



New appointment system

A new appointment system has been introduced at the Stag Medical Centre and Rose Court Surgery.

It replaces the triage system which became unmanageable because of the high volume of telephone calls to patients GPs were having to make each day.

Under the new arrangements, patients who need to be seen urgently can still telephone both surgeries and get a same day appointment. But less urgent appointments can now be booked up to two weeks in advance.

Receptionists will also offer a telephone consultation if patients feel that their problem can be dealt with in that way.

Practice manager Chris Thompson explained: "Although many people liked the triage system, we found that the practice just could not cope with the pressure and it became unmanageable. On some days the doctors were having to make 150 telephone calls in addition to seeing patients, home visits, writing prescriptions and doing paperwork.

"The problems were made worse during annual leave periods because locums who provide cover were not involved in triage.

"The new system has increased the number of patients each doctor sees to give us extra capacity, and it seems to be working. Generally the reaction from patients is positive, although some people do miss the triage system.

"Of course we will be reviewing it and it may need some tweaks, but the main point is that patients can still get in to see a doctor or talk to a doctor on the telephone the same day if their situation is urgent."

- Patients can help the system run smoothly by avoiding busy periods such as Monday mornings and the day after Bank Holidays if at all possible. Patients who want to see a doctor or have a telephone conversation that day should try to ring before 10.30am.

Telephone number change

The 0845 number has been replaced! Both surgeries now have telephone numbers which will cost no more than a local call.

A national campaign has lobbied for the change to avoid patients using mobile 'phones being penalised with premium rates.

The Stag Medical Centre number is 01709 364990 and Rose Court surgery is 01709 541982. Also Rose Court surgery is now open for telephone calls from 8.30am.

Inside: Receptionist Andrea Hargate in the spotlight, reveals what life on the 'front line' at the surgery is like.



Flu clinic charity fundraisers

Members of the PPG rolled up their sleeves and were aided by representatives from Rotherham Cancer Care, to help turn two busy 'flu clinic days into successful fundraising events for two charities.

Raffle prizes, teas, coffees and cakes raised £453 for MacMillan Nurses and £361 for Rotherham Cancer Care.

Donations of raffle prizes and cakes were provided by local businesses; Boots Pharmacy, Coop Pharmacy at Tanyard, Card Gallery at Tanyard, Coop Store and A R Framing at Worrygoose Island and Cuccini's Café & Bistro at the Stag.

Patients arriving for their 'flu vaccinations were able to chat to PPG members about the work of the group and the possibility of joining the PPG and also took part in a pilot GP Practice survey. A full survey will be posted on the practice website until January 2013.

Chair of the PPG, Jenny Drew, thanked everyone for their hard work. She said: "Members worked very hard to come up with a really good supply of raffle prizes and some fantastic cakes. There were also donations of cakes and prizes from the reception staff and their families and members of the PPG.

"It was really helpful to meet so many patients and be able to raise the profile of the PPG and the work we do."

- If you are unsure about whether you need the flu vaccination please contact either of the surgeries.

A new inspector calls

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the Government's independent regulator of health and adult social care services.

From April next year, the CQC will take over the role of regulating GPs and other primary medical services. The body already registers hospitals, care homes, dentists and home care services and carries out inspections to make sure they are meeting essential standards. Where standards are not being met, action can be taken.

Under the new inspection arrangements, all GP practices will have to be registered with the CQC by April 2013.

Details of the frequency of inspections, whether they will be announced or unannounced, and what the inspections will involve are still being finalised.

The CQC says its goal is to ensure that the essential standards are met across the sector for the benefit of patients and professionals.

New health watchdog

Healthwatch is the new independent consumer champion being set up to gather and represent the views of the public on health services at both a national and local level.

Healthwatch England was launched in October 2012. It will advise the NHS Commissioning Board, local authorities in England, Monitor (the independent regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts) and the Secretary of State for Health. It will have the power to recommend that action is taken by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) when there are concerns about health and social care services.

The new body will work closely with Local Healthwatch, due to be launched in April 2013. Local Healthwatch will take on the work of the Local Involvement Networks (LINKs).

