

Westhoughton & Blackrod

Patient Participation Group Newsletter

Issue 2

Contents

Introduction.

The Abuse Has To Stop.

New staff joining the practice.

A readers question.

Are we heading for a 'Perfect storm'?

Appointments

(why book one if you don't turn up!)

Telephone Lines (up and running)

Blackrod & Westhoughton services news.

More on the MORI poll.

Flu & Covid booster clinics.



Welcome, to issue 2 of the Unsworth Group PPG newsletter

This is the second edition of the Unsworth PPG newsletter, and it only seems like 5 minutes since I was writing the welcome article for the very first newsletter... I hope everyone has had a healthy and enjoyable summer, and that you found our first newsletter interesting, we certainly had some very positive responses, and suggestions.

I think that you will find this latest one useful and interesting, as well.

The first article in this edition is about abuse, both physical and verbal in the NHS. Abuse, is a major issue across all GP's practices at present. We make no apologies for including an article on it. In fact it is the most serious issue affecting staff at all levels of the profession. It cannot and must not be tolerated by any of us, everyone in our practice works extremely hard to make sure that we, the patients, get the very best care and attention. So, please read the article and let us all reflect on how we can make sure that we, as patients treat those who are there when we need them most are treated as we would wish to be treated.

In the last issue, we summarised briefly, "hot off the press", the results of the annual GP Survey, carried out by the independent, respected research organisation, Mori. In this issue, we give the results in much greater detail and compare them with the national results and another practices in Bolton.

Our aim with these newsletters is to share information about the practice and some of its people, be sure to read the biographies of two members of staff you may not have come into contact with, Dave Carter and Kealey Bowers.

We are delighted to receive your comments on the newsletter. Please do not hesitate to get in touch!
Our email address is, as always,

unsworthppg@gmail.com



The Abuse has to STOP! Right NOW!

August 2021 The Guardian *67% of GPs had seen colleagues experience violent abuse.*

Kay Keane, a practice manager in Stockport said: *"A man attended our practice with six knives because he didn't get the treatment he wanted. He smashed up the waiting room and threatened staff members. It was a scene we never want repeated in GP practice. It was terrifying and unnecessary. But we also know this is extreme. Bad language and threats are an everyday occurrence, and it is unacceptable."*

Jo Wadey, a practice manager in Worthing commented: *"Receptionists are leaving their roles because of the abuse they receive, which means we are continually trying to recruit and train, which puts a huge strain on practices."*

A recent survey carried out by the British Medical Association looking into levels of abuse against NHS staff in July 2021 included more than 2,400 doctors in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland across primary and secondary care sectors. The results showed that more than a third (37%) of all respondents had experienced verbal abuse first-hand in the most recent month; 51% of GPs and 30% of hospital doctors, and one in five GPs reported being threatened.

In Manchester, four members of a practice team were injured after being attacked by an irate patient. Two of the staff needed hospital treatment for head injuries and the alleged attacker has been remanded in custody awaiting his court appearance.

Like most other practices, Unsworth Group Practice sometimes has long waiting times for the phone to be answered, too many people wanting to see a doctor 'now', and a great team of receptionists and staff who are regularly abused.

"The abuse has to stop NOW. Please treat the Practice team just like you would like to be treated yourself. Thanks! "

Please do your best to look at **'If I die, it will be Your Fault'** on YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ru4QhVZ2a8>

Below, is an extract from the Practice website:

In Westhoughton we care about our community and this includes our staff.

Both Unsworth Group Practice and Stablefold surgery will not accept abusive behaviour towards our reception staff. Under any circumstances.

We understand our phones are busy and it's tough to get through.

We understand the challenges with increased demand for consultations (and we are doing our best to look at solutions).

We understand it can be scary if you or a loved one are unwell and you want to see a clinician.

However, these reasons do not justify unacceptable behaviour.

We are all people too.

Please help us to help you.

#inaworldwhereyoucanbeanythingbehind

Chris McKellen Acting Chair

Meet the Staff....

One of the most popular articles we produced in our first newsletter was the small “history” of some of the staff we, as patients, don’t come into contact with that often, or even did not know that our surgery had as staff...

There’s a lot more to Peter House and Blackrod surgeries than just Doctors and reception staff!

We know these are the people that our patients are used to talking to and seeing. But, things in health care are changing, and it’s true that lots of patients need help and advice. But, on many occasions that’s better given by a member of the team who has specialised training in that particular area of healthcare.

