

Why our GPs working 8am-8pm won't solve the NHS problems

image - Google Street View



Nationally GPs are contracted to provide routine and urgent care (*not emergency*) from 8am - 6.30pm Monday to Friday. Victoria Road Surgery also provides extended routine care from 7am on some weekdays and 7am - 7.30pm on another.

Outside 8am - 6.30pm Monday to Friday, there is an urgent out of hours GP service available via 111, we help fund this service. There is a national shortage of GPs, one third of all GP practices have an unfilled vacancy and are struggling to cover their core 8am - 6.30pm hours.

Asking GP surgeries to cover routine care from 8am - 8pm 7 days a week will mean there will be less availability in the week. Did you know on average a GP communicates with on average 50 patients a day (in our

duty surgeries we can consult with one hundred patients per day)? GPs manage up to 100 prescriptions each day all of which need to be checked for appropriate usage, monitoring and interactions. GPs have to read and code and action letters from third parties (hospitals, patients, other disciplines) every day and these can be in excess of 100, GPs check all test results coming into the practice electronically from the hospital and then speak with patients on the telephone regarding these. They write referral letters from the day's consultations, they make home visits and contact other health care professionals to discuss patients. They attend meetings on prescribing, clinical commissioning, meetings on how to make services in our area sustainable, palliative care meetings, child protection meetings and practice meetings to discuss changes they want to make in the surgery and how to react to opportunities and threats to the surgery. On top of this there is continued mandatory training, resuscitation updates, adult and child safeguarding and keeping up to date on the latest guidance to carry out.

That is why the face to face consultations are only 50% of our total work. Most weeks GPs come in on their days off, work from home and often leave much after the surgery has closed. They cannot physically do more.

GPs are not the answer to the hospital crisis

Data from World Bank and King's Fund:

Number of doctors per 1,000 population:

Spain 4.9 Italy 4.0 Germany 3.9 France 3.3 - with UK at 2.8

Number of Beds per 1,000 population:

Germany 8.2 France 6.4 Italy 3.4 Spain 3.1 - with UK at 2.9

GDP on health care:

France 11.5% Germany 11.2% Italy 9.2% Spain 9.1% - with the UK at 8.5%

So, the public should be writing to their MPs to pressurise the Government for more resources if they really want to improve the whole situation and want to get better accessible care.

Helping others



Nurse Raine Bruce (*pictured above*) decided that the surgery team should support Safe in Sussex - the women's refuge, by collecting toiletries for both the women and their children. She had a fantastic response from all the staff at Victoria Road and Raine felt like Santa when she delivered a big parcel of goodies. The generosity of the Victoria Road team was much appreciated and made the women realise that the community cares about them and their situation.



Jo Lowes, our Reception Manager (*pictured left with Sophie Peck of our Reception team*) thought it would be a good idea for us to support **Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child** a fantastic campaign in which you pack a shoe box full of toys, stationery, sweets and hygiene products for a child who is living in poverty or is a survivor of a tragic event or situation. Victoria Road staff packed 25 boxes, which we have just been informed were received by youngsters in Central Asia. Through the generosity of people in the United Kingdom 882,647 children, in 17 countries, received a gift to remember for Christmas 2016.

13,461 our largest patient list **EVER**, and an increase of more than ...

1,500 ...new patients in one year

806 ...total of appointments our patients didn't turn up for (Sept - Dec '16)



Jane de Jong
Practice Manager

Well, I cannot believe we are already dashing through 2017 and as I write this the weather is cold so I hope, if you are eligible for an annual flu vaccination, you all took the opportunity. If you missed out don't forget it is a good idea to make a note in your diary to contact us at the end of September 2017 for your next jab.

