

National v Local Messages...

Our Patient Participation Group (PPG) meets monthly. We regularly talk about the different campaigns we run and the messages we send to patients. At our January meeting, a member asked why our themes differed from the NHS messages nationally.

The PPG felt it was worthwhile information to share, so we have included it in this newsletter.

National NHS messages are often seasonal, or about the conditions that affect big parts of the population. These are important issues, but are broad and general.

We are a large, rural community, with an older than average population. We face some more specific challenges. For examples, 60% of us have a long term condition - much higher than the national rate.

From that, **we know that prevention is a key message for us to communicate with patients.** That's why you'll hear messages around lifestyle and being active

alongside campaigns about immunisations, screening and health checks.

Diabetes and mental health are major health issues, and we know intervention can make a big difference.

We've also focussed on the key themes from 2018's patient survey. More is being done to promote online services which make access for booking appointments or ordering prescriptions easier.

eConsult - featured in this newsletter - is another way patients can get help and advice fast. We're also working to introduce other staff roles, especially those who offer quicker appointments and prescriptions.

We hope you find this information useful, and it makes clear why we focus on certain issues. If you would like to get involved with our patient communications, then why not join our PPG? To find out more, email hello@theweardalepractice.com

Calendar for Next 3 Months

March

Practice themes: Access, NHS Health Checks
Ovarian Cancer Month
targetovariancancer.org.uk

13 March

National No Smoking Day
www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking

28 March

Staff Training:
Weardale Practice closed from 1pm

April

Practice Themes: Meet the Team, Long Term Conditions
Stress Awareness Month
www.stress.org.uk

6 April

"Meeting of the Grains"
fundraising walk

17 April

Staff Training:
Weardale Practice closed from 1pm

19-22 April

Weardale Practice closed for Easter

26 April

On Your Feet Britain
www.onyourfeetday.com

May

Practice Themes: Things You May Not Know About Your GP, Your NHS, Your Choice
Action on Stroke Month
www.stroke.org.uk

6 May

Weardale Practice closed for May Day Bank Holiday

7 May

World Asthma Day
www.ginasthma.org

13-19 May

Sun Awareness Week
www.bad.org.uk

27 May

Weardale Practice closed for Spring Bank Holiday

Our Chosen Charity

On Saturday 6 April Weardale Staff, family and friends will take on a 15 km walk. All funds raised will go towards the Teesdale and Weardale Search and Mountain Rescue Team (TWSMRT).

You just never know when a walk on the Fells could turn into something more serious, and TWSMRT do fantastic work to help people who need it.

You can help us support this worthwhile charity at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/weardale-practice2

Access Our Online Services

Want to book an appointment or order your repeat prescription? Online services are available for all of our patients, meaning you can access information anywhere, at anytime.

The system is easy to use, and is accessible with any computer, tablet or smartphone with an internet connection. Please visit the practice to find out more information and get signed up.

Follow Us On Facebook

The Weardale Practice is on Facebook! Make sure to give us a follow in order to get the latest news straight to your News Feed, including health advice, practice opening times and much more.

Find us by searching Weardale Practice.

Working together to maximise the health and wellbeing of individuals and our community



Stanhope Health Centre
Dales Street, Stanhope
DL13 2XD

01388 528 555
www.theweardalepractice.nhs.uk

Patient Newsletter March



Why not sign up for our SMS text messaging service to receive appointment reminders amongst other useful services.

Welcome to the first 2019 edition of The Weardale Practice Patient Newsletter.

In this edition:

- ♥ Updates on everything we've been working on in recent months.
- ♥ Our recent survey and upcoming consultation.
- ♥ Important health campaigns you might have missed.
- ♥ A forward calendar of what is coming up this Spring.
- ♥ Articles covering our patient communication plan, the NHS Long Term Plan, and Brexit.
- ♥ The latest staff news from inside The Weardale Practice.

NHS Long Term Plan

Launched in January, the Long Term Plan is designed to 'future proof' the NHS. It commits £20.5bn of spending, with £4.5bn set aside for Primary and Community Care.

The full details can be found at www.longtermplan.nhs.uk

It's too early to say what this will mean for General Practice, and us specifically. Much discussion will take place about how this plan is turned into a strategy. We will keep patients in Weardale as it takes shape.

The local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) hold meetings in public, and would be a good way to get involved. Find out more at www.durhamdaleseasingtonsedgfieldccg.nhs.uk/involve-me

You Said We Did

While we are getting the consultation ready, there are a few actions we are taking now. Many people said they would use online services, so we are promoting that. We're also doing more to introduce other clinical staff members, their roles and abilities.

