



### Improved appointment system

A number of changes are being made to the appointment system to try to iron out problems identified by patients and reception staff.

This follows a special meeting attended by GPs, receptionists and the Patient Participation Group to discuss the issue.

More pre-bookable slots will be available, and if a GP wants a patient to be seen again by them, they will book the appointment themselves rather than the patient having to go through reception. Patients receiving medication from hospital will not need to attend the surgery for medication reviews.

The recorded telephone message at both surgeries is to be changed and shortened.

At the same time, a campaign has been launched to cut down on the number of patients who fail to turn up for appointments, and to encourage patients to explore other treatment for minor ailments, such as pharmacies.

Practice Manager Chris Thompson said: "We recognise that it is sometimes difficult for patients to get an appointment, and this is a growing problem at GP practices across the country.

"There is more pressure than ever on GP time, and we will not be able to solve the problem completely, but hopefully with a few changes we can make it less frustrating for patients, and also for reception staff who are at the sharp end of dealing with the problem.

"Unfortunately, very occasionally, patients take out their frustration on the receptionist, which is not fair and not acceptable."

The number of patients who fail to turn up for all appointments – with doctors, nurses, health care assistants, and mental health specialists – average about 40 a week.

"It is a big problem for us, and these are appointments which could have been offered to other patients. Please remember to let us know if for some reason you can't keep your appointment," said Chris.

If you could like to receive an SMS reminder about appointments, please give your mobile telephone number to reception to be added to your details.



### Welcome to our fifth edition of the PPG newsletter.

Inside, Dr Qureshi is 'in the spotlight' and explains her aim to be an 'old-fashioned family doctor'.



# On your bike

## Cycle for fun and fitness

The practice and the PPG are once again backing Skyride Local, which organises group cycle rides on safe courses.

Keen cyclist and PPG secretary Elaine Laurie has undergone special training, including first aid, to lead the rides which are tailored to different levels.

A former member of Rotherham Harriers, she switched to cycling to ease pressure on her knees. "Cycling is fantastic exercise, it keeps you fit, gets you out in the fresh air, and it's enjoyable and fun. Why not give it a try?"



**Elaine Laurie**

Details are on the Skyride website at [www.goskyride.com](http://www.goskyride.com) and leaflets are on display in Stag and Rose Court surgeries. If you want to join in, just decide which ride you'd like to do and sign up. And it's FREE!

British Cycling are also promoting Breeze, a network for easy-going local bike rides for women. You can find out more at the Skyride website.

## Help us to help you

GP services across the country are very busy and under pressure at the moment. You can help us to help those most in need by thinking carefully about whether you need to see a GP or whether another health service like the ones below would be just as effective.

### Self care

Every home should have a well-stocked medicine cabinet, including pain relief medication, mild laxatives, cold relief products, indigestion remedies, rehydration mixtures to use if feeling dehydrated after a bout of sickness or diarrhoea, and a range of bandages and plasters for minor cuts, sprains and bruises.

### Pharmacy First

Our practice is part of the Pharmacy First scheme which enables you to get medication direct from the pharmacist without a prescription. Many pharmacies are open early until late and on weekends and bank holidays. You don't need an appointment and can just pop in and get expert medical help from a qualified healthcare professional.

### NHS 111

NHS 111 offers confidential health advice and information by telephone. Ring 111 if you are ill and have questions about your health and where to get treatment.

### Children

All children get colds, it's a normal part of growing up and no medicines can prevent them. Make sure they have plenty to drink and if they have a high temperature, some paracetamol will help. Most doctors don't recommend cough medicines, and antibiotics won't help a cold.

## In the Spotlight

**Dr Ambreen Qureshi joined the practice eight years ago after completing her medical training, fulfilling a long-held dream to become a general practitioner and an 'old-fashioned' family doctor.**



“I never wanted to go into any other branch of medicine. I like the idea of being a family doctor who can really get to know patients well, their family dynamics, and treat them holistically. This is something you don't get an opportunity to do in other specialisms.

When I was little, probably about eight, I did want to be a journalist, but my family felt this was not a suitable profession for a woman! In fact I was the first member of my family to go to University, and the first to go into medicine, I'm not from a medical family.

I'm so glad I changed my mind about what I wanted to do when I grew up, because I absolutely love this job! It's hard work, long hours, and you do take it home with you because it's impossible not to get involved when you care about patients, but it's very rewarding.

Another wonderful thing about it is the feedback I get.....lovely thank you cards from patients to say thank you for helping them. It's very humbling. I'm quite a religious person and I'm grateful that God has given me the opportunity to be in a profession where I can help others. I feel really blessed.

The worst part of the job is the increasing amount of paperwork we have to do which takes up such a lot of time these days. I'm also aware that like GP practices across the country, patients sometimes find it difficult to get appointments. There is more and more pressure on GPs, I probably see a third as many again as the number of patients I saw eight years ago. Unfortunately there is no one solution to the problem.

Obviously it would be good to have more GPs per head of population, but there are other things which would help. Not every health complaint needs to be addressed by a GP – for minor complaints there are other healthcare resources like pharmacies and the NHS websites which are fantastic and have a lot of useful information on them.

One thing I've thought about doing is trialling a few five minute appointments where the issue is straightforward. We'd also like to hear from patients if they have any practical ideas to improve the appointments system.

I've always worked full time and I wouldn't have been able to do this without the support of my family. My husband Munir is the best husband ever! He also works very long hours, he runs his own newsagent business, so he has a very early start seven days a week.

When I see a patient, I have a straightforward philosophy. I want to treat them how I would want my mum or my sister to be treated, and that's what I try to do.”

**Stag Medical Centre**  
**Rose Court Surgery**

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## New look website

There is a lot of information about the practice and the Patient Participation Group on our new look website.

The site has been re-vamped and expanded, with a much easier navigation system to help you find what you are looking for.

You can register to book appointments and organise repeat prescriptions online, and did you know that once registered, you can now access your Summary Care Record online? This provides information on what medication you are on, together with any allergies and adverse reactions.

Also available online is the Friends and Family Test which gives you an opportunity to rate your experience of using our GP practice and say how likely you would be to recommend it to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment.

"It's a short survey and will only take a few minutes to fill in, but it's very important for us to get feedback from patients," said PPG chair Jenny Drew. "We need to know where we can improve things, and to know what we are doing right. It's also helpful if patients would fill in the survey each time they experience the service."

If you aren't yet registered and would like to be, please speak to a receptionist.



A new Welcome Board at the Stag surgery with pictures of our staff team will help you put names to faces. The board will also be used to promote specific health campaigns.

## Stop Press

### Saying goodbye...

Long-serving GP Dr Rob McWhinnie, who joined the practice as a partner in 2001, retired at the end of May. Interviews will be taking place shortly to appoint a successor.

### And saying hello.....

Dr Nassim Rashid has been appointed as a locum, and Dr Jyoti Agrawal is joining the practice on a temporary basis to cover Dr Sally Bell's maternity leave. She will start work at the end of June.

### 'Flu dates

'Flu vaccination sessions will be held on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September and Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Members of the PPG will be on hand to help out and will be organising their regular fund-raiser for local charities.



**This newsletter is produced by the Practice and the Patient Participation Group. You can contact the PPG at [ppg.stagmedical@gmail.com](mailto:ppg.stagmedical@gmail.com) or by writing to the**



**surgery.**