So, General Practice is busy! I am sure that you are all aware of this when it comes to booking appointments or getting answers back from GPs it's nowhere near as quick or easy as you would like. We are definitely under the strain as reported in the news. **Our list size has grown again;** this time last year we had 11877 patients and as at 28 February 2017 we have 13461 patients an increase of 1584 patients. During the past year we have not managed to recruit any new doctors and Dr Novak is on maternity leave for a year. We do employ regular locums to support the practice as you are probably aware and we have recruited a Nurse Practitioner - Anne King. Anne assists the GPs with duty calls and home visits. Anne is an

Advanced Nurse Practitioner and is able to prescribe. However, demand is increasing and capacity reducing and this is what you hear and see in the news. There is no more funding coming into primary care at this stage so even if we wanted to recruit on a large scale we could not afford to do so. The additional GP service (MIAMI clinic) that we have managed to send many of our patients to has also suffered a cutback. Therefore we have to make sure we provide the best possible service we can. In order to do this we ask for your help. Please would patients use alternative health care options like pharmacies, self-help information sheets for common conditions and speaking to a nurse as an alternative to speaking to your GP. We want to work safely but where your condition is fairly low risk or a common cold, cough etc. these can be treated by other health professionals or with simple home treatments or remedies.

The Government are running a campaign about antibiotic prescribing. These have been prescribed so frequently during the past years to so many, that we are becoming resistant to them. If we continue to prescribe as we are then when you are very ill and really need them they may not work for you in the future. Therefore we are positively encouraged to **not** prescribe antibiotics where it is not

considered appropriate to do so. We will, of course, continue to consult safely and where appropriate you will be prescribed these. There are leaflets available to explain further about this (the difference between bacterial infections and viruses). This initiative and the research around this is for your future benefit and to protect the effectiveness of these drugs, so if your doctor refuses you this medication please understand it is for your benefit.

It does sound a little like doom and gloom, but rest assured we do care and that we do want to do the best that we can for our patients given the constraints that we are working under. We just ask that you work with us too and understand why it is that you don't get exactly what you think you should get in relation to very quick and easy access to general practice services.

One of our Patient Participation Group members, Lindsay Scott, has agreed to come into Victoria Road to work with our patients on an occasional basis to provide you with information about services, options and reasons and listen to your concerns - you can read about Lindsay in the article below. We want to hear our patients' opinions and value your ideas.

Can we be of assistance?

by **Lindsay Scott** - Chair of our PPG

During one of our many discussions at the Patient Participation Group, we asked if there was anything else our Group could do to help out during surgery times; we are aware that Victoria Road is a very busy surgery and everyone is working extra hard especially during the winter months! There was also the thought that by attending this clinic we would have the opportunity to talk to people about joining the PPG (that meets four times a year) and to listen to patients views on the surgery. It was agreed that two of our members would attend the next flu clinic.

Peter and I duly turned up, sleeves rolled up, slightly nervous and got stuck in! We were able to signpost people to the right room, help with booking in, and sort out other surgery queries where we could. We also collected a page of names of patients who were interested to know more about joining the PPG; there was also lots of positive feedback about the surgery and that was pleasing to hear. Further to us attending the flu clinic we agreed that could be a role for our PPG to have a



Peter Joyce and Lindsay Scott

presence at some of the surgery sessions to ensure that we remain in touch with patients and that we are representing and addressing your views, worries and concerns at each of our quarterly meetings. I volunteered for the first session and turned up bright and early and proudly wearing my shiny new Victoria Road name badge! Any worries of feeling a spare part quickly faded as I realised that there was plenty to be getting on with. I was able to inform a young mother about the children's walk-in clinic as she was very worried about her

daughter and hadn't been able to get an appointment that day, sort out the booking-in screen that was having an off day! Helped new patients fill in forms, assist with the blood pressure machine and sat with a patient who felt unwell until the doctor could see her. I hope I was able to gauge when patients didn't feel like talking and those who were happy to chat, I know I don't always want to talk when I am feeling unwell! During my session I had several opportunities to ask people for feedback on the surgery, and again I have to say it was almost all positive! We do continue to seek new people to join our Patient Group so if you do have an interest in joining us or sharing your views please do not hesitate to contact us through the surgery. And, just a little reminder that there is a comment box for any feedback or suggestions on the table in the surgery, and yes these can be anonymous!



VR is published by Victoria Road
Surgery, 50 Victoria Road, Worthing
BN11 1XE 01903 230656
victoriaroadsurgery.co.uk