

**BIRLEY HEALTH CENTRE  
NEWSLETTER**

August 2011

**TELEPHONES**

The NHS has told Practices to ensure you can contact us without having to use an 0845 number, if you so wish.

We therefore have set up a new number – **0114 2358038, as well as the current 0845 1221881.**

You can ring either number, but the 0114 does not allow queuing (so will often be engaged) and will not enable access to the Prescription line. However, both numbers will go direct to Out Of Hours when we are closed.

Some phone companies make high charges for calls to 0845 numbers, especially from mobiles, so this should help you avoid excess charges. We do not make any income from the 0845 number – it was set up because it can queue calls and offers options such as the Prescription line, which we believe offers a better service.

**PATIENT GROUP**

We have a Patient Focus Group which meets 3-4 times per year (the next one is Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September, at 5 pm. We are very grateful to the 8-10 people who give their time to help us look for ways to improve our services.

However, we know a lot of people can't get to a meeting at that time, or don't really like meetings, so we are setting up a new feedback and consultation system using emails/texts/phone calls, as well as meetings. Please give us feedback using Patient Opinion ([patientopinion.org.uk](http://patientopinion.org.uk)). They will record 'your story' - your comments, both good and bad – and publish them anonymously on their website, and also pass the comments to us (again, anonymously).

We will review feedback and then draw up a list of areas we need to look at. What needs to be improved. Please let us put your name on our contact group, so we can email/text or write to ask for your views!

We end up with a group which includes online members – please see our website for details; [www.birleyhealthcentre.co.uk](http://www.birleyhealthcentre.co.uk) !

**End of Life Planning**

This can be a difficult subject to discuss, but many of us are clear that we would prefer to die in the familiar surroundings of our home, with our loved ones. The reality is that most of us are likely to die in hospital. This is because it is often very hard to decide if there is no more that can be done to prolong someone's life. However, where we know we have a limited amount of time left, it is possible to plan how we want to die and to make sure we do die at home, if that is what we want. The NHS is encouraging Doctors to discuss this issue with patients and their families, and there are leaflets etc which can help you consider whether now is the time to think about this subject. If you would like more information, please ask for a leaflet, or look online at sites such as

[www.endoflifecareforadults.nhs.uk/public](http://www.endoflifecareforadults.nhs.uk/public) or [www.dyingmatters.org](http://www.dyingmatters.org) .

**Triage calls**

Most days it is possible to book a call from a Doctor, which will usually be around the middle of the day. These are for 2-3 minute discussions re medication changes or brief advice – please note the Doctor will not have time for a 10-15 minute consultation by phone.

**Seeing 'my' doctor**

We try and meet the demand for specific Doctors, but this can be difficult, particularly for same day appointments. We save some slots for on-the-day booking, and this does cause a scramble at 8.30 a.m. for the remaining slots for particular GP's. We know this is frustrating, but we are instructed to keep a number of slots free for same day booking.

**When our Doctors do Surgeries;**

Dr Allen - Mon (8-9 only), Weds a.m., Thur.

Dr Boyle – Mon/Wed/Fri

Dr Davies – Mon/Weds/Thur

Dr Galpin – Mon/ alternate Wed/Fri

Dr Heatley – Mon/ tues a.m./Fri

Dr Jamieson – Tue a.m./ Wed a.m./ Thur

Dr Noble – Mon/Wed

Dr Butler – Thur/Fri

**BUS SERVICE**

Our community minibus service is getting busier and busier – we can collect you and drop you off, door-to-door, with wheelchair access, all for £1!

It runs on Monday and Thursday and we will make an appointment so that you don't have a lot of waiting around.

It is now very difficult for us to visit you at home, so we will ask you to use this service. We are grateful to Sheffield Transport for their help.

## **BLOOD PRESSURE**

We have 1,200 patients who need their BP managing and monitoring. This is why we have invested in a high quality machine, which is for you to check your own BP in the waiting area.

Please use it before seeing the Nurse / Doctor - it will print the result on a label, which we can then put on your records. – in fact, if your BP is the only reason for your visit, please just hand in the ticket at Reception – we will contact you if it is a high reading. See if you are under 140/90!

NB – the machine will give a high reading if you do not rest for a few minutes before using it and also please make sure you read the instructions and put your arm all the way into the machine – otherwise it will not work properly.

## **HAY FEVER**

Hay fever is an allergic reaction to pollens and spores. Children and young adults tend to be the worst affected although it can effect all ages.

The peak months are May to September. The symptoms are a runny nose, itchy eyes and nose, blocked nose and sometimes skin rashes. Treatment of Hayfever involves avoiding pollen exposure and medication.

*Tips for Avoiding Pollen Exposure: -*

- Listen to the pollen count on the weather forecast
- Keep doors and windows closed
- Avoid grass cutting, picnics camping etc
- Wear sunglasses
- Pollen falls in the evening, so come in and shower before the air cools

*Medication*

- *Tablets / Medicine*  
These are very effective. Modern drugs do not cause drowsiness and are safe with most other medicines (but do tell us if you are on any other medication).
- *Eye Drops*  
These work well and quickly. Tablets and eye drops can both be used on an “as and when” basis.
- *Nasal Sprays*  
Two types are available; the most effective is the steroid nasal spray, but it has to be used for several weeks before it works.

All the above treatments are available from the pharmacy or on prescription.

## **SMS TEXT SERVICE**

We are now able to text you! If you have given us a mobile number, we will assume you are giving consent for us to contact you.

We have started

## **NHS BREAST SCREENING PROGRAMME**

It is our surgery's year to invite all women aged between 50 and 70 for routine breast screening. We strongly recommend having this scan, to detect early warning signs of breast abnormalities. You will receive a letter asking you to attend **Floor C Outpatients Department at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital.**

In addition, there is a randomised programme for women aged 47-50 and 70-73, to research whether the overall age range should be extended. **Not** all women who fall into this age range will be invited, but all women in the age range can still ask to be screened.

If you would like to know more about the programme please visit the following website [www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk](http://www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk).

## **CHIROPRACTOR**

Because Dr Welsh has been so popular, we are supporting this service, but it is now being provided on a private basis – this means there is a charge (but this is refundable if you use Westfield). You can make an appointment yourself, or ask for a referral.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

We all have them, once a year!

This is a good time to ask you to come and review your health, so if you have a long term condition (diabetes, Blood pressure problems, etc) we will write to you in the month of your birth, to ask you to have a review. Most of these reviews will be done by our expert team of Nurses, who have all been trained in treating long term illnesses.

## **STOP SMOKING**

We all know how damaging it is to health, but we also know how hard it is to stop. Jane Tinker is our advisor. Please ask for details – we can help you stop!

## **CARERS**

Please let us know if you are a carer, or if you have a carer. Have you used the Sheffield Carers Centre (2728362 or [www.sheffieldcarers.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldcarers.org.uk))?

## **COMINGS AND GOINGS**

**Dr Flint** is our new Foundation Doctor (here until December) and **Dr Alam** is our new Registrar (here for 12 months).