

January Patient Newsletter 2020

Loneliness – written by a member of the patient participation group

Loneliness has many different causes that vary from person to person. Sometimes we don't always understand what it is about an experience that makes us feel lonely. For some people, certain life events may mean they feel lonely such as;

- Experiencing a bereavement
- Going through a relationship break up
- Retiring and the losing the social contact you had at work
- Changing jobs and feeling isolated from your co workers

Starting an a University

Moving to a new area

Having no friends or family

We can all feel lonely from time to time, feelings of loneliness are personal, so everyone's experience of loneliness will be different. One common description of loneliness is the feeling



we get when our need for rewarding social contact and relationships is not met. Loneliness is not always the same as being alone.

So what can we do to combat loneliness? One starting point can be to perform

acts of kindness and recognise the kindness in others. Sometimes when you feel lonely you might feel like isolating yourself from the world, which only continues the cycle of loneliness. To find a group of new friends or join in with large groups may then feel overwhelming. So how about starting small?

Dr Orloff advises, 'Hold the door open for somebody or do something nice for a stranger and then you start to get the Endorphins and the Oxytocin going in your body, these are the 'feel good' hormones. If you are feeling braver, you might even try starting conversations. By getting out every day and having conversations face to face with your neighbour, a librarian, grocer, friend – in short, any one whom you might meet regularly in your community, will strengthen our wellbeing.

Susan Pinker, psychologist and author of, 'The Village Effect,' says even these minor daily connections with others will have a very positive effect not only with our wellbeing but can also strengthen our immunity.

In the next column I have listed some local organisations you may like to contact if you are feeling that you would either, like some help from your community to address your loneliness, or you are wanting to volunteer/learn new skills or feel ready to meet new friends.

LEARNING

U3A (University of the third Age). No age limit but gener-

ally attracts people over the age of 50. The U3A promotes lifelong learning and there are over 70 groups covering everything from Languages, to Tai Chi to walking – email; worthing-u3a.org.uk – Tel: **01903 694259**.

CHATTIE CAFE

Pop over to the Chattie Café at the May Bridge Keystone Centre every other Thursday at 6pm.

VOLUNTEERING

Guild Care – volunteering and fundraising. Email; enquiry@guildcare.org.

Tel: **01903 528600**.

Green Gym – every Tuesday 10am – 1pm. Conservation Work. Tel: **07970 860938**.

Adur and Worthing Voluntary Community Transport – Tel: **01903 851558**.

Friends of Worthing Hospital – Tel: **01903 205111 ext 84064**.

HELPLINES

Samaritans – If you are feeling low or having suicidal thoughts - Tel: **116 123**.

The Silver Line – if you are an older person and would like someone to talk to you can phone

0800 4 70 80 90. This is a free service.



Helpline - can offer counselling and support. Tel: **0808 808 1677**.

MIND – help with mental health – Tel: **0300123 3393**.

Text: **86463**

VISITORS

If you are lonely and would like to talk to someone about arranging a home visitor, you can begin by contacting **TIME to TALK** - a non profit making organisation. Tel: **01273 737710**.

Royal Voluntary Service – organise activities and visitors. Tel: **0330 555 0310**.

AGE UK (Sussex) – organises activities and visitors. **01903 731800**. **Active – Get Involved – Stay Connected**

Also don't forget we have a service called Going Local, who can also help support patients with loneliness or social isolation please see a clinician or reception to book in.

Did not Attends—written by a member of the patient

participation group

A **DNA** is where a patient makes an appointment with a GP, fails to turn up and does not let the surgery know that he or she wishes to cancel.

I recently received the figures for the **DNAS** for our surgery for the last 3 months. The total was **852**. This **startling figure** is **extremely disappointing** as our surgery is **under severe pressure to satisfy ever increasing patient demands**.

I have done some research on behalf of the PPG to gain an understanding of what **DNA's** mean to all of us:

The annual cost to the NHS of DNAS is estimated at **£216 million**.

