

# Selsey Medical Practice Newsletter

The latest news and information from your local surgery

## Summer 2023



## Appointments System



Access to appointments is an aspect of our practice that we are constantly striving to improve. Demand is higher than ever in Selsey, and we have increased the number of appointments available.

We are sometimes asked about how our appointments system works. Here is a brief description:

The practice currently offers about 1500 appointments every week. These are distributed between GPs, Physiotherapist, Paramedic Practitioner, Clinical Pharmacists, Nurses and HCA's. We also have appointments we are able to book at 'out of hours' centres.

Over 70% of our appointments are face-to-face. The remainder are telephone or video consultations (sometimes these are followed up with an additional face-to-face appointment).

We offer two types of appointments for booking; these are for 'urgent' cases, and 'non-urgent' cases. The way that each day's bookings are divided up is shown below:

- Approximately a third are kept for 'urgent', (on the day) appointments.
- Approximately a third are bookable 1 or 2 days in advance for 'non-urgent' cases.
- Approximately a third are bookable 1 or 2 weeks in advance for 'non-urgent' cases.

Depending on the type of appointment, they are automatically released to become available to book on our clinical system.

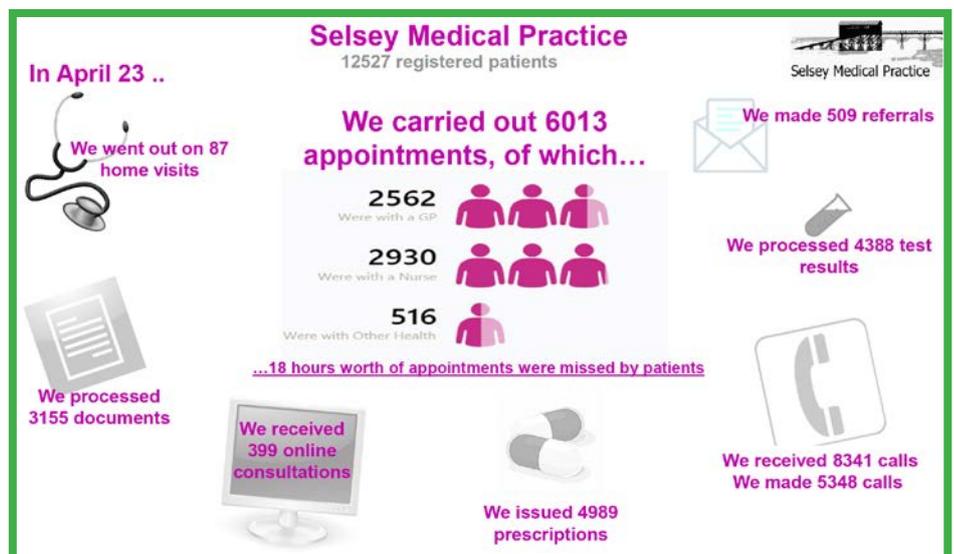
At that point, appointments are bookable online and are also available to our patient services team and clinical team for telephone bookings.

We are currently reviewing the distribution and availability of our appointments to see if we can improve access. If we are unable to offer you an appointment, this is because all the available appointments are full.

## Vital Statistics!

We are now publishing monthly statistics so you can see how we are working to meet the needs of the Selsey community. We post them on our website and the Patient Group post them on their Facebook page.

Here are April's figures, which are representative of most months in 2023 so far.



**NHS App.** Did you know that you can view your test results by using the NHS app? You can get information quickly and avoid ringing the practice. (Page 4) Find out more and download the app here: [www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/)



# Patient Group - Supporting our Patients

Do you use social media? Are you on Facebook? Have you discovered the Selsey Patient Group Facebook page yet? Visit us here: <https://www.facebook.com/SelseyPG>

Having served for a number of years, our long-serving Chairman, Bob Arnold, handed over the reins to me at the Annual General Meeting last month. However, Bob will continue to offer his expertise to the Patient Group in some administrative roles and this is really appreciated.

Selsey continues to be represented at the Chichester Alliance of Medical Practice (ChAMP) meetings and also at the West Sussex Patient Participation Groups. We are held as a model group and I hope this will continue as we look forward.