Appointments

Appointments are normally 10 minutes long, and can be booked in person, online or by calling 01388 528 555. All appointments available to reception staff can be booked online. To register for online services, please visit the Practice with a form of ID.

Prescriptions

Prescriptions can be ordered in person, online or by calling 01388 528 555 between 2pm and 4pm. You can also request a prescription by post or by dropping off your side slip to Reception or through our letterbox. Some pharmacists may also be able to process your side slip.

As with appointments, you need to register to order prescriptions online. Our Practice policy is to supply 28 days of medication. Please allow 3 working days for collection from the Pharmacy.



01388 528 555
www.theweardalepractice.nhs.uk

News & Updates

Parking, public transport and quick access to appointments were the biggest themes in our 2018 patient survey.

Over 1,000 Weardale residents shared their thoughts and suggestions last autumn. We're grateful to everyone who took part.

Our report on the survey is available on the news section of our website at www.thewardalepractice.nhs.uk, but here are the main findings:

On appointments:

- ♥ 84% would be unhappy waiting 10 days to see a GP for an acute illness.
- ♥ Two out of 3 patients would be unhappy to wait 5 days to see a nurse for an acute illness.
- ♥ Over 50% of people would be happy to wait up 3 days to see an Emergency Care Practitioner (ECP) for an acute illness.
- ♥ Nearly 70% said it was important to see the same person on each visit.
- ♥ 93% felt it wasn't reasonable to wait more than 5 days for any type of appointment for a minor illness.

On access and interaction with the Practice:

- ♥ Over two-thirds would be happy to use online services to book appointment or reorder prescriptions.
- ♥ 40% were interested in a low-cost door-to-door patient transport system.
- ♥ 56% said parking was the biggest obstacle to getting to the Practice.
- ♥ In the over-75 age group, mobility was the biggest problem in getting to the Practice.
- ♥ Three in 4 people would be comfortable having a telephone consultation, 40% would be happy to have a video consultation.

The survey has been important and helped us to understand everyone's opinions. It's also the first step in bigger process.

This Spring we will launch a public consultation about the Practice's future direction. Your input has helped us develop potential options, and we'll be encouraging everyone across the Dale to be part of the decision-making.

The potential impact of 'No Deal' Brexit

At the time of writing, it's unclear what the details of the UK's scheduled exit from the EU on 29th March will be. The NHS have issued guidelines in the event of a 'no deal' Brexit, specifically to do with medication. These are the main points.

- ♥ Patients are asked not to order extra supplies of repeat prescriptions
- ♥ Prescribers are not to increase quantities of medication. Doing so could add more pressure to supplies in the event of a 'no deal' Brexit
- ♥ Pharmacies, Practices and Patients should not 'stockpile' medication
- ♥ The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have a contingency plan. Six weeks supply of medication is being held centrally
- ♥ The DHSC has planned alternative transport routes and storage for medication.
- ♥ Legislation is being put in place in the event of a serious shortage. This would involve local pharmacists being able to prescribe alternative medication.

Please be reassured that should any action be needed by the Practice or patients, we will let you know as soon as possible.

"Always a prompt and helpful response which is much appreciated."

"Good telephone follow up to arrange appointment. Welcoming, friendly staff."

How We're Doing

In January 155 patients completed our Friends and Family questionnaire, and **91% would recommend The Weardale Practice**. In 2018, we had 1200 forms returned, with over 91% happy to recommend us.

We've also looked into some other statistics from last year. **46,310 patient consultations were held last year**, and 1,512 were wasted with patients not attending.

This adds up to **252 hours of wasted clinical time, costing £45,360**. But it's nearly half the waste compared with 2016, so progress is being made.

Did you know that last year: **37% of people were seen on the day** they contacted us? 69% of all requests for appointments were met within a week.

Inside The Weardale Practice

A Fond Farewell... to Dr Steve Lumb, who retires in March after more than 30 years at the Weardale Practice.



I can honestly say that the people of Weardale have been the best group of patients I could have ever hoped for.

Focus on... NHS Health Checks

Background

As we get older our risk of getting heart or kidney disease, stroke or dementia go up. The checks can spot early signs and help you make changes to reduce the risks.

For many people a few lifestyle changes can stop conditions developing. Exercise, diet and the amount you drink or smoke can all make a big difference.

Who are they for?

If you're between 40-74 and aren't being treated for any other conditions, then you can have an NHS Health Check.

You'll normally get an invitation from us or the local authority every 5 years, or you can ask for a check yourself.