Rotherham Healthwatch will represent the views of people who use services, carers and the public on the Health and Wellbeing boards set up by local authorities. It will also provide a complaints advocacy services and report concerns about the quality of health care to Healthwatch England.

In the Spotlight



Receptionist Andrea Hargate has worked at the practice for six years. She is part of a team of 14 reception staff who work at the two surgeries. Here she talks about life on the front line.

“It’s quite a long working day, often 7.45am to 6.45pm, and we’re very busy, which I like. I know some people think all we do is answer the telephone, but there is so much more to it than that. We get more than 100 telephone calls a day, so it’s an important part of our job, but as

well as that we deal with patients who come into reception plus there is a lot of paperwork.

“Each day we have to make sure that every consulting room has the correct forms – there are hundreds of them, for things like hospital referrals. We’re trying to be a paper light practice, but sometimes paper notes are needed and we have to make sure they are there for the doctors.

“One day a week I spend on prescriptions, processing them ready for signing by a doctor, and we work closely with the hospital, booking patients in for appointments with consultants and getting the results of tests. We order stationery, and we scan every letter that comes in on to a computer so that we have an electronic record of everything.

“We do get training, some of it is on the job training like how to answer the telephone, but we’re also trained in first aid, including CPR and how to deal with people in anaphylactic shock. We’re also updated every day by email about different forms and changes in procedures.

Stressful

“It’s a very stressful job. I think you have to have a certain temperament to work as a receptionist in a GP practice. You need to be sympathetic and if you’re in a bad mood one day, you have to leave that behind you. It’s important to be friendly and we try to help patients as much as we can.

“The best bit about the job is working with the public. I really like meeting people and if I can make someone’s life a bit easier by sorting something out for them it gives me a lot of satisfaction.

“The worst bit is that we do get some grief sometimes. We have to take the brunt of complaints because we’re on the front line and we’re the first point of contact. But it’s part of the job, and you just have to try not to take it personally and remember they aren’t getting at you, they may be very stressed because they are ill or a family member is ill.

“The two main things I’d like to get across is that we don’t just answer the ‘phone, and that we’re not the rotweilers that doctors’ receptionists are sometimes painted. It’s a really good team and we are there to help the patients.”

Stag Medical Centre

01709 364990

Rose Court Surgery

01709 541982

Patient Participation Group update from Chair, Jenny Drew

The PPG was formed nine months ago and has already achieved a great deal.

We have conducted our first General Practice survey which resulted in a number of improvements being made at the practice. For example, hand sanitizers and instructions for use have been provided at touch screens in both surgeries. Clocks are now included on the TV screens and we have brightened up both surgeries with artwork from Herringthorpe Infant School. Our thanks to pupils there for loaning us their work.

The group is really gathering momentum. Around 15 members meet face to face on a monthly basis, and in addition we have an email list of more than 50 members of a virtual PPG.

Our second, much shorter, GP Survey was piloted at the second 'flu clinic day. A full survey will be put on the website and will remain there until January 2013. Now the virtual PPG is active we are hoping for a much bigger response this time around. We would be really grateful if you could find a few minutes to take part in the survey.

The establishment of the PPG is a real opportunity for patients to influence decisions about which services are provided, how they are provided and how the practice is run.

New look website

Changes have been made to the practice website to make it easier to use.

We set up a sub group to look at improving the look and content of the website. There is now a navigation bar with various tabs relating to specific parts of the work of the PPG. Information is set out under headings, for example all the agendas and notes of meetings, patient survey results and email sign-up form for the virtual PPG.

The working group is also looking into the possibility of using Facebook, and more improvements are planned.

Our PPG always welcomes new members. You can contact us at ppg.stagmedical@gmail.com or by writing to the surgery at The Stag Medical Centre, 162 Wickersley Road, Rotherham, S60 4JW or via the email sign-up on the website at www.stagmedicalcentre.co.uk

Thank you

The Chair of the PPG wishes to thank all the members of the group for their support and enthusiasm during 2012.

The Annual General Meeting will take place in January 2013 (See website for further details) when election/re-election of members to specific roles will take place.

You would be most welcome to join us and see if there is anything you feel you can contribute to the running of the group.

Best wishes to you all for the festive season, and a happy and healthy 2013.



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

