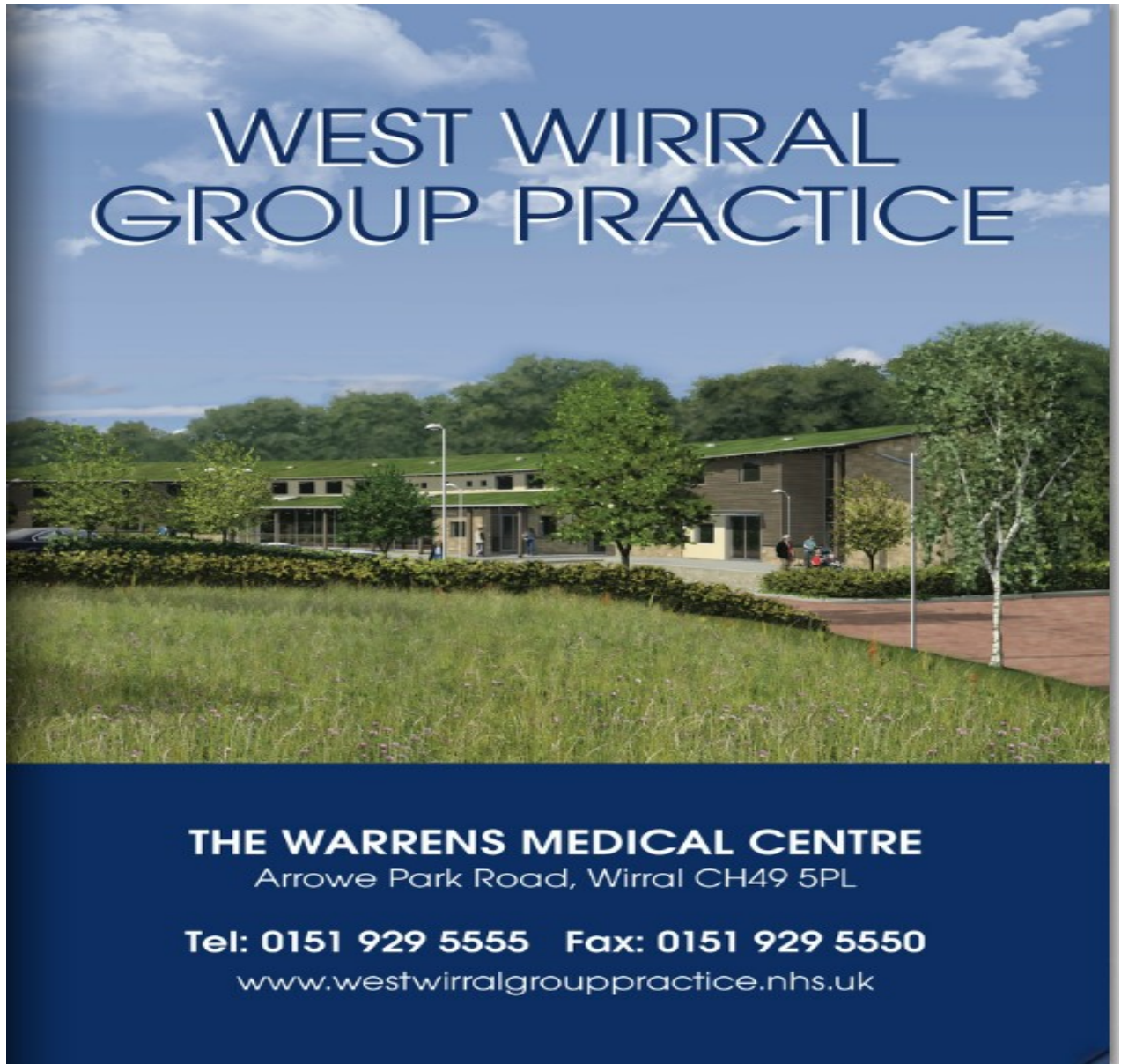


PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER 1ST. MARCH 2017

Edition 2017/1



New Warrens Medical Centre Website can be found at the following address :-

<http://www.westwirralgrouppractice.org.uk>



West Wirral Group Practice (WWGP),

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

New Electronic Newsletter

Email: ppg.wwgp@gmail.com 1st. March 2017

[Number 2017/1](#)

