**LBSPPG NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2016**

 Dear Patients,

 Welcome to the second newsletter from the Little Bushey Surgery Patient Participation Group (LBSPPG).

 Since our last newsletter the Group has held its first AGM where a new committee was elected and our Constitution and Terms of Reference were ratified. These can be found on the Practice website and our notice board in the surgery waiting room. The committee members are:-

 Chairman Barry B

 Vice Chairman Margaret W

 Minute Secretary Angela P

 Committee Members Linda B Ann D Howard K Jeffrey N

 Krishna P Shareen P Fiona W

 I would like to thank Sam and Myra Segen for all their help in setting up the Group.

 Winter is upon us and now is the time to look after ourselves and also to keep an eye on those who are elderly and not so readily able to look after themselves. Herts Help and Carers in Hertfordshire will provide help and information on a variety of topics including social and financial.

 Its not too late to get your flu jab, the surgery has plenty of vaccine in stock. It is very important to tell the surgery if you have had your jab elsewhere. If it is possible also inform the surgery if an elderly friend or relative has had their jab.

Dementia Research

85000 people in the UK are affected by dementia? This means that most people have been touched by dementia in some way. Maybe a member of your own family has (or had) dementia, or perhaps you know of someone a friend or a neighbour who has the condition. We'd all like to see better treatments or even a cure for dementia, but that's not going to happen unless people come forward to participate in research. Would you like to learn more about dementia research and help to beat dementia? If the answer is yes, then why not take a look at the Join Dementia Research (JDR) website http://www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk to register your interest in dementia research studies and perhaps get involved with dementia research.

You'll find lots of really interesting information on the JDR website too. Thousands of people have signed up already, and you don't have to have dementia in order to do your bit to help,

so why not take a look and consider joining others and let's beat dementia together

**Yellow Card Scheme**

The Yellow Card Scheme is well established as the way to report suspected side effects from medicines. However, the scheme has been extended to allow the reporting of all suspected problems or incidents with all healthcare products.

It now covers:

* side effects (also known as adverse drug reactions or ADRs) from prescribed medicines, as well as over the counter and herbal preparations
* medical device adverse incidents
* defective medicines (those that are not of an acceptable quality)
* counterfeit or fake medicines or medical devices

The Yellow Card Scheme is run by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) which is part of the Department of Health. The MHRA is responsible for ensuring that medicines and medical devices work and are acceptably safe. Information gathered from the Yellow Card Scheme is assessed by medicine safety experts at the MHRA. If a new side effect or problem is identified, the frequency and seriousness is assessed and the treatment or device may have to carry additional warnings or, in rare cases, be withdrawn.

The Yellow Card Scheme is a way of monitoring side effects from medicines which were too rare to be found in clinical trials and which only become apparent when the medicine is being used by many more people. With medical devices, the Yellow Card Scheme could pick up a problem with the design, manufacture or maintenance of the device or that the instructions are unclear leading to errors in using the equipment.

It is important that you report any problems that you experience with a medicine or medical device. The Yellow Card Scheme allows anyone who is taking the drug, health professionals or carers to report their concerns.

Yellow Cards are available from pharmacies and GP surgeries or from the Yellow Card hotline by calling freephone 0808 100 3352 during business hours. The Yellow Card form can also be downloaded, to print and complete from the Yellow card Website, [www.yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk](http://www.yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk). Alternatively, you can call the Yellow Card hotline and make your report direct to their staff.

PLEASE KEEP YOUR APPOINTMENT

If you have attended the surgery recently you may have seen a notice detailing how many appointments were not kept (DNA). In the last 3 months appointments missed were GP 147, Nurse 64 and HCA 69. This equates to 588 GP appointments not kept in a year.

 As with every Practice appointments are limited so wasting 588 in a year makes it even more difficult for patients to get one in the first place. If you cannot keep your appointment, for whatever reason, you must inform the surgery as soon as possible. Most people receive a text reminder about their appointment so there is really no excuse for forgetting. Doctors are unable to refuse an appointment so it is up to us patients to apply social pressure on our friends/relatives to act responsibly and either keep their appointments or cancel them in good time.

**Carers**

I would like to take the opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Cara Harrington and I am the designated Carer’s Champion here at Little Bushey Surgery.

**Am I a carer?**

If you give unpaid help and support to a family member, friend or neighbour who would not be able to manage without you, then you are a carer. The person you look after might have a physical or learning disability, be ill or frail, have mental health problems or misuse drugs or alcohol. They may be your child, partner or parent, or a friend or neighbour, and they might live with you or live elsewhere.