We will be holding our annual practice satisfaction survey in July and I hope as many of you as possible will share your views on our medical centre. This is more important than ever this year as we will be helping to provide statistics enabling the Government to focus on the population's greatest needs. The replies will also help us shape the future needs of our local community, as well as indicate where we can assist the surgery to make improvements for us all.

Finally, I think we all owe a debt of gratitude to the hard-working staff at Selsey Medical Practice. We all need to bear in mind the sheer volume of patients being cared for by a small group of dedicated people. Best wishes to you all.

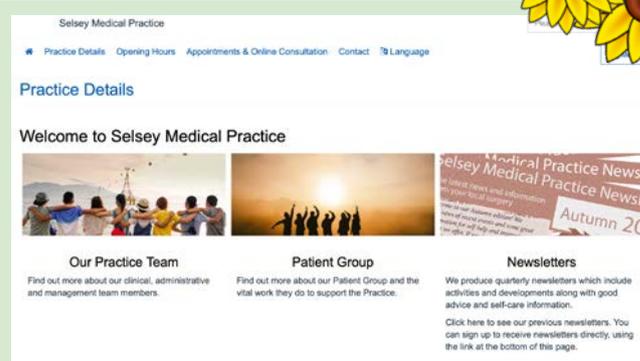
**Barbara Shepherd**, Chair, Selsey Patient Group



## Patient Group Web Page

As well as a Facebook Page, the Patient Group also has a section on our website, where you can find out details of their activities, and read minutes of their meetings and reports from Patient Surveys.

Look for the link on our Practice Details page (screen shot shown right)



## Patient Group Evening Seminars Return!



*Ms Angela Skull*

On Weds 3rd May we had an inspiring and informative evening talk from colorectal surgeon, Ms Angela Skull. This was the first face to face event since pre-covid times and, as usual, it did not disappoint.

The talk covered topics ranging from bowel cancer to gall stones, and everything in between. Lots of questions were asked and answered. Ms Skull was a fabulous speaker and stayed on after her presentation to answer further individual questions.

The evening talk was a collaboration between the Patient Group, Selsey Medical Practice and Nuffield Health.

The next one is planned for September – if you are interested in receiving information about this talk email the practice on: [sxib-wsx.selsey-selsey@nhs.net](mailto:sxib-wsx.selsey-selsey@nhs.net)

# Help us to Increase Available Appointments

In May's news, the Government announced that people will be able to access health services without needing to see a GP, under a plan launched by officials in England.

When it becomes operational, patients will be able to use high street pharmacies for some common drug prescriptions and routine tests to ease the pressure on busy doctors.

NHS England says its plan will free up 15m GP appointments over the next two years - around 2% of the total. If this works for us in Selsey, it will be a small step in the right direction, and we will keep you informed about any changes to the current local pharmacy service.

In the meantime... We have been encouraging patients to utilise all available services for some time now, as a way to help us to free up more appointments for those who can only be dealt with by a GP surgery. Here is a list of some alternative ways you can access care and support at the moment.