Our surgery is indeed fortunate to have Physicians Associates, and we’ve asked Dave Carter to give us a little bit of background information, into how he became a PA...



Dave Carter

My name is Dave Carter, I am a Physician Associate new to the Westhoughton Primary Care Network (PCN).

What’s a Physician Associate (PA) I hear you ask?

So a PA attends medical School and undergoes an intense 2 year Master’s degree building onto their first degree in a health related science or subject.

Whilst we are not “Doctors”, we can see and deal with a similar broad range of health conditions and complaints; utilising Senior GP support when needed.

Coming from a Nursing background, where I spent 8 years working in the Emergency Department at the Royal Bolton Hospital.

I have now spent the best part of 3 years in Primary Care. As well as my usual clinical work, I am keen to support and promote services, in particular for our Military and Veteran community. Being a Veteran myself it is something close to my heart.

So keep an eye out for updates and make sure you let us know if you have ever served in the British Armed Forces!

When not at work I enjoy the outdoors and spending time on my allotment, with my wife and our two children, who love seeing where our food comes from. Things just taste so much better when home grown!

I’m looking forward to meeting some of you throughout my time here at Peter House, Westhoughton.

We’re looking forward to meeting you to Dave, sounds like you have had an interesting and varied career... Welcome to Unsworth Group, and we hope you enjoy meeting and getting to know the Westhoughton Community.

Thanks, Dave I’m sure we all are looking forward to meeting you too, it’s good to know that we have the people on our surgery staff who have the specialised skills available, that are needed nowadays .

In the surgery “Back office” there are also staff, that patients would not normally come into contact with at all. One of them is Kealey, who quietly works away in the background making sure that all the surgeries systems, keep working seamlessly to give a quick and efficient service, to staff and patients alike. We caught up with Kealey, to give us an insight as to how she helps to keep the wheels of the surgery oiled and running.

Hello, I’m Kealey Bower and I work as a Business/IT assistant at The Unsworth Group Practice.

I started working for the NHS at 17 years old as an apprentice studying Level 3 Business Administration in a health care setting. In April 2018.



Kealey Bower


I did my studying with Damar Training, and with the assistance of Stacy Tickle (my manager) I got where I am today!

Passing my course with a distinction, I became an employee of “The Unsworth Group” in January 2021, based at Peter House. My current role is a Business/IT assistant.

My work involves: Health and Safety maintenance, organising events/meetings, I’m the main contact for IT and other adhoc jobs for our clinicians and lots more as well! You will have seen me out and about during the Covid vaccination clinics, and more recently the flu ones too.

There’s still so much more to learn and progress towards in my role, But, I’m ready for the challenges!

When not at work I enjoy socialising with my friends and family, I also love going out with my little dog-bailey. I’m really looking forward to meeting some of you throughout my time here at Unsworth Group Practice .



Readers' Question

Question: There are different classifications of doctors in the Practice. Should I always try to see a Partner?

Answer: In the Unsworth Practice at the present time, there are eight Partners, five salaried doctors, four locums and eight trainees. Clinically, the Partners, Salaried Doctors and the Locums are all equal.

Partners are responsible for the effective running of the Practice, with each Partner taking responsibility for a specific area of the Practice i.e. Health and Safety, Finance, Administration, Clinical ... In a business, Partners could be compared to the shareholders.

Salaried Doctors have chosen not to be involved the actual day to day running of the practice.

Locums are doctors who are similar to supply teachers. They are employed for a specific length of time to cover for a specific purpose i.e. to cover for maternity leave, to cover for illness.

Trainees are often qualified doctors who have worked in hospitals for several years and who have selected to go into general practice. They then have to spend a further three years training in primary care.

Are we entering the Perfect Storm?

Looking at the media, we are led to believe that Primary Care is in crisis. The gloomy outlook says things such as:

- The demands on the NHS as a whole are increasing exponentially
- Patient's expectations are increasing
- The country is 2500 (to 5000) doctors short
- Recruiting staff for the NHS is a major problem
- Doctors are not still offering enough face to face appointments

So, how does the Unsworth Group compare?

The demands on the Unsworth Group are also increasing exponentially. Almost every appointment is booked up in advance, although there are limited emergency appointments each day.

This demand has partly been driven by several factors including: ill health and illness as a result of COVID-19, unmet health needs as a consequence of the pandemic, the backlog of elective care procedures and reduced access to community services. At the present time, the Practice is really struggling to meet demand and it is not yet winter.

