

December 2018 Report

Introduction

This is an update on our activities since our September newsletter. We are pleased to report that we have gained two new recruits to the Patient Participation Group (PPG) since our last newsletter, David Griffiths and Susan Pettifer from The New Surgery (TNS). Anyone with an interest in helping to support health services in our area, and ensuring the patients' voice is heard, is welcome to contact us, either via email rhsppg@gmail.com or in writing care of one of the surgeries' reception desks, marking the envelope for the attention of the Patient Participation Group. However, please note we cannot take up individual complaints which should in the first instance be addressed to the organisation concerned.

At our last PPG meeting, Tring Town Councillor, Chris Townsend, joined us. We had a constructive discussion about the impact of new housing on local health services amongst other topics. It was agreed that we would all work together to ensure that the authorities take into account new housing throughout the surgery's catchment area, including Buckinghamshire, when developing local future health service plans.

Lastly I'd like to thank the surgery for once again for renewing our membership of the National Association for Patient Participation N.A.P.P.).

The New Surgery (TNS)

The feedback from TNS patients, continues to be quite positive. As previously reported, The New Surgery is

one of the venues for the new Dacorum Extended Hours appointments. These appointments have to be booked by telephone during normal surgery hours and are intended for those who have difficulty attending routine appointments during normal surgery hours, not emergencies - see below.

Markyate Surgery

Remember that Rothschild House Surgery patients (not The New Surgery) can also book appointments at Markyate, which is about a thirty minute drive from Tring, if their preferred GP is there. This is one of the options in the online Patient Access system.

New Musculoskeletal Services

We are continuing to hear reports that some patients are experiencing delays to assessments and treatment when receiving referrals to Connect, the new provider of Musculoskeletal services (MSK). The surgery is now providing patients with letters containing full details of their referral and who to contact in case of queries.

Practice News

The surgery has a new designated Carer Champion, Tracey Butler. If you are a carer for someone and registered with the Rothschild House Group and haven't registered as a Carer already, we encourage you to do so. Once registered as a Carer there are a range of support services which Tracey can outline to you, including a weekly drop-in session, on Mondays, at Rothschild House, to address any concerns or problems. Contact the surgery for further information.

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At a recent meeting with surgery staff, it was emphasised that patients themselves should follow up any referral appointments made to outside hospitals or clinics, as the referring GP is not informed of the progress of any referral until or unless any test results are received. If for any reason you don't have the details of the organisation/unit to which you have been referred request this from the surgery.

A new digital telephone system has been introduced at The New Surgery, which will provide greater capacity and room for expansion. Once proven there it is planned to roll it out at the other surgeries. Note: if you are calling the Rothschild House surgery, Mondays and Fridays are always the busiest times and there are usually 7 or 8 staff on duty from 8am on Mondays, but even so there may be delays during especially busy periods. Please try to call outside these times or use online services, if possible.

New Community (i.e. more local) services are being introduced in 2019, ophthalmology first then Ears, Nose & Throat (ENT) and Dermatology. More details later.

Unused Medicines Campaign

A new campaign by Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning Group (HVCCG) and others called 'Open the Bag' Campaign has been launched. Every year across Hertfordshire and west Essex, an estimated £7m of unused medicines are wasted. Research suggests that prescription medicines are sometimes over-ordered 'just in case' they run out – leading to very expensive and potentially dangerous stockpiles of medicines in the home that have

a limited life. Some patients are also reluctant to tell their GP that they have stopped taking medicines that have been prescribed for them, which could lead to serious health problems. See

<https://www.healthierfuture.org.uk/news/2018/november/will-you-look-bag-and-help-us-reduce-medicines-waste> for more details.

Out of Hours Services

Out of hours services are whenever the surgeries are closed and patients should call 111 for advice, unless it is a medical emergency when a 999 call should be made. From recent personal experience 111 can be a very effective service, with a duty GP making a call-back and, if required, an appointment made at an out of hours GP clinic such as West Herts Medical Centre. You can also access 111 online - <https://111.nhs.uk/>. This requests you to answer questions about your main symptoms and provides advice on where to go locally for help and when, or a call back from a nurse will be arranged. It will also tell you what to do if you can't see your usual doctor or dentist.

We welcome feedback!

We believe that patients have useful ideas and feedback to share so please feel free to contact us either using the email address rhsppg@gmail.com or write to us and mark your envelope Attention PPG.

**KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING
BETWEEN DOCTORS, THE NHS AND
PATIENTS!**

George Edwards, Chair
Rothschild House Patient Participation Group
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