- **Try self care first**- many minor illnesses like coughs, colds, back ache, hay fever and minor injuries either get better without any intervention or can be self managed using over the counter remedies (**talk to the pharmacist**)
- **Minor ailments.** Very helpful advice can be found on [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk) or [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- **Advice.** For telephone medical advice you can **call 111** in or out of hours.
- **Cancellations.** If you realise you are unable to attend a booked appointment, contact the practice to cancel as soon as possible. You can do this in person, by phone, online or, if you have consented to our text service, you can cancel via a text message.
- **Existing referrals.** Please DO NOT make a GP appointment to discuss an existing referral, these can be dealt with by our **medical secretaries** and they can speak to your GP if needed.
- **Non-medical problems** such as social difficulties, can be discussed with our **Community Referrer**. Ask the receptionist, nurse or doctor for a referral.
- **Self-referral services**- ask our reception team if you would like information on how to refer yourself for **physiotherapy** or to our psychological therapy service called **NHS West Sussex Talking Therapies**.
- **Sickness certificates**- employees need to “**self certificate**” for the first 7 days, the appropriate self-certification form can be obtained from your employer. A doctor's note, (Med 3 form), is not available for the first 7 days sickness.
- **Children.** If your child or young person is unwell a clinician should see them if you judge that they need medical attention. Please do not come to the practice just as proof of absence for the school as this is not a good use of an appointment and **the doctor will not write a sick note**. If the education authorities are concerned at a later point that excessive time has been taken off school, they may request a report from the GP. Any information disclosed to the school will require written parental consent and, in some cases, the child's consent.
- **Hospital medication.** Following discharge from hospital you should be provided with at least 2 weeks supply of medication, please **contact the hospital team** who looked after you, if you don't have the appropriate medication.
- **Hospital sick note.** Hospitals must provide a medical certificate following any procedure, for the whole period of time that they have advised you to stay off work. You should **contact the hospital** if you have been discharged and need a certificate, as GP's will not be able to provide certificates immediately after a hospital procedure.
- **Pregnancy related queries Telephone 01903285269**- the hospital provides a 7 day a week maternity advice line between 7.30 a.m. and 8.30 p.m.. to advise on problems from early pregnancy right through to full term. To book your pregnancy with the hospital search on line for '**book my pregnancy in West Sussex**' and follow the links.
- **Dental problems.** Our GP's are not insured to see patients regarding dental problems; patients should see their own dentist for any dental problem. In an emergency, you can contact The Jubilee Dental Centre at St Richards Hospital on **01243 831790**. Phone lines are open from 5.30pm Monday to Friday and from 8.30am Saturdays and Sundays.

Do all you can to keep yourself healthy in natural ways. Think about improving your lifestyle with more exercise and a better diet.

# Test Results

Did you know that you can view your test results by using the NHS app? This means you can get the information you need quickly and avoid having to ring the practice. Our patients who already have the app have found it reassuring to see their results as soon as they are processed by the hospital. If they are normal, they can feel relieved, but if there are any issues, they will usually receive some communication from their clinician (once they have had an opportunity to review the results).

The App also provides access to your medical records. Here you can see a summary of conditions and procedures that you have had in the past, which can be useful to know. To find out more and download the app visit the NHS website here: [www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/). The app provides a simple and secure way to access a range of NHS services on your smartphone or tablet.



As well as looking at test results and your medical record you can use the NHS App to:

- check your symptoms
- find out what to do when you need help urgently
- book and manage appointments at your GP surgery
- order repeat prescriptions
- register to be an organ donor
- choose how the NHS uses your data



## Waiting for a Hospital Appointment?

As you will have heard in the News, hospital waiting times are very long at the moment. If you have been referred on for further treatment and want to know how long you are likely to have to wait before being seen, there is now a dedicated NHS site for patients to be able to check waiting times for different specialities:

[www.myplannedcare.nhs.uk](http://www.myplannedcare.nhs.uk).

This site is updated weekly so you can monitor the length of time you should expect to be waiting for.

You can also ring the referral support team for information on **01903 708670**.

Lastly, you can visit our own page [www.selseymedicalpractice.co.uk/support-while-you-wait](http://www.selseymedicalpractice.co.uk/support-while-you-wait) for useful tips and how you can get support while you are waiting for a hospital appointment.

## Community Pharmacy Consultation Service

Selsey Medical Practice have been participating in a new approach to improve access for patients to clinical appointments. The aim is to signpost patients to the most appropriate healthcare professional, which may be a pharmacist rather than a GP. (More about signposting on page 6).

Now that we are using this service in the practice, you will be asked some questions when you call us. If your symptoms could be resolved by a booked consultation with the pharmacist instead of the GP, you will be offered a same-day referral to a pharmacy of your choice. We think this is a good thing. Once you see how great your local pharmacist is (they are highly trained and skilled clinicians, experienced in treating minor illnesses) we don't think you'll look back.

This approach is one way in which we can free up GP appointments for people with more complex health needs and ensure that everyone gets treated at the right time, by the right healthcare professional.

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We are keen to hear what you think about this initiative and will be listening to your comments and feedback about your experience of using this service

# Access to Remote Women's Health Appointments



'Women's Gynae Health' is an excellent service which provides remote consultations for women with gynaecology health problems (including symptoms of the menopause) that require more expertise than is easily available in primary care, but do not require a full secondary care service.

This service has been used by patients from our Selsey practice for several months and the feedback they have given us about it has been hugely positive.

