings.

Admiral Nurses are the dementia equivalent of Macmillan Nurses for cancer care, and Beth's appointment is the result of a five-year campaign by the Patient Participation Group (PPG). Stag Medical Centre and Rose Court have a higher proportion of elderly patients than any other practice in Rotherham.

At first Beth joined the practice for two days a week, but the value of the post was quickly recognised and she now works full time with a current caseload of 161.

"I manage the caseload for the practice and am able to co-ordinate everything like tests, ECGs, treatments and scans for the patient and their

carers. I ensure that advanced care and contingency planning is in place, and that other health issues such as diabetes, cardiac problems etc are addressed.

"Since I started in September last year we've had a 15.5 per cent increase in dementia diagnosis, and early diagnosis is vital so that patients and their families can access treatment and support as soon as possible."

Dementia statistics

Dementia statistics are startling. Around 850,000 people in the UK are living with dementia and this figure is projected to increase to more than 1 million by 2025. Almost a quarter of a million people will develop dementia this year – that's one every three minutes. One in six people over 80 have dementia.

Beth began her nursing career in an acute stroke ward and quickly became interested in the brain, how it works, what happens when it gets damaged, and how it affects people.

She then went into district nursing which brought her into contact with a lot of dementia patients. After taking a degree in palliative care, she began to specialise in dementia care after two close family members were diagnosed with the condition.

"I learned all I could about dementia and began to share this knowledge with other health care professionals. The brain is such a fascinating subject, and when you have a dementia diagnosis, the journey is different for everyone, with different challenges and needs."



Beth Goss-Hill

After a spell at Rotherham Hospital as Dementia Needs Nurse, Beth took a Masters degree in dementia and achieved her ultimate goal – becoming an Admiral Nurse.

Her services are now in demand at other practices in Rotherham, and it is hoped that a scheme to recruit Admiral Nurses to GP practices will be rolled out nationally.

Meanwhile, she will be a guest at the National Primary Care Conference in London in October, speaking about her role and what has been achieved here.

Beth's presence at the practice is very much appreciated and the feedback is extremely positive.

A Wickersley resident is carer for his 88-year-old mum, a patient at Rose Court, who was diagnosed several years ago.

"I can honestly say Beth being there has transformed my mum's life and transformed mine. One of the main things is help from Shared Lives, a befriending service, who come and take my mum out for a couple of hours three times a week.

"Also she's put in place a lot of aids which make life easier, such as a telephone which my mum can use, and a sensor on the door to alert us if she goes out on her own.

"She is also lovely with my mum. She is wonderful."

If you have concerns about a family member who may be developing dementia, you can leave your details at reception in either surgery and Beth will contact you for a discussion.

Missed appointments

Last year there were 2,995 missed clinical appointments at the practice – the equivalent of 109 working days! Please remember to contact us if you cannot keep an appointment. It can then be given to someone else who needs it.

Care Navigation

You may wonder what this means, and you may also have wondered why receptionists now enquire what the problem is when you ring to make a GP appointment.

There is a very good reason. It is to help you get to the best possible person or organisation to sort out the problem as quickly as possible, freeing up GP time to deal with more serious, complex cases.

This is care navigation and it is being introduced more and more at GP surgeries across the country to cut down on frustrations caused by increasing demand for a GP appointment.

For instance, eye problems are often better dealt with by an optician, and similarly a dentist for teeth problems. Pharmacists have a wealth of healthcare information and advice. Nurse practitioners can deal effectively with many problems patients see a GP for.

A pilot scheme to train receptionists in care navigation has been run at our practice, and has been filmed by the NHS to show other surgeries how it can work. A Rotherham directory of services is being created and staff will use an on-line tool to 'navigate' patients to the most suitable service.

Receptionist supervisor Andrea Hargate said: "With the introduction of care navigation we can now direct patients to the most appropriate source of help, whether it is to the pharmacy, physio or Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANP) for example.

"This means we are not searching for doctors' appointments that don't exist and doctors are not being overloaded with patients with minor ailments that can be dealt with quickly by another professional service.

"Because we are the patient's first contact, care navigation has helped to appease many people's frustrations and anger at not being able to see a doctor. Most of our patients are willing to be seen by 'someone' quickly, and we have learnt to reassure our patients that some of these services such as physio and ANP work alongside our doctors and nurses, they are not replacing them.

"I'm really positive about it, and I'm sure it can only get better. The more services we can navigate the more it will benefit us all. The GPs will have more time to deal with more serious issues, and also the appointment times could increase from a 10-minute appointment to 15 or 20 minutes which in fact we are trialling at our practice"

Dr Abbey retires

Our longest serving GP, Dr Susan Abbey, has retired after more than 30 years with the practice.

At a farewell party, many tributes were paid to her leadership and commitment to patients and their care.

Practice Manager Jean Toner said: "Due to the respect we have for you and under your supportive leadership, you leave the practice in a good place. Through some difficult times you gently pointed us in the right direction. We now have a harmonious team open to new ideas and innovations. The staff actively participates in improving service, and they are all valued.

"We know how important it is to you that we strive to provide our patients with the best care possible, and we promise to try to continue to do this."