**Young carers**

Young carers are young people who help look after someone in their family and take on responsibilities normally handled by an adult. Carers in Hertfordshire’s Young Carers Service supports carers aged 8-18 years old and their families to make sure their caring responsibilities don’t stop them from having the same opportunities, and social life, that other young people enjoy.

As a carer you may struggle to attend appointments at the Surgery because you need to arrange respite support. Please be aware that as a carer we will endeavour to offer you priority appointments or access to a doctor or nurse so please make reception aware when contacting the surgery.

Also, as a carer registered here at the practice, we offer you a carers health check where we check amongst other things your blood pressure, cholesterol and BMI. If you are interested in having this check you first need to book in for a blood test, then have an appointment with the nurse who will discuss your blood results and talk about your lifestyle, support and any assistance that can be offered to help you. Being a carer also entitles you to an annual flu jab.

In order to provide you with the best support we can, with your consent, pass your name on to ‘Carers in Hertfordshire’ (CiH). They are a voluntary organisation who can provide you with assistance in a number of ways, including financial advice and information on practical and emotional issues that can crop up from time to time. CiH also offer a carers’ passport/card which can be used locally to obtain discounts at lots of different shops and venues, eg. 20% discount at Frankie & Benny’s; 10% off products at Boots the Chemist; concession prices at Watford Palace Theatre and 15% discount at Holiday Inn.

**Carer’s Assessments**

Any carer who has a need for support can have a carer’s assessment. You will be entitled to an assessment regardless of the amount or type of care you provide, your financial means or your level of need of support. Your assessment is an opportunity to have a conversation about your role as a carer and what this means to you. You can choose to have someone with you. This could be at your home or somewhere that suits you. You may want to have an initial conversation over the phone. I am more than happy to refer you for an assessment or you can contact Hertfordshire County Council Adult Social Services directly on 0300 123 4042.

We understand that caring can be very stressful and demanding, with little or no thanks or recognition. If you find yourself struggling or having difficulties, please feel free to contact me at the surgery - sometimes just having the opportunity to discuss things with another person can be enough. If I’m unable to help, I will put you in touch with someone who can. I normally work 8.30am - 6.30pm on Monday and Wednesday. If you would like to talk with me, please give me a call on 0208 386 8888 or leave a message at reception if I’m not around. I will call you back and we can arrange a time to suit us both.

Please note that there is a carers noticeboard in the reception area here at the surgery. This is kept up to date with useful and local information to help support you.

**Electronic Prescription Service (EPS)**

**EPS has been developed and been launched across most GP surgeries in the last few years. It has completely changed the way in which your prescription is now handled both at your Surgery and at the Pharmacy.**

**If you collect repeat prescriptions you will not have to visit your GP practice just to pick up your paper prescription**. Instead, your GP will send the prescription electronically to the Pharmacy of your choice, **saving you time**.

The prescription is an electronic message so there is **no paper prescription to lose**.

**You may not have to wait as long at the pharmacy** as your repeat prescriptions can be made ready before you arrive.

**Less time spent visiting the GP surgery and pharmacy:**

* No need to visit your GP practice just to collect a paper prescription as they are sent electronically.
* Your Pharmacy can prepare your repeat prescription in advance so it is ready for when you arrive.

**More convenience and choice:**

* Choose where your prescriptions are sent, whether near your home, where you shop or where you work. This is flexible and can be changed at any time, just let your doctor or pharmacy know.
* No need to send stamped addressed envelopes as prescriptions are sent electronically.

**Improved safety:**

* Electronic prescriptions cannot be lost so you won't have to spend time trying to find them or asking the surgery to issue another paper prescription.
* Electronic prescriptions are more accurate which will reduce the risk of receiving the wrong medication

Local pharmacies are very experienced and have been fully involved in working with the local GP’s to make the changeover to EPS as smooth as possible. If you have any queries regarding signing up to this new service or any other questions do not hesitate to contact your local Pharmacy.

*This article has been written by Garry Michaels of Heath Pharmacy.*

**USEFUL CONTACTS**

This is a list of useful contact numbers & e mail addresses

**111**

This number is our Out of Hours service for when you want medical help or advice and the situation is not” life threatening” when of course you should dial 999 or attend A&E. For any medical need during our opening hours please phone the surgery.