Our patient's expectations are also increasing. Over the last few years, we have become used to having our Amazon parcels delivered next day and a supermarket delivery at a time and date to suit ourselves.

So often we ask ourselves why we cannot see the clinician the next day?

At the present time, the Unsworth practice is one doctor short but they have been recruited and will start work in November. Fortunately, for many years the Practice has been a formal training Practice and most of the trainees find it a great place to work. It is perhaps, therefore, slightly easier for the Practice to recruit from its trainees when a vacancy arises. However, nationally, GPs are retiring earlier or leaving the NHS quicker than new GPs are being trained.

Recruiting staff is a difficult task for many businesses at present. The Unsworth Practice has major difficulties in recruiting and retaining Receptionists. In recent months, the Practice recruited four new receptionists and two of them left after the first week (See our article on abuse). More recently, four interviews were arranged and three of the interviewees withdrew just before the interview.

The pandemic necessitated telephone and video appointments and it would appear that some surgeries are reluctant to return to face to face appointments but the Unsworth Group has now returned to 70 to 75% of its appointments being face to face. Prior to the pandemic, the number of face to face appointments was approximately 80% whilst the current average within the NHS is around 55%

Please remember that this figure will never reach 100% - many of the younger generation, or those working away from the area, prefer telephone appointments.

Let's Talk About Appointments

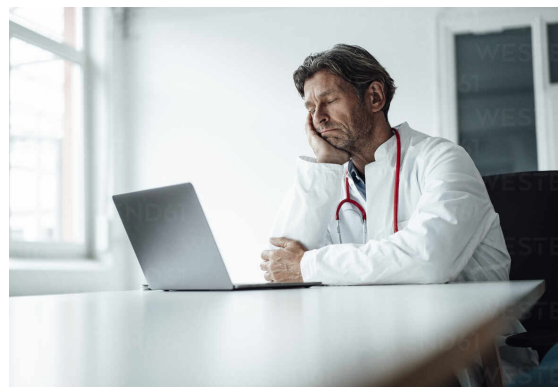
The demand for all GPs appointments has grown exponentially across the whole of the NHS, since Covid.

We know, like most other practices that it is frustrating to get through on the phone and then not always to be able to get an appointment with whom you want to see at a time to suit yourself.

But now you have that appointment – so why not use it?

In the last three months there have been 2072 appointments where the patient did not attend. This is the equivalent of 268 hours of wasted clinicians' time or 33.5 working days.

Please, if you have an appointment, use it! Thanks.





New Telephone System.

It's here and it's working!!

What is, we hear you asking? The brand new all singing and dancing telephone system. You might remember in our last PPG newsletter we mentioned that a new telephone system was on order for the practice. Well, the system is now installed and starting to be used...

It was ordered though the Telecoms dept. of Bolton Foundation trust, who have chosen this as the preferred system for GP surgeries in Bolton. It was already in use in a number of surgeries, so, it made a lot of sense to have the same system installed in Peter House.

So, how will this new telephone system help? Well, it will, when all the features are up and running, give a lot of data to the practice management about things like when are the busy days and times, what is the waiting time for calls to be answered, how many calls are in the queue, and so on..

This will allow for better planning of staff to cover the very busy times, but please remember, that with a practice of 20,500 patients, and maybe 100 of those patients call at the busy time, the system has 10 incoming lines. Then 90 patients need to wait, for their call to be answered, if each call takes 4 or 5 mins to be resolved that that is a wait of up to 40 minutes for the last person in the queue.. Yes... it is a long time to wait... So, please if you can avoid the busy "first thing in the morning call" and can your question be answered by looking at the huge information that's available on the practice website?

Now... when you are in the waiting room waiting for your appointment, what is your biggest concern? Mine is always, will I hear the public address (Tannoy) and what will be my room number? Let's face it, the old system was not good, in fact it was, hmmm, awful...!

Now the new telephone system is the latest digital technology, and when used as the Tannoy, it is LOUD! And, Crystal clear... I know I have listened to it... and it's good.

Plus, for those patients who wear hearing aids... should you wish to use it, you can switch the aid to what is known as position T and the system will connect wirelessly to your aid for clear pickup of announcements...

The PPG team will monitor what's going on with the new system, and report back...

Blackrod Practice news.

Some of the practice partners met Councillors from the Blackrod Town Council recently to discuss some of the concerns about the Blackrod practice. The difficulty of travelling, for some patients, between Blackrod and Westhoughton was discussed in some detail.