One in 20 appointments are wasted because patients fail to notify that they wish to cancel.

In the NHS overall **1.2 million** GP hours are wasted each year

The average cost of an appointment to the NHS is **£30**. The **852 appointments missed** by our surgery's patients is equivalent to **a cost each year of over £100,000**

The total cost to the NHS of DNAS could pay for either, the salaries of an **additional 2325 full time GPs** or **224,640 cataract operations** or **216,000 drug treatment courses for Alzheimer sufferers** or **58,000 hip replacement operations** or the **salaries of 8424 full time community nurses**

The above statistics are sourced from NHS England.

DNA's are significant not only because they waste large sums of money but also they reduce the time available for our GPs to **help other perhaps more needy patients**.

Drastic action to reduce the number of DNAS has been taken by some practices in the UK. This is an extract from an NHS publication.

'Due to an increase in the number of wasted appointments through patients failing to attend without informing the practice, it has become necessary to implement the following Policy:

• If you fail to attend an appointment without letting us know, you will be sent a leaflet and a letter asking if there are any specific problems pre-

venting you from attending

• If you fail to attend two consecutive appointments without informing us, we will write to you repeating our practice policy.

• If you fail to attend three consecutive appointments, you may be removed from the Practice list and will have to find an alternative Doctor'

I understand that the management of our surgery are reluctant to introduce such a policy however they are very much aware that the DNAS problem has to be addressed urgently.

So what can we the patients do to help the surgery and ourselves?

The answer is very simple. Most patients today have access to a telephone or own a mobile 'phone so if you are unable to attend an appointment **PLEASE ring 01903 230656** as early as possible telling them you wish to cancel.

Or Text the word **CANCEL** in reply to your reminder text message, this will automatically cancel your appointment, and save you having to hold in the phone queue.

Alternatively you can cancel on line. This gives the surgery the chance to **re-allocate this valuable time to another patient and save money that can**



be spent on providing us an even better service.

Victoria Road data of patients who did not attend over the last three moths—

November— 311

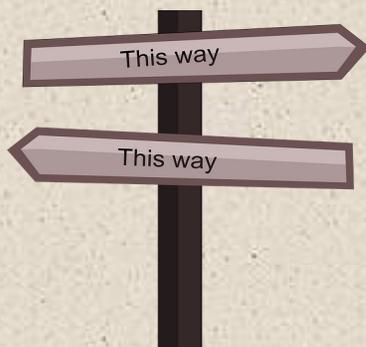
October— 300

September— 299

A total of nearly 1000 appointment in just 3 months.



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Where to Go ? - A member of the patient participation group

Do you know what to do when you are feeling unwell?

Where do you go and who do you contact if you need help?

The NHS offers many answers and solutions to these questions however we probably all agree that it is often difficult to decide what is right for us.

As a member of the PPG I have tried to find the answers to the above and I am taking the opportunity to share my results with you. I have identified the 6 steps you need to consider.

Firstly, the **starting point is SELF CARE** as many illnesses and injuries can be treated at home including acne, constipation, coughs & colds, fever [in children over 6 months old], headaches & migraines, heartburn & indigestion, lower back pain, sore throat, sprains & strains. You will of course need painkillers,

anti-diarrhoea medicine, rehydration mixture, indigestion remedies, plasters and perhaps a thermometer. Fortunately most of these items are not expensive and all come with detailed instructions.

The second step you can take if any of the above conditions persist is to visit your local **PHARMACIST**. Pharmacists are highly trained & professional people who can give guidance on most minor illnesses. You can also buy *over the counter medicines* to relieve your symptoms & if necessary your pharmacist can refer you to your GP.

The third point of contact is the **MINOR INJURY UNIT** which can help with problems such as fractures, cuts, bruises, minor eye problems, burns, scalds and sprains. Should you have any of these conditions, the **MINOR INJURY UNIT** is a sensible alternative to visiting the surgery.