Dr Lumb studied Medicine at Newcastle University, qualifying in 1980 and completing his GP training four years later. His first job as a new junior doctor was at the old Sunderland District General Hospital.

"One of my jobs was at Hexham in A+E where 2 junior doctors split the workload which meant one week you worked 48 hours and the next 120 hours throughout the 6 months. That would never be allowed now but it certainly gave you experience."

After a short spell at a GP Practice in Byker, Dr Lumb along with his wife Alison and 10-month old son Richard made the move to a rural practice in the South Island of New Zealand. After a happy year of travelling, ski, jet boating (and doctoring), and a further 4 months in Melbourne, Australia, the Lumbs returned to Newcastle *"to be met by 4 inches of snow wearing our shorts and sandals!"*

A second son, Michael, arrived a few short weeks later. Then a conversation with a GP friend led to Weardale.

"There was a job coming up at Stanhope which was just the sort of practice I was looking for and the rest is history. My first day here was 1st March 1987 doing a month's locum before joining as a partner a month later."

As the junior partner, Dr Lumb worked at both ends of the Dale at St John's Chapel and Wolsingham, as well as regularly visiting up to 20 patients at their homes.

Even if you generally feel fine, risks can be found if you haven't had symptoms before.

During the Check

You'll have a 30-minute appointment with a Practice Nurse (or it could be a GP, Emergency Care Practitioner or Health Care Assistant).

They'll ask you some simple questions about your lifestyle like diet, how much you drink or smoke and if you exercise. You'll be weighed, measured and have your blood pressure checked too.

Your Results and Advice

Your results will be explained to you, along with advice on improving your general health and lowering any risks. There might also be useful services we can refer you to.

"In those days medicine was much less complicated. No computers, no tasks, emails, notifications or screen messages. If you were out on a visit and another call came in you would get messages passed onto you when you were in patients' houses or someone would flag you down in your car."

After more than three decades at the Practice, Dr Lumb definitely leaves a legacy in Weardale. Work in Horn Hall Hospital - which later became Weardale Community Hospital - is a source of pride, working alongside caring colleagues to provide services to the community.

Many trainee GPs have also benefited from Dr Lumb's experience and expertise. *"One is now a partner here, and the husband of another is also a partner. It is great to see how their careers develop."*

"My favourite memories are all the wonderful patients I have met and the stories they have told me. I can honestly say that the people of Weardale have been the best group of patients I could have ever hoped for. Many have become lifelong friends and I have got to know 2nd and 3rd generation family members (and even some 4th generation)."

"The valley has provided everything I could have wanted with great countryside, fantastic running and cycling terrain, a great group of friends and a wonderful place to bring up a family."

In retirement, Dr Lumb has plenty to replace the appointments and 7am meetings in his diary. More

Birthday Month Reviews

We've started a new programme of annual reviews for patients with long-term conditions.

A longer, single review means you won't be asked to come in separately to talk about each condition or medication.

They are called Birthday Month reviews as you'll be invited during the month of your birthday.

By taking more time to talk through all your needs, we can be certain you're getting the best possible care.

Your medication and treatment will be reviewed, plus any services you use. The advantage is they will be looked at in one go, not condition by condition.

All patients with long term-conditions will be written to about this new approach, and again before their review is due.

There is no action for patients to take until you receive your reminder.



time with his family, cycling, running and skiing trips already planned and plenty of woodwork in his new workshop. Even a return to New Zealand to visit friends made all those years ago.

Thank you for everything you've done for Weardale, Steve. We wish you a happy, long and peaceful retirement.

A Warm Welcome... to Thomas Watkinson who joins us as a Clinical Pharmacist. With 3 years as pharmacist at Sunderland Royal Hospital and another role specialising in reviews of long term conditions, Thomas brings a wealth of experience to Weardale.

Patients will most likely come across Thomas as he carries out medication reviews, as well as offering clinics both in person and over the phone.

Introducing eConsult

In December, we tested eConsult - an online resource for self-help guides and GP consultations.

You can check your symptoms 24 hours a day, from anywhere with an internet connection. eConsult is quick and easy to use, and we think it will make a big difference to everyone.

You'll be asked a series of questions - the same as your GP would ask you in person - and you choose the replies that best match your symptoms.

One of our GPs will review your answers, replying by the next working day. They might suggest treatment, a follow-up appointment, or give some general advice.

To find out more about everything eConsult offers, visit www.thewardalepractice.nhs.uk and look for the eConsult link. You can also pick up a copy of the eConsult leaflet or ask at reception.