Appointments are provided remotely by telephone or video by gynaecologists or GPs with a special interest (GPSI) in women's health. Consultations are usually 15-minute duration and, with your consent, the consultant can access your GP records. Where necessary, the clinicians will organise basic investigations and then arrange follow up care.

These appointments are available during the day and in the evenings and can be booked by the reception team at the practice.

Please contact the surgery in the normal way to make an appointment.

## Hay Fever

Summer is nearly here! We find lots of people suffer at this time of year with Hay Fever, so here is a brief guide to help you cope.

Hay fever is an allergic reaction to pollen – a fine powder released into the air by plants and trees. Hay fever is most prevalent during the warmer months when the amount of pollen in the air is highest.

The symptoms of hay fever often include: sneezing and coughing, runny or blocked nose, itchy / red eyes, itchy ears, nose, mouth and throat and headaches.



If you suffer from hay fever, try to avoid activities that bring you into contact with pollen, such as: cutting the grass; keeping cut flowers indoors; drying your laundry outside; allowing animals inside the house as they may bring pollen in with them. You should also avoid smoking and second-hand smoke as this can make your symptoms worse.

You can use techniques to reduce your symptoms, such as: applying Vaseline inside the nostrils to catch pollen; wearing wrap-around sunglasses to stop pollen getting in your eyes; showering and changing clothes after spending time outside; and vacuuming and damp dusting regularly.

You may also benefit from eye drops and nasal sprays. Antihistamine medications such as Cetirizine, Fexofenadine, and Loratadine are available as tablets, and all these can be purchased over the counter without a prescription at most pharmacies and supermarkets. Please note that there is no stronger prescription antihistamine than the ones you can buy over the counter - this is a common misconception.

Using this advice, you can treat hay fever yourself, and you shouldn't need to see a doctor in most cases.

For more information about how you can treat hay fever, visit: [www.nhs.uk/](http://www.nhs.uk/)

# Signposting - Making sure you get the right care

Selsey Medical Practice always try to balance the availability of appointments with our patients' needs, ensuring that everyone can access safe and appropriate care. We also have to consider our clinicians: whilst they are excellent at their jobs, they are normal human beings without superhuman powers, and therefore they do have a limit as to what they are able to fit into a working day (despite often working for 11 or 12 hours).

One way we try to manage demand is by training and empowering our patient services team. Our staff have lots of experience and knowledge, but they now also have access to a signposting tool to help them to be able to "signpost" you to the most appropriate service. The aim of the signposting tool is to ensure that you see the right professional for your problem which helps us to manage the demand for our services.

The system has been designed by a commercial provider but much of the content and detailed guidance within has been provided by Dr Parrish, so that patients can be directed to local services and given the latest advice. When you telephone the surgery, a patient services team member will ask you some basic questions as usual. Please do your best to help them. They have two computer screens open in front of them - one shows them your medical record and one shows the signposting tool; both help them to identify the best care for you. This could be an appointment to see a GP or nurse or they might recommend a specialist service. In some cases, they might direct you to emergency care without delay.

This is what the signposting tool looks like. If, for example, you had a bad headache and called us, the patient services team member would ask you some questions about it.

Under "Headache" there is a list of concerning symptoms to look out for that might require urgent attention from a GP, as well as guidance on Sepsis and Stroke. Please remember, they are not making clinical decisions, but they are using our own doctors' guidance combined with their knowledge to direct you to the best care and advice.



## Help to Support the NHS

### by buying your own over the counter medications



NHS England says "reducing prescribing of over the counter medicines for minor, short term health concerns could save the NHS £136 million a year, and encourage more people to self-care."

Did you know that each year the NHS spent over £70 million on prescriptions for paracetamol? Each prescription for paracetamol costs the NHS around £3.25, but you can currently buy the same paracetamol for as little as 39p in Tesco. The NHS also spends £4.5 million every year on antidandruff shampoos, £7.5 million on indigestion remedies, and many millions more on other "over the counter products".

We carried out an audit and found that in the last year £141,915 of NHS money was spent in Selsey on medications that patients could have bought over the counter.

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If we can start paying for our own over the counter medications, we'll save the NHS many millions of pounds that can be invested in A&E services, hospitals, mental health services, and other areas in real need of better funding.