Welcome to this electronic newsletter by the Patient Participation Group, serving the West Wirral Group Practice, which the Practice has kindly agreed to distribute to all the patients who have registered for electronic communications. It is therefore important that as many patients as possible inform the Practice of their email addresses and mobile phone numbers, so that we can communicate effectively in a timely and low cost manner.

Initially, it is also proposed to print copies of this newsletter for distribution within the practice, so as to reach as many patients as possible pending their registration for electronic information.

We do trust that you will find the newsletters interesting and informative. The PPG serves as a conduit between you and the Practice and is a statutory requirement of the NHS contract with Medical Practices. In this fast changing environment, it is important that patients are not only kept informed of developments but also are actively engaged in the decision making processes, at least as much as the system allows! It is proposed to have quarterly newsletters and the frequency can be changed according to demands. We very much welcome your views and opinions, including suggestions for improvements and you can reach us collectively using our generic email address: ppg.wwgp@gmail.com

We need your input and support and look forward to hearing from you either by email or through the PPG's suggestion box available at the Warrens Medical Centre.



New Electronic PPG Newsletter. 1st March 2017.

Distributed to patients of the West Wirral Group Practice who have registered to be on their electronic mailing list.

A limited number of printed copies will initially be made available at the Warrens Medical Centre for the benefit of patients not currently registered for online services.

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How to go on-line

Online Facilities

You can now start using online facilities to :

- **Create your account**
- **Book an appointment**
- **Order repeat prescription**
- **View your medication**
- **View your care records**

Firstly, you must register your details for this service. It's quick and easy to register, simply follow the steps below:

Ask at reception for a registration form. This form provides all the information you need to register to use the "EMIS Access" internet facilities.

Once you have completed the form and returned it back to the practice they will issue you with the following information:

PIN , Practice ID Number, Access ID, NHS Number & EMIS (Patient Access website address)

Please go to the EMIS website by clicking on the "Patient Access Sign In" at the top right hand corner of the Practice Website to register your account. If the information does not match, your registration will not be accepted.

Members of the PPG will help you with getting online if you need help.

Patient Participation Group

c/o The Warrens Medical Centre

Arrowe Park Road

WIRRAL CH49 5PL

WHAT IS A PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG) ?

Every PPG is unique, evolving to meet local needs. Primarily, we, at West Wirral, work with the Practice to offer the patient perspective on the services provided. PPGs also help to improve communication, to encourage patients to take more responsibility for their health and to provide practical support.

Each group determines its own activities according to the needs of the community and the Practice itself. PPGs work by building a relationship between the Practice and its patients that breaks down barriers and shares information. At WWGP PPG, we have had various coffee mornings for patients with different conditions. We have a support group for Carers of dementia patients. We have produced a directory of Voluntary Organisations to help with Social Isolation and Loneliness, and we have helped with the Walking Group that the Practice has set up to keep us all mobile.

We continuously work with the practice and relevant organisations, arranging events and activities for our patients.

We also have a Virtual Group whom we contact periodically by email. To join, please write to us at :-

ppg.wwgp@gmail.com.



What are the benefits of a Patient Participation Group?

PPGs are good for patients because:

- ♦ Patients will have a better understanding and knowledge of the Practice and its staff.
- ♦ Patients will be more responsible for and take an active interest in their own health.
- ♦ All sections of the community are able to get involved through Virtual Membership via email.
- ♦ Patients will have a forum for positive ideas and voicing concerns although we are not a forum for complaints

PPGs are good for GPs and Practice Staff .

