

# Nethergreen News July/August 2008



Welcome to the next edition of our Newsletter.

This month we're covering: Missed appointments, Booking and availability of appointments Extended opening hours, Repeat prescriptions, parking on the road and staff illness.

## **MISSED APPOINTMENTS:**

The past two months have seen a great improvement in the number of appointments that have not been kept—we've seen a reduction to around 100 (60 Docs & 40 Nurses) in the whole of the last two months, and I thank you all for this improvement. However, even though the figures have fallen overall, it still means that in the past two months, we have lost the equivalent of 4 Doctors surgery sessions, and two Nurses sessions. This obviously has a knock on effect for those of you trying to book appointments and having problems getting what you want; so, please try to keep all the appointments you have booked in advance. This leads me nicely onto the

## **BOOKING AND AVAILABILITY OF APPOINTMENTS:**

I thought this would be a good time to remind you all of what we offer to patients.

The doors and phones are open from 8.00 am each morning, and we don't close until 6.00 pm each day (except Thursday), so you can get through to us to book an appointment at any time between those times.

We offer on the day appointments primarily for those of you that need to see a Doctor for an urgent or acute medical problem every morning, and we also have a telephone triage service every morning if you have an urgent problem that you feel can be dealt with by a telephone call instead of a visit to the surgery. The telephone triage service is available once our morning acute appointments have all gone.

Appointments are also available within 6 weeks, 1 week, 48 hours and on the day, for routine appointments.

**ADVANCE NOTICE RE APPOINTMENTS:** On 14th and 15th August, we will be having an upgrade to the computer, which will take it out of action; therefore, for the weeks commencing 11th and 18th August, the majority of appointments will only be able to be booked on the day, and for the two days mentioned, appointments will only be available for urgent problems, as we will not have access to your full medical records that are held on the computer. I'm apologising in advance for any problems you may encounter, but would ask for your forbearance at this time.

(PTO)

**EXTENDED ACCESS:**

You'll remember that in the last Newsletter I told you that we were still waiting for details from the PCT on what was expected from Practices in respect of Extended Access.

The publicity surrounding the longer opening hours has subsided, but finally, in the last week of June, we have received the guidance for Practices from the PCT regarding the requirements we have to meet in order to open longer hours.

Providing longer opening hours over and above our current hours still remains a decision for each individual Practice, and we can choose whether or not to participate in this scheme.

As I wrote last time, we know that many of you would like us to open in an evening or on a Saturday, and the survey we conducted in January this year showed that more of you would prefer evening surgeries rather than Saturday surgeries; we are actively considering whether or not we should offer longer opening hours as this Newsletter reaches you, and as always, we will take the patients' requirements into consideration,

We do have concerns over some of the requirements being imposed on us to deliver this service, but if we were to offer longer hours, either in an evening or on a Saturday morning, then these appointments would be for **pre-bookable routine appointments only**. They would not be for patients who have an acute problem that evening or Saturday morning—if you had that sort of problem, you would still need to ring the OOH service or NHS Direct or call at the Walk in Centre; if you called at the Practice we would not see you.

Once we have reached a decision, if that decision is to offer longer hours, then I would need to submit an application to the PCT for their approval of our proposals; if accepted, then that's the time I will let you know. However, that process may take some weeks and I would stress again that we haven't yet discussed this at the Practice.

**REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS:** After the note in the last Newsletter regarding Internet ordering of repeat prescriptions, there has been a tremendous increase in requests to register for this, and we are seeing this in the steady increase of requests this way. You can still order repeat prescriptions by post, fax or by dropping them into the Practice; **however**, we have not accepted telephone requests for almost five years. Unfortunately, though, we have recently noticed an increase in patients ringing for repeat prescriptions because they have forgotten to let us have the request in time, and the patient is in danger of running out of tablets. We are sympathetic to genuine cases, but it is the patient's responsibility, and not ours, to ensure that you have a supply of your repeat medication, so please make sure you drop your repeat prescription request down to us in plenty of time before your current supply runs out.

**CAR PARKING:** No, not in the car park but this time on Nethergreen Road. I have received concerns from some local residents that patients park their cars across driveways, and over double yellow lines that are across some entrances., when coming to the Surgery. I appreciate that there are often very few spaces on the road next to us, but please consider our neighbours when you park to come to the Surgery. I am aware that these residents will be asking the traffic wardens to make more regular inspections, so you may end up with a ticket if you continue to park across driveways. Be warned!!!

**STAFF ILLNESSES:** You may have noticed Sue and I working on the desk over the last few weeks and you may have missed some regular faces. We've had quite a few members of staff absent through illness in the last couple of months (shoulder injury, foot operation, surgical procedures and now shingles), and coupled with holidays, it has left us a bit short staffed at times, so if the service on the phones and the desk hasn't been up to our usual standard, then please accept my apologies. It's not an excuse, but an explanation—even staff working in a Doctors Surgery aren't immune from illness!

Finally, for those of you that haven't looked at it yet, our website ([www.nethergreen-surgery.co.uk](http://www.nethergreen-surgery.co.uk)) is up and running— the hits are increasing and we are now on the first page of a Google search!