# Buddy Transport Service

The Buddy Transport Service is being coordinated by the Care Shop in Selsey. It is supported by funding from the Friends of Selsey Medical Practice to provide the administrative support needed.

This service is available to those who require additional assistance, and without this support would not otherwise be able to attend their medical appointment.

This is a prearranged service, available for weekday appointments only.

## Destinations and Charges for Collection/Wait/Return:

(Additional Charge for Car Parking at Hospitals will apply)

- Selsey Medical Practice £5.00
- St Richards Hospital, Chichester £12.00
- Bognor Regis War Memorial Hospital £15.00
- Sage House, Tangmere £15.00
- Portsmouth Hospital £25.00
- Worthing Hospital £25.00



*Actual vehicle may not be a Porsche!*

Buddy Transport Service Contact Details: Tel No: **07394 399 381**

# New Emotional Wellbeing Service

We now have access to an amazing new Emotional Wellbeing Service for patients over 18.

The service provides 1:1 sessions (face to face or remotely) for patients who may be struggling with mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, anger issues, self-harming.

Any member of the practice team can refer you to this service and once a referral has been received a Mental Health Support Coordinator will contact you (usually within 72hrs). Appointments with them can be held at the medical centre.

# New Online Consultation Tool (Accurx Triage)

You can now contact us about a medical or administrative issue using our new online consultation tool. Links to this are on our website. We have replaced the old 'e-Consult' online consultation system with what we think is an easier system for you to use. The new tool uses simple online forms and is a quick and convenient way for you to contact us.

Using a smart phone, tablet, or computer, patients complete a short form and enter a few personal details... You won't have to answer lots of questions. Your request will be reviewed by us within 2 working days.

You can also use the online form to request repeat medication.

Currently the system is open weekdays from 06:00 - 15:00. However we reserve the right to adjust these times.

Please note that online consultations should not be made for any emergency or urgent medical conditions or for minor injuries; for these, you should contact the appropriate service. If you are unsure which service you need, call 111.

# Friends of Selsey Medical Centre

The Friends of the Selsey Medical Centre Charity was set up over 25 years ago, when the original surgery in St Peter's Crescent was deemed to be inadequate for the growing population of Selsey with all the new house building taking place. Patrick Moore dug the first sod of turf for the new surgery building that we currently occupy.

The 'Friends' were formed to help furnish the new surgery with equipment that was necessary, but that was not normally available or supplied by the NHS. The same principle applies to their support today.



The average amount spent on equipment by the Friends each year is in the region of between £15,000-£20,000. This year 22/23 they have spent in the region of £45,000 to assist the surgery, in collaboration with Selsey Community Forum, to provide Selsey Medical Practice patients with an in-house specialist who can provide on-the-spot help and advice for patients, and even better collaboration between both organisations. They have also participated in funding the new Buddies car scheme (page 7). A full list of the support and medical equipment provided to the surgery is listed in their AGM Booklet, supplied each year to paid up members along with details of the current financial situation.

The Friends continue their work to keep our surgery nice and well-equipped but they need more patients to become members - it's £5.00 per person per year to be a member.

Your membership is very important to them, both in terms of fund raising but also in helping with the running of the charity. They are looking for people to join their committee to help the charity which requires 2 hours commitment, once a month. Contact details on our website.

We are very grateful to David Webber, who has been a brilliant Chairman for the past 17 years. His parting comment for the newsletter was "Please join us, we are a friendly lot, and you will help keep this excellent charity running for future generations"!

## Please be Kind!

As you may be able to tell from several articles in this edition, we rely very much on the professionalism and support provided by our patient services team. They are there to receive your calls and help you to access the care you need. Sometimes what patients need and what they want are not the same thing, and people can understandably feel frustrated if they have to wait behind someone with more urgent needs, or if they are asked a few questions, or if they can't get an appointment exactly when they want one. Please remember that the staff member is doing everything they can to help you. Please don't raise your voice, shout or be rude to them. They understand the anxiety you might be feeling and do their best, so please be mindful of the stress they also feel, and work with them to find the best way to organise your medical care.



## Practice Closure

The practice will be closed from 12:30pm on Thursday 6th July.

This is to provide essential training and updates for our teams. Further information including out of hours contact details for the time we are closed will be available on our website nearer to the time.