The services offered at Blackrod are now resuming as quickly as possible and the chart below compares the services currently offered at both Blackrod and Westhoughton:

Blackrod	Westhoughton
GP Contact appointments – both telephone and face to face offered (patient choice)	GP Contact appointments – both telephone and face to face offered (patient choice)
Nurse led clinics	Nurse led clinics
Baby immunisation & baby checks	Baby immunisation & baby checks
Blood tests	Blood tests
Musculoskeletal – currently in induction	Musculoskeletal – currently in induction
Mental Health Practitioner	Mental Health Practitioner
Choice of site to attend	Choice of site to attend



GP Survey Results

In our last edition of the PPG newsletter, we included some of the results of the annual GP Survey, This is a “National poll” carried out by the independent, respected, research organisation, MORI. The results we printed in the last edition, were ‘hot off the press,’ so now, we are giving them with a little more detail, and a comparison, of how we match against another Bolton GP practice, and the National score from all the surveys.

	Unsworth Group Practice	National Average	Another Bolton Practice
YOUR LOCAL GP SERVICES			
% of patients who find it easy to get through to this GP surgery by phone	69	68	30
% of patients who find the receptionists at this GP practice helpful	91	89	83
% of patients who are satisfied with the general practice appointment times available	72	67	47
% of patients who usually get to see or speak to their preferred GP when they would like to	44	45	35
MAKING AN APPOINTMENT			
% of patients who were offered a choice of appointments when they last tried to make a general practice appointment	75	69	77
% of patients who were satisfied with the appointment they were offered	84	82	74
% of patients who took the appointment they were offered	98	98	95
% of patients who describe their experience of making an appointment as good	74	71	57
YOUR LAST APPOINTMENT			
% of patients who were given a time for their last general practice appointment	97	91	92

% of patients who say the healthcare professional they saw or spoke to was good at giving them enough time	91	89	85
% of patients who say the healthcare professional they saw or spoke to was good at listening to them	93	89	87
% of patients who say the healthcare professional they saw or spoke to was good at treating them with care and concern	91	88	84
% of patients who were involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their care and treatment	98	93	94
% of patients who had confidence and trust in their healthcare professional they saw or spoke to	96	96	92
% of patients who felt the healthcare professional recognised and understood their mental health needs	94	86	92
% of patients who felt their needs were met during their last general practice appointment	97	94	90
YOUR HEALTH			
% of patients who say they have had enough support from local services or organisations in the last 12 months	88	74	78
OVERALL EXPERIENCE			
% of patients who describe their overall experience of this practice as good	86	82	85

We have said it before, here at both Peter House, Westhoughton, and Blackrod we are in patient numbers the biggest GP practice in Bolton with approximately 20,500 patients. The next nearest GP practice in terms of numbers is around 14,700! So, you can appreciate with so many patients, the results of this survey are reflect the hard work and dedication that the **Unsworth Group** staff give.



Flu and Covid booster Clinics.....

It's that time of year again when the surgery has its Saturday morning seasonal flu vaccination clinics... This year it's a bit different, due to the amazing number of Covid injections that were given throughout this year, the Covid booster jabs are being given as well, to those who need them. Westhoughton Primary Care Network (PCN) Director, Dr. Beverley Matta issued the following statement on Social Media following the first clinic on 25th September.....

"On Saturday 25th September, we delivered our FIRST Westhoughton Primary Care Network flu clinic! Some fantastic joint working delivered 1066 flu jabs and co-administered 300 Covid boosters to our most vulnerable patients and health/social care workers.

I'm always really proud of all my team and volunteers but a special thank you to the management team who did a fabulous job.

Watch this space for more dates; we are continuing contacting our most vulnerable patients first. We will get to you please be patient!

You can contact us on our hotline numbers in the meantime to request an appointment if you are yet to be called and it's greater than 6months since your second Covid vaccine.

Please don't call the surgeries as it stops poorly patients getting through.

Big thank you to the community for all the support".

From all of us here at the PPG, we would really like to give a huge "Thank you" to everyone who took part in the clinics. For us, especially the volunteers, who receive no payment whatsoever, yet turn up, and give their time freely to help deliver the organisation and assistance to patients and staff alike...

We understand that the next Flu vaccination clinics will be on the **2nd and 9th of November** once again, the spirit of both the staff and patients of all of the Westhoughton PCN will be on display... (Wish we could bottle it, we would make a fortune!)

