



WINDRUSH PATIENTS' NEWSLETTER FOR March - April 2023

Welcome to the latest Windrush Patients' Group Newsletter.

In this edition:

- Can't attend your appointment?
- For our younger patients' interest ...
- Is it Time to Spring clean your medicines cabinet?
- Travelling abroad? Sort out your NHS card and insurance now;
- The local Asylum Seekers.
- Ringing the Practice

Can't attend your appointment? Then please remember to cancel it!

Our Practice loses around 3,000 GP appointments each year due to patients failing to attend or to cancel their appointment. This means that the professional is wasting his/her time waiting for their patient, and it increases waiting times for other patients.

As soon as you realise that you don't need your appointment please contact the Practice using one of the following methods:

- Text: all patients should receive a text reminder one day before their scheduled appointment. You can simply respond with the word "CANCEL" to clear that appointment.
- Patient Access or the NHS APP: the facility to cancel is on those **sites**;
- Telephone the Practice and press 9 where you will have the option to cancel.

A quick reminder here that if you have recently changed your address, phone number or other contact details you need to let the Practice know.

(In addition, it is easier to cancel your appointment now using "9" on the options at the start of your call to the Practice.)

For our younger patients:

are you aged between 11 and 18 - or do you have friends or relatives who are between 11 and 18 years old? Yes?

Then just take a look at <https://oxme.info/>

This is a Targeted Support Service for the youth of Oxfordshire - a website where young people can get excellent help and advice provided by our County Council. There are sections on

- health (advice on family planning, drugs, alcohol);
- life (activities, life-plans, drug taking, transport);
- learning (GCSEs, leaving school, training opportunities);
- earning (finding a job, weekly vacancy lists, making yourself "work ready).

In addition, there are news updates appropriate to your age group and lists of events which you might like to go to.

Time to Spring Clean your medicine cabinet?

When did you last check the expiry dates on those packets of pills?

When did you last read the instruction leaflet for what you are taking?

When did you last clear out that medicine cabinet / drawer / box?

Now is the time to get things sorted!

- *Make sure you read the instruction leaflet; should some of your medication be stored in the fridge?*
- *Don't keep medicines in the bathroom; most of them need to be in a cool, dry place.*
- *Keep out of the reach of children and pets; a high lockable cupboard is the ideal place.*
- *Please clear out that medicine cabinet; apparently, some pharmacists have been asked if medicines which were prescribed in the 1930's and 1960's are still safe!*
- *Check the expiry dates: many medicines become ineffective after their expiry date and some can even be a risk to your health;*
- ***Please don't share your medicine;** it has been prescribed for YOU and it could be harmful to the person you share it with.*
- *Ideally you need to check your medicine storage area every six months. "*

Over to you!

Travelling abroad? Don't forget your NHS Card ...

Yes - many of you are now planning that trip to the sunshine, or to far off lands; with Covid (hopefully) behind us, we can go globe-trotting if we would like to ... Hooray!

BUT - please don't forget that you need to have healthcare cover while you are abroad.

Full details of how to obtain your UK Global Health Insurance Card or your UK European Health Insurance card (if you are eligible) then just go to

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>

The other thing to remember is your Travel Insurance. Some good advice we have picked up is that you need to get your travel insurance sorted well in advance of your actual holiday. Apparently if you have your cover sorted early, then if you need to cancel your holiday for any reason you will be covered for the cancellation. So it's a good idea to check this out sooner rather than later.

The local Asylum Seekers

As many of you will know, the Witney Hotel is the temporary home for some asylum seekers. Dr Smith has updated us on the Practice's input to this arrangement. The residents are entitled to medical services – and their care is currently being allocated to all the three Practices of our area –Nuffield, Cogges and the Windrush.

The demographic of the patients is mostly families and couples – and one of the problems is that they speak twelve different languages. Two GPs from the Windrush go to do a surgery each week and we have also had nurses and other support staff go in to do blood test clinics. It is a considerable amount of work. Patients have physical and mental health issues; they have not had access to medication for months. Most are unvaccinated. There was considerable publicity about the threat of diphtheria, but this has now gone. The main problem there now is boredom.

Dr Smith stressed that this work is **not** impacting on the Surgery.

Ringling the Practice:

As some of you will have already discovered, a new system was introduced to the Practice at the beginning of this month. This is already cutting down the time which you spend waiting.

When you ring you need to listen carefully to the options now offered. These allow you to access some services directly, rather than waiting in a queue. As previously, when you get through, the Practice Team will ask you for some details in order to ensure that you get to the right service as quickly as possible: they are bound by the same confidentiality as all of the staff. As a guide, the numbers offered are:

Press:

1. For Life threatening Emergencies only;
2. If you are a Health Care professional;
3. Dispensary and Prescription enquiries;
4. For Test results;
5. For Flu and Covid issues;
6. Hospital referral information;
7. General Enquiries
8. For an Appointment; then press 1 to see a Nurse (eg blood pressure/ injections/ dressings)
or press 2 to make appointment with a GP or the Acute Care Team.
9. To cancel an appointment.

The other thing to bear in mind is that the Practice phones are at their very busiest before 10 am. So if you can wait until later in the morning, or later in the day, your wait will be shorter. We will be interested to hear how you are getting on with this new arrangement.

Your Patients' Participation Group is here for **you**.

We welcome your thoughts and comments. If you would like to contact us then please either pop a note in the Patients' Post Box which is in the Information Area (corner of the waiting room) or send an e-mail to patientgroup.wmp@nhs.net. We look forward to hearing from you!