New posts for speedier appointments

Patients needing an urgent on-the-day appointment are now being seen by Advanced Nurse Practitioners.

Sarah Atkinson and Louisa Hollingshead are highly trained to Masters Degree level to deal with minor illness and injury. Both have extensive experience in accident and emergency care. They work alongside GPs rather than the nursing team, and there is always GP back-up on duty at the surgeries to refer more serious cases to on the day.



From right to left, Dr Abbey, senior partner Dr Muthoo, and Dr Abbey's husband, Roger.

ANPs can issue prescriptions and refer directly to other health care services, and will see all 'on-the-day' patients, except for babies under six months old.

When you 'phone either surgery and you think you need an urgent appointment, please discuss your case with the receptionist.

New PPG chairman

The new chairman of the PPG is Tony Robinson, who succeeds Elaine Laurie.

The PPG was set up seven years ago following a search for patient volunteers who were willing and able to devote a little time each month to the work of the Group.

We represent all patients at both Stag Medical Centre and Rose Court surgery, and aim to give your perspective on the services provided. It is an opportunity for patients to influence decisions about which services are provided, how they are provided and how the practice is run.

At the most recent Care Quality Commission inspection of the practice in 2016, the PPG was rated 'outstanding' for the contribution it made to the practice, its patients and the wider community.

There are now 12 members and 61 virtual members. New members are always welcome, and if you are interested in joining please contact either surgery or go to the link on the Home page of the practice website..



'Flu days raise money for charity

Members of the PPG once again rolled up their sleeves to turn busy 'flu clinic days into successful fundraising events.

Almost 3,000 patients were vaccinated, including children who enjoyed a Halloween fancy dress event.

PPG members and practice staff baked cakes, and £700 was raised for homelessness charity Shiloh, and another £700 for Speak-up, an advocacy service for people with learning difficulties and/or autism. The remainder was allocated to PPG funds to help pay for patient support projects.

'Flu dates for 2018

The practice is gearing up to reach as many people as possible again this year in the risk groups eligible to receive the 'flu vaccine. Two provisional dates have been earmarked so far: Saturday, October 6th will be the major 'flu vaccination day.

Wednesday 31st October from 2pm to 5pm, children's nasal 'flu clinic with a Halloween theme. Bookings for these dates can be made from August by contacting either surgery.

Friendship, Carer and Support Café

This friendly drop-in space for carers and ex-carers to unwind and relax is open on the first and third Fridays of every month from 1.30pm to 3.30pm at Rose Court surgery. If you wish you can bring the person you care for, or just have some free time to enjoy the company of others who may be in a similar situation to you. It's an opportunity to make new friends and relax. Events include guest speakers and trips, and activities available include Easter Bonnet competition, Christmas lunch, dominoes, draughts, quizzes, music and readings. Free tea, coffee and homemade cakes. If you want to come along, please contact the surgery. It is run by the PPG and you will be very welcome.

Award for Practice Manager

Practice Manager Jean Toner has won a major NHS award for her leadership in developing the key role of nursing at the practice.

The Practice Nurse Leadership Award 2018 recognises the vital contribution of general practice nursing.

A former nursing sister in the intensive care unit at Rotherham Hospital before joining the practice 27 years ago, Jean became Practice Nurse Manager and was appointed Practice Manager three years ago.

Since then she has overhauled the appointment system, championed the use of advanced nurse practitioners, increased the mix of skills in the practice, promoted preventative medicine, and encouraged admin staff to play a bigger role in patient healthcare. She also works very closely with the PPG.



Jean Toner with husband Gerry and Dr Abbey.

Surgery opening times reminder

Stag Medical Centre is open for telephone and appointment access from 8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday, and Rose Court 8am to 5.45pm Monday to Thursday. On Fridays, Rose Court is open from 8am to 1pm. Both surgeries are closed for training on one Thursday afternoon (from 12 noon) a month. This is usually the third Thursday, but occasionally this has to be changed to the second Thursday.

There are extended opening hours for face-to-face GP appointments at The Stag – 6.30pm to 8pm on Mondays and 7am to 8am on Fridays. There is no telephone access to the surgery during these extended hours.

We have extended hours accessible to our patients via the GP Hub Monday to Friday from 6.30pm and also on Saturdays and Sundays. Please contact the surgeries for further information.

Purple Butterfly Appeal

The PPG is supporting the Purple Butterfly Appeal which raises money to fund Purple Butterfly rooms at Rotherham Hospital. These are rooms which provide privacy, dignity, space and a home-from-home for people nearing the end of their lives, their families, friends and carers. Each room costs more than £75,000 to install and equip with the right balance of medical equipment and soft furnishings to make them more homely and comfortable.

The hospital is currently fundraising for a fourth Purple Butterfly room. For more information about how you can raise money for the appeal, please contact Suzanne Rutter on 01709 426821 or email Charity@rothgen.nhs.uk

PPG member Heather Hind has experience of one of the rooms during the last stage of her husband's life and since then has raised money for the cause. She is co-ordinating the link between the Appeal and the PPG.

This newsletter is produced by the Practice and Patient Participation Group. You can contact the PPG at ppg.stagmedical@gmail.com or by writing to either surgery.