They assist GPs to have an increased understanding of patient's priorities, needs, wishes and perspectives. Through Virtual Members, GPs and staff can connect with the wide diversity of the practice population particularly those whose voice is seldom heard. PPGs are an additional resource for the Practice raising awareness of and signposting wider services and providing help in administering specific campaigns

When do we meet?

WWGP PPG meets on a monthly basis at the Warrens on a Wednesday from 5.45pm to 7.30pm. **New Members** From time to time we will be looking for new members for the main committee so if you would like to join us, are a patient of West Wirral Group Practice and can spare some time to help us and the Practice, please contact us at the following email address, ppg.wwgp@gmail.com and provide us with your name, and email address so that we can contact you.

There currently are a number of vacancies on the main committee so please join us to help in these challenging times- **We need you!**

WE WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Angela Carter, PPG Committee Member.



ONLINE SERVICES: "A personal experience".

In the previous page we explained how to get on-line and that we would be happy to help you with the initial setup if you are at all unsure. As a patient on the disease modifying anti-rheumatic drug (DMARD) "methotrexate" I need to have my liver and kidney functions monitored monthly and I am delighted that I can now get my blood results, sometimes on the same day that the sample is taken, and delivered to my PC, laptop, tablet or mobile phone, wherever I may be. This eliminates the problem of taking the little "methotrexate book" to the surgery for the staff to enter the blood results and then collect it again after a few days! Not only is this good for me but it also frees up admin staff from carrying out this task and enables them to attend to the needs of other patients. You will also be pleasantly surprised (I hope) to see, online, all your previous medical conditions summarised as well as your immunisation injections, allergies and prescriptions. You will also be able to book doctor's appointments and repeat prescriptions online.

Mike Zammitt, PPG Committee Member.

Email: ppg.wwgp@gmail.com

“Nature vs. Nurture”

What makes a man, or woman? Is it what we are born with, which we call “nature” or the way we are influenced by the forces around us i.e. “nurture”. The relative merits of nature versus nurture has occupied human minds for centuries but over the last 20 years, since the mapping of the whole human genome was achieved around the turn of this century, we now have a more fundamental understanding of the significance of these two factors.

The human genome consists of the sum total of all the DNA in our bodies parcelled in 23 pairs of chromosomes, providing what has been described as the “blueprint” for life or perhaps more accurately as “the information to create and maintain an organism”. We are born with a unique set of between 20,000 and 25,000 genes, contained in every cell of our bodies and these do not normally change throughout our lives. It is what we have been bequeathed by nature. However, the way that we experience life, for instance by the food we eat, the air we breathe, how we are brought up and influenced by our parents, families, friends, by the way we are affected by circumstances, good or bad, all have the potential to “mark” our genes chemically and therefore change us. Scientists call this epigenetics or beyond genetics and this has become fundamental in our understanding of “nurture” which is now considered to be just as important as nature, if not more so in some cases.

Identical twins are created by the fertilized egg dividing into two, shortly after conception and the twins have exactly the same genetic material, yet by the time they are born they are not identical. They have been “epigenetically marked” by their individual experiences in the womb, be this by subtle changes in temperature and pressure or, not so subtly, by which sibling kicked the harder! Indeed, the propensity to inherit pre-dispositions to certain illnesses may already have been altered.

It is now possible not only to “read” genes but also to “write” them using newly discovered gene editing techniques, such as “CRISPR” (pronounced crisper, and don’t even think about asking what the letters stand for!) and the potential and consequences for medical science are enormous, so watch this space!



In the meantime, the Warrens PPG is urgently seeking new recruits to help with their programme of work assisting the Practice in their day to day patient focused activities as well as with external matters that impinge on the quality and effectiveness of the services that they provide to, us, the patients. For further information and/or comments on this article please contact me at the email below.

Mike Zammitt, PPG Committee Member.

