
THE CASTLE MEDICAL GROUP

Newsletter

Issue 5 - December 2002

Dr Susie Owen (replacing Dr Richard Freeman)

We are delighted to inform patients that Dr Susie Owen has joined the practice as a replacement for Dr Richard Freeman.

Dr Owen is a half-time GP and will be available at the following times:

Monday	All Day
Tuesday	Morning Only
Wednesday	Morning Only (alt. weeks)
Thursday	Afternoon Only

Patients who were registered with Dr Freeman will be transferred onto Dr Owen's list on 1 February 2003.

We would encourage patients previously registered with Dr Freeman, and who need to see a doctor, to make an appointment with Dr Owen.

As a practice, we encourage patients to see their registered doctor whenever possible, although you can ask to see any doctor in the practice if preferred.

Night Calls

With effect from 1 December 2002, all night calls between 11.00 p.m. and 7.00 a.m. will be covered by a deputising service, called Radio Doctor.

Radio Doctor consists of GP's from around East Lancashire, and already provides a deputising service in this locality. This group will now be

covering all patients registered with practices in Clitheroe, Whalley and Slaidburn.

Your telephone call between these hours will go through to the Preston Primary Care Centre, where a team of experienced nurses will take your call.

The Ribblesdale Emergency Medical Service (REMS) will continue to operate between the hours of 6.30 p.m and 11.00 p.m. This service will still be based at Clitheroe Hospital, supported by a team of nurses.

The practice will continue to provide an emergency surgery at Clitheroe Health Centre on Saturday mornings.

Patients should continue to call the surgery number at all times.

Data Protection And Confidentiality

Everyone working in the NHS has a duty to keep information about you CONFIDENTIAL (including young people).

The Data Protection Act (1998) extends this duty of confidentiality to all person-identifiable data, and relates to both paper-based and computer-held records.

As a practice, we ensure that staff are fully aware of their responsibilities, and we take every effort to ensure that we only give information about you to those people who need to know.

We realise that it is not always easy to be able to speak with a member of the practice team in a confidential environment, particularly at the reception desk.

PLEASE ASK AT THE RECEPTION IF YOU WISH TO DISCUSS A MATTER PRIVATELY.

Subject to certain safeguards, you also have a right of access to your health records - this is normally on practice premises, as your records are the property of the Secretary of State for Health. If you wish to view your health records, you must make a formal written request to the Practice Manager. He/She will discuss your request with your GP, and then contact you to make a suitable appointment to come into the practice.

If you have any further queries, please contact the Practice Manager.

Patient Questionnaire

The practice started using a new appointment system on 2 January 2002. The Advanced Access System was adopted, which meant that patients were asked to contact the practice on the day that they wanted to be seen by the doctor, bringing an end to pre-bookable appointments and lengthy waiting times.

We conducted a Patient Questionnaire at the end of January 2002, and have repeated the exercise during the week commencing 14 October 2002. We used exactly the same questionnaire as we had done in January 2002, just after the start of Advanced Access, so that we could compare the results.

The number of completed questionnaires analysed was similar both in January and October (284 and 278 respectively).

There were few differences in the responses to questions over the period of ten months in between surveys, although more people knew

about the appointment system in October. Some observations are as follows:

- ❑ More people were ringing for an appointment between 8.00 a.m. and 9.00 a.m.
- ❑ More people were experiencing difficulties in getting through to the practice - this has been the main "bone of contention" for patients, especially those trying to get through between 8.15 a.m. and 9.00 a.m. There are two possible actions that we could take to improve matters: we could either increase the number of telephones and telephone operators used during this period, or we could introduce a "call waiting" system that holds callers in a queue until a line becomes free.
- ❑ Nearly all patients (99%) said that they got an appointment that was acceptable to them
- ❑ Most patients (78%) said that they got an appointment with the doctor of their choice
- ❑ The number of people that knew we were operating a different appointment system had increased from 76% in January to 90% in October
- ❑ More people felt that the new system was an improvement (from 75%-83%)
- ❑ 96% of respondents said that their overall impression of the system was good

There seem to be two main areas for concern, from the patient's point of view:

1. Getting through to the surgery in the early morning.
2. Not being able to book appointments in advance.

The appointment system seems to work extremely well for the majority of patients - whatever system we adopt will not always suit everybody. We do have a problem with the

telephones for the first hour in the morning (especially on Mondays and Tuesdays). We will be opening up a fourth telephone when staffing levels permit.

Our main aim is to ensure that patients who need to be seen by a doctor are able to do so quickly. We are currently looking at ways of being "more flexible", in order to meet individual demands.

We would ask people to discuss individual problems with the receptionist.

Health Visitors

- ❖ Liz McGladdery returns from Maternity Leave in January 2003
- ❖ Brushing for Life Scheme - as soon as they get teeth, all children are encouraged to use adult toothpaste, due to the low content of fluoride in children's toothpaste
- ❖ Breast Feeding Support Group - dates are on the noticeboard in the Health Education Room (9th & 23rd January 2003)
- ❖ Positive Parenting - any parents interested in joining the group, please contact the Health Visitors.

Flu Vaccinations

We have now come to the end of the flu vaccination campaign.

We have given over 2000 vaccines since October - thanks must go to all the nursing and administrative staff who have worked so hard to organise the campaign this year.

The use of the Parish Hall was, once again, very successful - there weren't quite the queues that we had last year, as people came throughout the day! Four clinics were held during October. In addition, community nurses have been to nursing homes and visited housebound patients.

The government set a target that 70% of people over 65 years of age should be vaccinated - The Castle Medical Group has fallen slightly below the

national target, despite the fact that everyone over the age of 65 was sent a letter, and clinics were advertised in the local paper.

Thanks again to all staff for their great efforts.

Overweight ? Short on Exercise?

Don't want to develop diabetes in 2003?

Studies have shown that the number of people developing diabetes has increased by 30% since 1995 with, it is thought, an equal number of people with diabetes as yet undiagnosed.

The risk factors for developing this potentially damaging disease include higher levels of obesity and decreased levels of physical activity.

Act now, before you become a statistic! Lose 10% of your body weight and exercise for 30 minutes each day (no thong required!) - brisk walking will do.

Need further advice or help - ask for an appointment with one of the Practice Nurses:

Tel: 421900 or 421850 (the main reception)