

Practice Newsletter

Changes to Opening Times at Churchinford

The proposal to change the opening times of Churchinford Surgery by closing at 12:30pm on a Friday afternoon as of 4th September 2017 was discussed at the June Patient Participation Group meeting. The debate at this meeting and from other comments received to date have been used to generate this newsletter article.

What is the reason behind the closure?

On Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons, there are three doctors working and two of our three sites open. For a significant proportion of the year (due to annual leave) there are two doctors working across two sites and, if the duty doctor is called out on an emergency visit, then one doctor is working across two sites. The difference between Friday afternoons and the other three afternoons is that Fridays are busier leading up to the weekend, therefore we would like all the clinical staff on duty to work at the main site.

What if I collect my prescription from Churchinford Surgery?

The dispensary will still be open until 12:30pm. However, if someone has missed collecting their medication already dispensed at Churchinford and it is needed before Monday morning, Hemyock dispensary will be able to help.

Won't more patients go to A&E?

The Practice does not offer an accident and emergency service but believes it offers good on-the-day access to people who need to be seen urgently that day. Having clinical staff working at one site makes on-the-day access easier to provide.

Aren't surgeries meant to be opening longer ('extended') hours?

This is certainly the direction of travel nationally, but there is a lack of practical detail as to how this will actually happen. We are very unusual already in being able to keep three branches of a practice open every weekday and for as many hours as we do.

Most branch surgeries are not open every day or close more in the afternoons. We provide our 'extended hours' via the Saturday morning surgery and we are only one of a handful of Practices outside Exeter that do so. This is to allow access to appointments and medication if people have work or caring commitments during the week. For longer opening hours Monday through to Friday, it is likely that we will need to group together with other local Practices to provide this service across a larger area.

It's a big gap between Friday lunchtime and Monday morning

This will be the same as it is for the Dunkeswell branch surgery. However, patients can book an appointment on Friday afternoons at Hemyock and there is also the Saturday morning Surgery at Hemyock.

Changes to Opening Times at Churchinford – continued

Can't we get more doctors?

We have been lucky that we have been able to recruit doctors as our Partners have retired. However, cuts to our core contract funding means that we need to make savings over the next 5 years equivalent to that of a half time doctor. .

Would you re-open in the future?

If we found we were able to open another afternoon session again, it would be likely to be at Dunkeswell, as they are closed three afternoons a week.

So, is this just a cost-cutting exercise?

No, most definitely not and all clinical and dispensary staff hours for that afternoon have been redeployed. The clinical staff will be covering the main site and the staff hours for dispensary have been moved to elsewhere in the week, both with the intention of supporting the service at particularly busy times.

What about patient satisfaction?

We obviously want patients to be satisfied with our service and closing an additional afternoon in the week is not something we would have considered in an ideal world.

We are committed to continue to provide clinical and dispensary services over three sites, despite the Practice's core contract being based on a single site formula. Most surgeries only have one site to staff, not three, but we believe that it is important to provide good access to patients in a geographically dispersed, rural area. However, we must be able to provide adequate clinical cover at busier times.

We are also training one of our nurse prescribers as a nurse practitioner and one of our healthcare assistants as an assistant practitioner. A nurse practitioner is able to see patients with certain acute conditions and the assistant practitioner will be able to manage more straight forward dressing changes. We hope that this will free up nurses' time to concentrate on seeing patients with long-term conditions and managing more complex wounds and will enable us to provide a greater range of appointments across all three sites.



Refurbishment of the doctors' rooms at Churchinford

As part of the on-going programme of refurbishments across the three sites, the doctors' rooms at Churchinford will be upgraded and redecorated during the week commencing 21 August 2017.

The surgery will be open all week, but there will only be clinics running on Monday 21 August (with extra clinics added that day) before the work starts on Tuesday 22nd.

This is because patients and clinicians found the last refurbishment (of the nurse and healthcare assistants' rooms) far too disruptive. The dispensary will be open and patients can still telephone the surgery as usual to book appointments.

Changes to the appointment system

More routine appointments are being made available to book. This means that there are less appointments available to book on-the-day therefore we ask that if you think you need to be seen on-the-day, please try to telephone before 11:00am in the morning.

If you are asking about routine test results it would be helpful if you can telephone after 11:00am.

Please note a receptionist can only tell you the results of your test if a doctor has already seen them and doesn't need to speak to you about the results themselves.



Why do Receptionists ask for details when booking appointments?

The doctors in the Practice want their receptionists to ask for brief information from patients so that they can:

- ◆ Ensure patients have the right appointment with the right health professional
- ◆ Plan the day to fit in urgent and more routine matters at the right time.

Reception staff, like all members of the team, are bound by **strict confidentiality rules**. The Practice would take any breach of confidentiality very seriously and deal with it accordingly.

In the surgery, you can ask to speak to the receptionist away from the main waiting area.

In all cases, **if you do not want to say why you want an appointment**, the receptionist will respect your decision but it really does help the doctors on duty to provide timely care.

Saying Goodbye

We have said goodbye to: **Mrs Wendy Plimmer-Page**

Our deputy practice manager, who has moved to pastures new in a job where she can utilise her considerable personnel skills, we think her new team are very lucky! Thank you Wendy for your considerable contribution in how the Practice has run over the last 12 years.

We will be saying goodbye to: **Dr Mary Coleby**

Who will be leaving the Practice at the end of this month. Dr Coleby has been with the Practice since 2005 and will be missed by her patients and staff at the Practice. We know that you will join us in thanking her for her hard work over the years, for the high standard of care she has provided and wish her well in the future.

Practice Newsletter

National Diabetes Audit:

helping to improve diabetes care



The Blackdown Practice is taking part in an important national project about diabetes care and treatment in the NHS.

The project is called the **National Diabetes Audit (NDA)**.

To take part, we share information about your diabetes care and treatment with the NDA. The type of information, and how it is shared, is controlled by law and enforced by strict rules of confidentiality and security.

For further information about how your information is used, please see the NDA patient information leaflet. We have copies in reception. However, **if you do not want your information to be used**, please inform the receptionist. This will not affect your care.

Patient Survey Urgent Dental Services



NHS England is reviewing urgent (unscheduled) dental care services across the South West and would like to hear patients' views on their experiences of this type of dental care, as well as the availability of services and ease of access.

You can help by filling in the online questionnaire, which asks about your experience – why you needed treatment, how you found out where and when to go, how far you had to travel and what the quality was like.

You can find the survey at : <https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/survey/548a9d48/>

The closing date is 14 August 2017.



Tea with the Queen

Barbara's considerable contribution to the Blackdown Support Group and all those needing their services was recognised through an invite to the Queen's Garden Party this Summer. Barbara along with Sarah Folland didn't get to meet the Queen on the day but had a wonderful time and considered it a great honour to have been invited.