Email: ppg.wwgp@gmail.com

HYPERTENSION

The Warrens Medical Centre has become a Beacon Practice for hypertension - otherwise known as high blood pressure. The GPs at the West Wirral Group Practice are keen that all their patients - even those that have not been diagnosed with high blood pressure - **"*know their numbers*"**.

The Warrens is one of four GP practices in Wirral that were appointed, in 2016, by Wirral Public Health working closely with the Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), to be a Beacon Practice for hypertension/high blood pressure.

This Beacon Project is designed to improve the management, and detection, of patients with high blood pressure. In addition to those patients already diagnosed with hypertension, it is estimated that there are about 45,000 patients in Wirral with undiagnosed high blood pressure. The project will aim to find ways of picking up these patients and make sure that those with high blood pressure receive the best care and advice to manage their condition.

The Beacon Practices will share progress and improvements they establish with all local GP practices for the benefit of the wider Wirral population. Warrens Medical Centre will be getting additional blood pressure measuring machines as part of the beacon status, so look out for them along with the new information booklets that will be in the Reception area.

You are encouraged to use the machines to self-monitor your blood pressure and take the results slip to the receptionist who will help you understand what the numbers mean and advise you if any further action is required.

Even if you do not need to see a GP, you will have a better understanding of your blood pressure... **and "know your numbers"**.

Blood pressure results show a reading of two numbers, for example 140/90mm/Hg: The top (highest) number is your **systolic** blood pressure, and is a measure of the pressure when your heart beats and pushes blood around your body. The bottom/lowest number is your **diastolic** blood pressure and indicates the pressure when your heart relaxes between beats.

Blood pressure results are generally classed as 'normal', 'low' or 'high'. Doctors are most concerned about high blood pressure (hypertension) because, **the higher your blood pressure, the higher your risk of health problems**.

Be wise... know your numbers.

Debbie Simnor, PPG Committee Member.

Email: ppg.wwgp@gmail.com

Walking for Health

In England, half of all adults are not active enough to benefit their health. This means that they are at risk of developing serious illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

Walking for Health is England's largest network of Health Walks with over 400 active schemes across the country and is run by The Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support.

In April 2015, some of the Practice Nurses, Health Care Assistants, Reception staff and members of the PPG from the Warrens took part in the one-day training course for Walk Leaders under the auspices of the Walking for Health team. You may wonder why a training course is necessary, but this involves learning to plan and risk assess a route, some necessary data collection and some very basic first aid, before a certificate is issued and a few practice walks are undertaken as "back" or "middle" leader.

In May 2015, Health Walks from the Warrens began in earnest and quickly became a popular weekly event.

We are lucky to have the option of several types and length of walks, usually aiming for about 45 minutes. We have street walks in the area around Thingwall when the weather is questionable; a bit of countryside in the Landican or Barnston directions and our most popular walk in our lovely Arrowe Park, ending with a cuppa at the Red Rooms or back at the Warrens.

We are a very relaxed walking group! No hurrying and plenty of chat. Our aim is social as well as healthy activity. When your strength and confidence has improved, there are plenty of opportunities to join a more advanced walking group. There are several all over the Wirral, on most days and at various times. See www.walkingforhealth.org.uk for the programme of walks. These cater for walkers of different abilities, varying in length of walk, speed and walkers level of activity.

Our walks from the Warrens take a break from the end of November, but we will be starting up again on Tuesday 7th March at 11.00 meeting in the waiting room at the Warrens. New walkers and old are very welcome!

Karen Sohrabi-Shiraz & Jo Purdell-Lewis, PPG Committee Members.

Bring friendship into the lives of older people in The Wirral

Many older people in the Wirral suffer with feelings of loneliness and social isolation, something which is heightened at times of the year, for example at Christmas time.

However, thanks to national charity Contact the Elderly, there's a way for local residents to get involved with older people in the community and help them feel less lonely and isolated. Contact the Elderly organises free, monthly Sunday afternoon tea parties for people aged 75 or over who live alone. The tea parties help older people make friends in their community, enjoy a chat with others and have something to look forward to.

