

Waterfront and Solent Surgery Newsletter

Letter from the Doctors

We would like to start with a huge thank you to all our patients for their donations over the last year leading to enough funds to buy the information screens at both surgeries and the soon to be purchased heart monitors. Everyone's generosity is greatly appreciated but particular thanks must go to all members of our patient participation group for their fund raising efforts, as well as all their support behind the scenes. More about them later.

It has been a difficult year for a lot of our patients and we can only hope we have been able to support you appropriately. However as well as several staff changes over the last year, the surgery has not been immune to the financial turmoil. Wherever possible we have tried to minimise the impact of change but sometimes you will have been affected; repeat prescription requests that we always used to be able to turn around within 24hrs now do take 2 days, we have had to close the surgery at Solent on Friday afternoons and the phones sometimes take longer to answer at busy times than you or we would like. We can only ask you to help us whenever you can and if you do find that your care is suboptimal the please let us know- preferably constructively!! Our suggestion boxes don't get much use and they would welcome some input....

One constant area of pressure is the appointment system. The factors behind this are complex but one of the problems relates to our list size. The government does not allow practices to "close" their lists to new patients (without severe financial penalties). As such our list size has been slowly growing and as much as we welcome new patients there is always a fair bit of work getting to know them and organising their records. The finances of GP however are somewhat perversely organised making it very difficult to take on a new partner to cover such work. Furthermore we have always thought of ourselves as a small practice and have no desire to grow much larger.

To try and improve things we have taken on more nursing hours than before. A lot of long term conditions such as hypertension and certain heart disease and lung problems can be managed by our nursing team (often more effectively than by the docs as they are more persistent!) We will try to advise you when we feel it is appropriate to see them but we do need you to use their services. It frees up the partners for illnesses where a diagnosis hasn't yet been made and to look after the more complex problems. When booking an appointment please think about who best might be able to help you and if you are at all uncertain please ask one of the staff who will be able to help you.

(Alternatively for a lot of minor illness there is a very good advice page on our website www.waterfrontandsolent.co.uk)

Can we also remind you that the phones at Waterfront do get very busy at times – especially in the early morning. Please can we suggest you try phoning the Solent branch which is much quieter but has full access to all appointments and clinical records for all patients.

So - back to the patient participation group. A truly great bunch who give up their free time for everyone's benefit. As well as fund raising we really appreciate their input whenever difficult decisions about the overall direction of the practice needs to be made. At present it is a fairly small group and we would really encourage you to consider joining - at any level. There is no firm time commitment or expectation but it does give you the opportunity to have an ongoing dialogue with the practice. Can we ask you, at the very least, to have a look at their web site. (www.wspf.co.uk)

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas.

The Doctors