**HERTS HELP**

If you need help and don’t know where to turn, if you have a question or a problem – medical or social – you can contact **HERTS HELP**

Telephone number is 0300 123 4044

E mail address is info@hertshelp.net

Post HertsHelp, Hertlands House, Primett Road, Stevenage, Herts SC1 3EE

**CARERS IN HERTFORDSHIRE**

 Gives support and information to unpaid family & friends who look after someone\*

Contact **CARERS IN HERTFORDSHIRE**

Telephone number is 01992 586 959

E mail address is contact@carersinherts.org.uk

Post The Red House,119 Fore Street, Hertford, Herts, SG14 1AY

\***IF THIS IS YOU PLEASE LET THE RECEPTIONIST OR YOUR DOCTOR KNOW YOU ARE A CARER BECAUSE IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU ARE LOOKED AFTER AS WELL.**

**RED CROSS MOBILITY AIDS**

Provides short term loans (free) of mobility aids, such as walking frames and wheelchairs

Phone 01923 804 283 for opening hours

**HERTFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE**

Free Home Fire Safety visit – including free fire detectors

Telephone 0300 123 4046

**A1 OPTICIANS**

If you need an eye test but can’t get out to an optician, A1 Opticians in Hemel Hempstead is providing free eye test to all elderly and housebound residents in Hertfordshire.

Telephone number 0800 023 4969

E mail info@A1optician.co.uk

**HERTFORDSHIRE NEUROLOGICAL SERVICE.**

If you have been diagnosed with a neurological problem, you can self refer into the above service for help with self-management or physiotherapy. For more information

Telephone 01923 299 100

Website [www.hertsdirect.org/fire](http://www.hertsdirect.org/fire)

Address Hertfordshire Neurological Service, Jacketts Field Rehabilitation Unit, Jacketts Field, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire WD5 0PA.

**LUPUS UK (HERTS & BEDS LUPUS GROUP)**

If you are interested in attending 3 monthly meetings

Telephone 01923 801 107

E mail hazel.wood@gmail.com

**RESTLESS LEGS SUPPORT GROUP**

This is a National Group – for information contact

Website [www.rls-uk.org](http://www.rls-uk.org)

**KIDS**

Independent support for parents/carers of disabled children with additional needs. Includes a free to library. For more information

Telephone 01923 676 549

E mail hub.herts@kids.org.uk.

**HERTFORDSHIRE HEALTH WALKS**

Offers great walks around Hertfordshire – free – with trained walking leaders. All levels of fitness ad ability catered for. For more information

Telephone 01992 588 433

E mail healthwalks.cms@hertfordshire.gov.uk

**PATIENT TRANSPORT**

**WATFORD COMMUNITY CAR SCHEME**

For the elderly or disabled who have to attend hospital/doctor’s appointments. It costs 45p a mile to cover expenses and they appreciate one week’s notice of journey details.

Telephone 01923 216 955

**BARBARA BUS FUND**

Set up to help people who cannot get out or use public transport because they cannot transfer from a wheelchair. There is a fleet of specially adapted vehicles which can be hired. Based at Stanmore

Telephone 0208 416 0733

E mail office@barbarabus.com

Address The Barbara Bus Fund, Louis Fleischmann Building, RNOHT, Brockley Hill, Stanmore, HA7 4LP

NEW

KOOTH

For young people aged 11 – 26 with issues such as eating disorders, bullying, anxiety and depression. On line chat available 365 days a year up to 10pm.

Website [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

Big White Wall

For anyone over 16 who wants to improve their mental health. Can deal with depression and anxiety and may also be suitable for carers and those who have been bereaved.

Website [www.bigwhitewall.com](http://www.bigwhitewall.com)

Mesothelioma

Mesothelioma is cancer caused by exposure to asbestos. It is an American website but they will help non Americans under certain circumstances. Help and information on this condition can be found at the following website,

[www.mesothelioma.net](http://www.mesothelioma.net)

If anybody has any other organisations that they have found to be useful please let me know via lbsppg@virginmedia.com so that I can include them in the next newsletter. Also the PPG would welcome any comments or articles (on any subject) for inclusion in the next newsletter.

The Little Bushey Surgery Patient Participation Group can only be effective and successful if you, the patient, make your views known either by e mail to lbsppg@virginmedia.com or on Facebook **LBSPPG** (please use capitals). As patients of the Practice we would be grateful and appreciate your feedback to improve the service of the Little Bushey Surgery.

Wishing you a healthy new year

Barry

Little Bushey Surgery Patient Participation Group.