Fourthly, whilst your **GP** is the main point of contact for you and your family's general health care, we should all **be aware that our GPs are under severe pressure**. Fortunately our surgery can now offer excellent alternatives to an

appointment with a GP as it now employs **health professionals** including pharmacists, who have the skills and knowledge to help us. Discuss your health issues with a receptionist and they will make an appointment with the member of the team that is right for you.

Fifthly, if you think you need medical treatment for something which is not life threatening or you are not sure where to go and perhaps you can't get an appointment with the surgery, your next port of call is **NHS111**. This service is open 24 hours a day and it is able to direct you to the best place for you to get treatment including *GP Out of Hours*, and the *Minor Injuries Service/ Urgent Care Centre*

Finally, for **life threatening emergencies ONLY** you should dial **999** or **visit A & E** [Chichester or Worthing Hospitals]. As we all know **A & E is also under severe pressure** and as result of this it is unable to sustain the high level of service it needs to. Sadly statistics produced by the NHS suggest that many patients do not need A & E's services and should consider the other options

outlined above.

My researches suggest that by using the services outlined above, other than those offered by GPs and A & E, will allow our GPs and A & E to maintain the quality service we demand, when we really need it.

Please Read our Who do I need to see leaflet from more information on all the services we provide, this can be found in our waiting room.



Victoria Roads National surgery data

Below are some of the best and the worse results from the 2019 National Patient Survey, and some of the things we are trying to do to improve, in response to this. The scores are compared with our Local CCG and the National Average.

The results where the patient experience could improve -

“74% of respondents felt the healthcare professional recognised or understood any mental health needs during their last general practice appointment”

We are trying really hard to rectify this, in September of this year, we had a Mental Health Worker called Daniel join us, he does a clinic every Monday Tuesday and Wednesday here in Victoria Road Surgery, he also does clinics at other local surgeries during the rest of the week, which we could access if we needed to, meaning that for the majority of the week there is someone to call upon if needed.

This is a brilliant resource of which we are really pleased to have in surgery. We think that the survey result was due to patients

needing and wanting to speak to someone with more specialised Mental Health training, which is exactly what Daniel is. He has great local knowledge of what is available, and is able to signpost patients to a wide range of different local services and support

“84% of respondents say the healthcare professional they saw or spoke to was good at treating them with care and concern during their last general practice appointment”

This was a disappointing score, but we recognise that we can always do more, we think that by having a bigger clinical team with lots of differing skills and knowledge, the better this percentage will be.

This year we have employed a second pharmacist, and another nurse practitioner, this has greatly improved what services we are able to offer, and it has enabled us to increase the amount of patients we are able to see or speak to each day, we have also increased the size of our admin team too, which enables us deal with patient queries in a more efficient and timely manner

We are also looking to rent another room from Durrington Health Centre which could enable us to consult with more patients.

“87% of respondents felt their needs were met during their last general practice appointment”

Again we would have liked a better score than this, and as above we hope that a bigger more multi skilled team will help to combat this. We have also developed a new website this year, with a easy to use patient survey, to enable us to get a better idea of our patients experiences, so that we can act on the feedback.

The results where patient experience is best -

“71% of respondents were offered choice of appointment when they last tried to make a general practice appointment”

We are pleased with this result on the whole considering how pushed the NHS is, this hopefully shows how hard we are working to increase what we can offer. This also reflects how helpful our

GP Access Hub Appointments are.

“82% of respondents say that they have had enough support from local services or organisations in the last 12 months to help them manage their long-term conditions”

This is another good score, and we are pleased patients feel like they are getting the support they need. We train all our clinicians and reception staff where possible to sign post to local services .

We also have our Going Local service which is based around sign posting and local support services.

“96% of patients who had confidence and trust in the healthcare professional they saw or spoke to during their last general practice appointment”

This is a good high percentage, our clinical team take great pride in what they do, and it is great that so many of our patients had confidence and trust in their last general practice appointment.

In summary, we appreciate that we can always improve, and we rely on and welcome any patient feedback.

Surgery Info

New Website Address

Victoriaroadworthing.nhs.uk

