

Nuffield Practice Patient Participation Group

Spotlight

The Nuffield Practice Patient Participation Group (PPG) works with the practice to ensure that through excellent communication, practice decision-making is informed by the best possible understanding of patients' needs and concerns

December 2023

Chair's report Casting back to our last Spotlight bulletin, one of the articles memorably drew attention to Witney Museum's curated display during NHS 75th anniversary celebrations, of artefacts charting the remarkable history of the Nuffield Practice from its beginnings. It is all the more heartening that this December 2023 bulletin highlights the distance travelled since those early times. Who would have guessed 75 years ago that we would be aided by technology in so many ways, or supported by social prescribers or ECPs (as described below), or that patients would be encouraged to engage in activities such as walking, local cycling groups, gardening, and volunteering in clinics?

A strong sense of shared values is still in evidence today throughout the Nuffield Practice, as seen in commentary of current patient surveys, as it was all those years ago, thanks to the willing service of so many, for which we are more than grateful. Here's to the next evolving 75 years!

Introducing our Emergency Care Practitioners You may have heard a reference to 'our ECPs' and wondered what the initials stand for: in this issue of 'Spotlight' we decode the initials and introduce the people behind them. **Peter Arbuthnot** and **Ashton Warren** are our Emergency Care Practitioners, supporting the Practice and its patients in a variety of essential ways, just some of which are indicated here. Between them they see and treat a variety of illnesses in all ages, and 'telephone triage' calls to assess the level of urgency for face-to-face appointment. Depending on the request, they may prescribe appropriate treatment, order blood tests, swabs or urine tests, or discuss further with the Duty Doctor on shift. They can also refer patients to secondary care services if needed (for example, ENT). Beyond this, they may follow up with patients to ensure they are improving with treatment, and may also follow up some test results. They can give 'safety netting' advice, or provide signposts to the right advice and guidance services. These are just some of the ways in which the Practice has been strengthened by the work of our most welcome ECPs.

Social Prescribing—or, medicine that doesn't come in a tube or a bottle

With our motto 'Help is at hand' in mind, *Spotlight* has been catching up with one of the valuable ways in which the Nuffield Practice now supports its patients. The idea of 'Social Prescribing' (you can read more about it on the NHS website [here](#)) is to help people to improve their mental health and wellbeing, and reduce loneliness, by signposting them towards appropriate community activities (our own Walking Group might be one example). At the Nuffield, when contact is made with someone who would benefit from this kind of help rather than having clinical needs, a referral can be made to [Oxfordshire MIND](#). People living with long term conditions and dealing with issues related to job-seeking, housing, or social contact, can then be encouraged and enabled by MIND's Primary Care Wellbeing Workers to link in with and use existing local support services, and develop the tools with which they can manage their own wellbeing. You can ask more about the service from our helpful Reception team. Just another way in which we can be confident as Nuffield patients that 'help is at hand'.

Autumn arrives in the garden Following a very mixed summer weather-wise, Autumn has definitely descended on the Nuffield Practice garden. Most of the flowers are over, but a few brave hollyhocks, verberna and Sweet William flowers cling on despite the wind and rain. The Hot Lips (Salvia) is also doing well. It's easy to forget that much of the planting in the garden is very recent. Even though we're still at an early stage, some little plants we put in relatively recently are thriving, particularly some herbs such as sages and lavenders, and some of the perennials such as the golden rod and echinops. As time passes, we're confident that the new plants will mature enough to hold their own against the rampant uninvited guests: some enthusiastic species such as clover tend to run rife over our carefully selected bee friendly specimens.

The team has been busy pruning, weeding and trimming. We're thrilled to report that our tiny band of two patient volunteers has doubled and we're now a group of four. Thank you to our new gardeners for volunteering. Many hands make light work. If anyone else would like to help out, please speak to the Practice reception. I can say from experience, it is very rewarding - especially with the number of positive comments we receive from passers-by when we're working in the garden.—*The Gardening Group*

Keep cycling!—our *Cycling Champion, David Eaton encourages us:* It is well known that people's exercising activity, particularly outdoors, drops off significantly from November onwards until the better weather returns in March. There is no need for this, one just needs to have the right clothing to exercise in these colder months and there are many health benefits, particularly for mental health, in exercising outdoors in the winter months. In this article I am including the following link [How to keep cycling through the winter | Cycling UK](#) which whilst it relates to cycling, equally some of the advice it gives could apply to walking and running outdoors.

The Windrush Bike Project in Corn Street can provide practical help to those who want to get into cycling. I am willing to give advice to any one on a one to one basis, just email me first at david.eaton28@ntopenworld.com with what you would like advice on and with your contact details.

Walking: no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong choice of clothes! Don't be deterred by the time of year; the Walking Group keeps going through the year—a walk is only cancelled if there is a severe weather warning, or snow or ice on the pavements. As **Judith le Good** writes, '*In winter we tend to avoid the off-road paths but there are still plenty of routes where we can enjoy open space, nature and the changing seasons. The only Tuesday we never arrange a walk is the Tuesday between Christmas and New Year which this year is Boxing Day. Getting out whatever the weather is so good for your well-being.*' Contact Judith for more information at judithlegood@btinternet.com or tel. **01993 702219**, or just turn up at **2 pm on Tuesday** afternoons outside the Surgery. You will find a warm welcome.

And, finally—*Heather writes:* Looking to the future, we would like to welcome everyone to join us at our next meeting in January, when we will be holding elections for NPPG roles of Chair, Deputy Chair, and Secretary, and also reviewing our strategic plan: your chance to have a say in what we do and how we do it. The agenda will be circulated nearer the time, and we would be pleased to receive any comments or feedback in advance to ensure your views are heard.

To contact the Patient Participation Group, and find out more about its activities, consult the [website](#) or email the practice at nuffield.practice@nhs.net