



STAFF NEWS

We have more GPs coming and going over the summer with the return of Dr Calvert (June), and Dr Boyd (July) from their maternity leave.

This means saying goodbye to Dr Loudon, who left at the end of May, and to Dr Falconer from 20th July, who have been working as locum GPs for Drs Calvert and Boyd over the last few months.

While we are delighted to have our full team of GP Partners back together we are very grateful to all our locums who have given us such great support during the last year.

Both Drs Calvert and Boyd return to the same consultation schedule, but there may be some changes later in the year. Full details are available from reception, or on the Practice website.

The start of August also means a changeover in our GP specialist trainees, with Drs Swanson and Dunne moving on from Bruntsfield. Dr Swanson has been with us for the last year, as well as a 6 month period in 2013/14, and has now completed his specialist training.

Dr Dunne has been with us since February 2016, and will be moving on to her next year as a specialist trainee.

Both staff and patients alike will definitely miss both doctors and I hope you join us in wishing them well for the future. Although fans of Dr Swanson may spot him returning to help us out with a few sessions as a locum GP.

Our next GP trainee is Dr David MacSorley, who some of you may remember from the 6 months he spent with us in 2014/15. He joins us for his final year of specialist training from the beginning of August.

SPIRE

(SCOTTISH PRIMARY CARE INFORMATION RESOURCE)

GP records let doctors provide patients with the care they need, but are also the closest thing out there to a comprehensive lifelong record of a patient's health. As such, GP records are an extremely valuable source of information.

The SPIRE project is a collaboration between the Scottish Government and NHS National Services Scotland (NSS). It aims to unlock the potential of this information, to simplify and standardise the process for extracting data from GP practice systems for a number of purposes (e.g. audit, disease surveillance, benchmarking, planning, research).

To ensure that any data extracted will be safely and securely handled, and that the confidentiality of information in patient records is safeguarded, an Information Governance Framework has been developed. This describes principles and arrangements that will underpin SPIRE and to which the service will adhere to ensure patient confidentiality is always maintained.

A toolkit of information is being produced to support practices to inform their patients about SPIRE and respond to any queries. This toolkit will contain information for patients in a variety of formats such as paper leaflets and information for practice websites. There will also be a separate public engagement campaign to raise awareness across Scotland. This is currently planned to start in summer 2016.

For more information on the SPIRE project, you can access their website and FAQ at www.spire.scot

Forthcoming dates for your calendar:



Wed 7th September

Mon 19th September

STAFF TRAINING - PRACTICE CLOSED FROM 12.30PM

PUBLIC HOLIDAY - PRACTICE CLOSED ALL DAY

WAITING TIMES

The current NHS Scotland non-emergency waiting time standards are:



- 12 weeks from GP referral to new outpatient appointments; and
- 18 weeks from GP referral to treatment.

We are aware that an increasing number of departments are struggling to meet these targets due to the pressure the NHS is under. While we expect that all of you are well aware of these difficulties given how prominently they are covered in the media, this will do little to ease individual frustration about feeling you have been left in limbo after a referral has been made.

NHS inform (<http://www.nhsinform.co.uk/rights/waitingtimes>) goes through this process, including your rights, in detail. One of the most important facts to be aware of is that the responsibility for meeting these targets is solely with NHS Lothian (i.e. the local hospitals and outpatient clinics). As independent subcontractors, GP practices are not advised of current waiting times, we do not have any rights/ability to prioritise non-emergency referrals and we do not have any dedicated access to the hospital's appointment administrators. In fact the first communication we receive back after making a referral is the clinic letter written to summarise your appointment.

If you are approaching your waiting time target for a non-emergency appointment, or have passed it, and you have not received word from the Department you are due to see, NHS Scotland states that it is the individual who has been referred, or their representative's, responsibility to contact the hospital/clinic. This is because the department you have been referred to has a responsibility to "explain why you have not been seen/treated and to offer the next available appointment".

They also have a responsibility to discuss the complaints process with you if you are not satisfied with the response.

To contact an appointments team call the NHS Lothian central switchboard on **0131 536 1000**.

Ask the switchboard to put you through to "appointments in [the department you have been referred to e.g. cardiology, etc]. The team you are connected to will then be able to deal with your enquiry directly.

CHANGES TO CERVICAL SCREENING PROGRAMME

From Monday 6 June 2016, the age range for cervical screening changed from age 20–60 to age 25–64. The frequency of cervical screening will continue to be every three years from age 25–49, but will change to every five years for women from age 50–64.

These changes were recommended by a review of the evidence on the effectiveness of screening across age groups, bringing Scotland into line with practice elsewhere in the UK.

Data shows that screening women below the age of 25 has little or no impact on rates of invasive cervical cancer. But evidence shows that women up to the age of 64 can also benefit from cervical screening. In women aged 50 or above, screening every five years offers adequate protection.

Women will continue to be invited for screening by receiving a letter and leaflet automatically sent by the Scottish Cervical Call Recall System (SCCRS) at the correct time. There will be instances where a woman aged 20–24 is invited for cervical screening on or after 6 June 2016. This will be because she has previously been invited as part of the programme, prior to the changes. We would encourage all women to remain in the screening programme as recommended, and if you are uncertain if you need a smear please contact the practice or check with the nurse or GP next time you are in.

Please remember to inform us if you can't keep your appointment (by phone or online)



Contributors

Dr Nick Walls (GP)
Karen McDonald (IT Dept)

