

GREYSTOKE GAZETTE

ISSUE 79

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2018

Staff News

A message from Dr David Ridley:

With some regret but also excitement I am announcing my retirement at the end of July. After 34 years working at Greystoke I am sure I will dearly miss my colleagues but also the patients some of whom have become friends over the years .

Trish, my wife and senior practice nurse at the practice for the last 11 years will also be retiring so we can plan our new adventures together.

We are all going to miss them terribly and are so grateful for all they have done to make Greystoke such a good practice. We wish them a well deserved and wonderful retirement together. We are planning to advertise for a new partner and practice nurse.

Breast Screening Programme

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the country. As many as 1 in 8 women get breast cancer with the risk increasing as you get older.

The NHS offers breast screening to save lives from breast cancer. Screening does this by finding breast cancers at an early stage when they are too small to see or feel. Breast screening is also called a mammogram, where x-ray pictures are taken of your breasts. Women aged 50-70 are invited to have breast screening every three years. Some women aged 47 to 49 and over 70 are also being invited, as part of a study of screening older and younger women.

Our patients will be called for breast screening during March-April 2018 and you will receive an appointment letter direct from the screening office.

Who can you contact if you have a question ?

You can contact your GP or nurse about breast screening or your local breast screening office on 0191 2820202.

Alternatively you can find more information at www.nhs.uk/conditions/breast-cancer-screening



Did you know that walking briskly for just 10 continuous minutes counts as exercise?

A regular 10 minute brisk walk can make you feel better in so many ways. It can boost your energy, clear your head and lift your mood. It can help people with lower back pain and those at risk of high blood pressure. It's also good for your long-term health – it can reduce your risk of serious illnesses like heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Each 10 minute burst of exercise is known as an "Active 10".

Brisk walking is simply walking faster than usual, at a pace that gets your heart pumping. Start with a 10 minute brisk walk a day and then see if you can gradually build up to more. It's the easy way to improve your health and wellbeing. No gym memberships, no Lycra. Just 10 Minutes and you.

Get started with the free Active 10 app

The Active 10 app shows how much brisk walking you are currently doing and helps to show how to fit a 10 minute brisk walk into your day. It breaks this brisk walking down into manageable chunks of 10 minutes and encourages at least one session every day (which equates to 70 minutes a week). Users can set their own goals and the app encourages people to progress up to 30 brisk minutes of walking per day, to meet the 150 minutes recommended by the Chief Medical Officer.

Read more at <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/active10/home>

Northumberland Young Carers Directory

A young carer is “anyone under the age of 18 whose life is in some way restricted because of the need to take responsibility for the care of someone, usually in their family. Many young carers assume significant levels of responsibility normally associated with an adult. It should not be assumed that all children whose parents are ill or disabled are automatically young carers; however an increasing number of disabled and ill adults are forced to rely on their children for their survival and wellbeing, resulting in their children becoming young carers”.

VoiCeS Northumberland have gathered information about services and support available to young carers in Northumberland and have presented this as a directory of support for young carers. This directory is designed to be used by young carers, their families and practitioners who want to find out more about local support available.

Please visit the website: <https://voices-northumberland.org.uk/young-carers/> or ring 01665 713109

Hayfever sufferers

All the evidence shows that if you start your anti-histamines, sprays and drops before your hayfever develops you will achieve much better control of your symptoms throughout the hayfever season. Despite the cold weather we have suffered the hazel catkins are out and shedding pollen and the other trees will be following soon. All those who are sensitive to tree pollens should be starting their medication now. If you are only sensitive to grass pollens you should start your medication by the end of April.



One year into the Greystoke new access telephone system...

We are now one year into the use of the new telephone access system and the practice would like to share our thoughts on our experiences.

There has been a total increase in GP consultations of 200 per week which is an extra 25% and a reduction in the ‘did not attend’ rate by 84%.

Without an increase in resource we have been able to deliver this increased workload through a combination of increased efficiency and longer hours. It is even more remarkable when you consider the increase in consultations was maintained despite one doctor being off on long term illness and one doctor on maternity leave. It is not uncommon for a GP at Greystoke to carry out in excess of 80 consultations in one day meaning we work longer and harder each day as we try to provide a responsive flexible efficient and safe service and every second of that day is being used to work which means that the time is very tight for all the doctors when they are at work. All of the GPs at Greystoke surgery were happy with the traditional General practice model of direct patient booking for face to face contact but we felt that we must make changes to try and meet the ever increasing needs of our patients.

This winter saw unprecedented levels of demand both in hospitals and primary care (GP surgeries) across the country and despite these challenges the hard work and dedication of the staff keep the NHS going. However, it is no secret that a number of factors including the ageing population and higher expectations of care as well as budget cuts are putting an enormous strain on the NHS including our own practice. We cannot deliver a further increase of patient contacts next year so we must use the resource we have sensibly and effectively and for this we need your help.

Continued overleaf:

So, how can you help us?

PLEASE use our access system wisely as the current situation in the NHS means it is challenging to meet the demand given the resources available. When asking for an appointment, please think, 'Do I REALLY need to speak a GP?' Please do not use the access system for the sake of speaking to a GP because it is there. A number of minor ailments can be dealt with by your local pharmacist and there is plenty of useful information on the patient.co.uk and NHS choices websites.

Some patients will request a telephone appointment slot with a GP simply to pass on information such as a referral being done, medical or insurance forms needing completion etc. As appointments are limited, it is more helpful to ask a receptionist to pass the message on to the GP or discussing referrals with the secretarial staff. That allows the appointment to be kept free for someone else who needs it for medical care. Remember, there may be someone needing urgent medical attention that needs to be prioritised.

If you are seeing a GP about a specific problem and need a review, please be patient and wait until that GP is next available to speak to them (unless the matter is urgent). If you ask another GP to review the problem, then that GP needs to essentially start again which makes us less efficient and is less satisfactory for the patient.

You might only be able to speak to us within a certain time window, e.g. if you are a teacher. If this is the case please let us know and we will make every effort to call you back within this time frame such as during a morning or lunch break, though due to unanticipated emergencies we cannot guarantee a call back within a certain time frame.

Telephone appointments are available to book on line and there is an option to free text when you would like a call back.

Please do not attend the surgery in person asking for an appointment. This does not make access to see a GP any quicker and you will still have to wait your turn before being contacted by a GP.

When you have requested a call back, please have your phone available at all times. It is not uncommon for some patients to be phoned back immediately depending on the appointments list and it is not time efficient when GPs have to ring on multiple occasions to speak to the patient. Remember if you cannot have access to your phone for any reason let us know and we will try to call at a more convenient time.

Despite the above, we are pleased to say that patient demand is being met better, the previous long wait to see a GP has dramatically reduced and patient feedback has significantly improved so please help us to continue this service so we can help you as best as we can now and in the future.

Thank you

GP online services

Sign up to GP online services and you'll be able to use a website or app to:

- book or cancel appointments online with a GP or nurse order repeat
- prescriptions online
- view parts of your GP record, including information about medication, allergies, vaccinations, previous illnesses and test results
- view clinical correspondence such as hospital discharge summaries, outpatient appointment letters and referral letters
- The service is free and available to everyone who is registered with a GP.

For more details please see link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/aboutnhsservices/doctors/pages/gp-online-services.aspx>

