

Pinfold Medical Practice's PPG April 2024 Newsletter

Contact us via **reception** or the **suggestion box** in the practice foyer

Email: nencicb-cd.pinfoldppg@nhs.net

Hi Everyone,

Our first Digital Workshop has now taken place

I am delighted to announce our very first Digital Workshop has taken place in Butterknowle Village Hall and the patients who attended found it very informative. They are certainly happy to use the website and NHS App in the future (or at least give them a go!). The PPG and our Practice Manager, Dee are certainly encouraged by their feedback.



If you, or a family member (aged 18+) are curious to learn more about the NHS App or how to access Pinfold's website and would like to share the PPG's discovery of 'patient empowerment' please let reception know on 01388 718230. You will then be booked into one of our group sessions at the village hall. These are for a limited time, so if you are interested, please do get in touch. You will *not* need to bring any devices with you.

Do not worry if you are not particularly technically minded, this workshop is very informative and can be enjoyed irrespective of technical level. The feedback so far has been very positive.

If you recall, a little while ago we had a film crew from More4 at Pinfold following staff and patients over 4 days. The 6-part series covering a number of rural practices is now due to be transmitted. The first episode is to be aired on Thursday, 25th April 2024 at 9pm. It is our understanding, Pinfold Medical Practice will feature within episodes 3 and 4. The More4 TV series is called GPs: Treating Rural Britain.

In other news, there is currently an open consultation happening regarding the community water fluoridation expansion in the north east of England directed by the Department of Health & Social Care. For those interested in the supply of fluoride into our drinking water and how it prevents tooth decay, more information is available via Gov.UK.

Sadly, I was recently informed that a patient 'Did Not Attend' (DNA) audit revealed incidents had significantly risen at Pinfold. From **20th February to 20th March** there were **54 DNAs recorded**. This unfortunately puts a different slant on patients complaining about the lack of appointments available. PLEASE, for the sake of all patients, if you cannot attend your appointment, let reception know as soon as possible to free up appointments for others.

One of our PPG members, Mike, recently spent time with Pinfold's dispensers and has kindly offered the following summary which I am sure you will find interesting.

In the dispensary, remember that Monday morning is the busiest time of the week with 50-80 jobs for the staff to work through. Later in the day and throughout the rest of the week the workload is considerably lower. Medicines are received in three deliveries per day and orders placed before 10:30 am tend to come in on the afternoon of the same day. Medicines ordered later in the day are typically received on the following day, but issues with a lack of stocks at the supplier can result in delays of up to several months. In some cases, a GP may be able to prescribe an alternative, but not all medicines are easily substituted, and patients are then advised to try other dispensaries, especially the larger stockists, such as Boots (who have an online stock checker where you can determine which branches hold stocks of specific medicines). Patients can help by accepting a generic version of their medicine, because finding stocks of a specific brand may be difficult or impossible.

In respect of availability, patients may sometimes find that a repeat prescription cannot be fulfilled. This may be because the date for medical review has passed. Patients should be aware that the time limits on prescriptions are set for good medical reasons, e.g. to assess their health status, determine the efficacy of the medicine and identify any side effects.

In summary, the dispensary staff handle a large workload with speed, accuracy and efficiency. As patients, we can help them by attending to any time restrictions on prescriptions, accepting generic rather than branded medicines, and using our initiative in searching out alternative dispensaries, if this is feasible.

Practice Manager's Update:

The Spring 2024 Covid Vaccination program has commenced. Our care coordinator will get in touch with all over 75-year-olds and Immunocompromised patients to book in to have their vaccines at the practice.

We have all started work on our new GMS contract from the 1st of April 2024.

NHS Business service authority has announced the cost of a NHS prescription is changing from the 1st of May 2024 to £9.90 per item.

High "Did not attend" rate continues to rise both for GP surgery appointments and hospital appointments. Kindly be mindful about the capacity and pressures the NHS is currently going through. If you are not able to attend, please could you get in touch with the surgery and/or hospital to cancel your appointment, so these could be offered to other patients.

Until the next newsletter, please stay safe, happy and healthy.

Bernadette Hunt
PPG Chair & Teesdale Patient Representative