Each older person is collected from their home by a volunteer driver and taken to a volunteer host's home, where they meet with a small group for tea, chat and friendship. The group is welcomed by a different host each month, but the drivers remain the same which means that over the months and years, acquaintances turn into friends and loneliness is replaced by companionship.

Contact the Elderly is launching a new group in the Wirral in March 2017. If you know an older person who would benefit from this service then you are encouraged to get in touch. The charity also takes referrals from healthcare professionals like community nurses, GPs and social workers.

Contact the Elderly: A lifeline of friendship.

Visit www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk, email Prabina.lord@contact-the-elderly.org.uk or call 0161 460 2950.

BLOOD TESTS – PHLEBOTOMY

Changes to the delivery of the Wirral phlebotomy service took place on 2nd December 2016 in order to increase the numbers of blood tests being carried out.

Due to a number of reasons, including many patients not turning up for previously arranged blood test appointments, Wirral Community Trust, which is contracted to deliver the phlebotomy service until July 2017, was forced to make changes to the way it delivered the service in order to make improvements.

Domiciliary visits continue to be made; however, most patients are now required to visit one of four hubs across the Wirral to have their blood collected instead of attending their own GP Practice.

Hubs operate a 'drop-in' service Monday to Friday from 8.30am - 4.30pm, but patients need to make sure that they have a form from their GP to take with them. This form enables the nurse to log each patient with their GP and provides information about the blood test(s) to be carried out.

Hubs are located at:-

- * St Catherine's Health Centre, Derby Road, Birkenhead;
- * Victoria Central, Outpatients' Department, Wallasey;
- * Eastham Clinic, Eastham Rake; and
- * All Day Health Centre, Arrowe Park Hospital

It is acknowledged that the new arrangements are more inconvenient for many patients, including those using public transport; but, for other patients, it is proving to be more suitable as they can choose to go to their preferred hub when convenient, without having to wait weeks for an appointment. The new arrangements continue to be monitored.

Debbie Simnor, PPG Committee Member.
Email: ppg.wwgp@gmail.com

Dementia Carers Support Group

The second Carers Support Group is now underway and is held once a month on a Wednesday afternoon at the Warrens. It is facilitated by 3 members of the PPG who have direct experience of caring for someone with dementia. This time Margaret Sheriff, Health Care Assistant is also involved. As well as being a health professional Margaret also has personal experience of caring for a parent with dementia. On occasions Dr. Johnston also attends.

There are estimated to be over 670,000 people in the UK acting as primary, unpaid carers for people with dementia. Caring can be an overwhelming experience, bringing irreversible changes to lives and relationships and it can be isolating and emotionally draining. However, peer support can have a positive effect; this is why the support group has been set up.

It is recognised that many of our patients are caring for family and friends who enable those they care for to stay in their own homes. This is a very worthy undertaking which clearly benefits the patient being cared for but often the needs of those who carry out these duties are overlooked. However, some informal support goes a long way to help people in this position. The aim of the Carers Support Group is to bring together people to enable them to share their experiences with those in a similar situation, give and receive advice and provide a listening ear to each other all over refreshments and a chat. The meetings only last an hour as it is recognised that it is difficult to arrange alternative care for the person with dementia. It is hoped that from time to time speakers will be invited to provide useful information.

If anybody is interested in attending the group or receiving more information, then please contact the Practice and ask for Margaret Sheriff or contact me at the email address below.

Anne Davies, PPG Committee Member.
Email: ppg.wwgp@gmail.com

Consultant's Corner

"What's a Drug like you doing in a Joint like this"?

Rheumatoid Arthritis:

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RhA) affects between 0.5% and 1% of adults in the general population. Around 5 to 50 new cases per 100,000 people develop the condition each year. It is three times more common in women than in men.

Traditional treatment aimed at controlling symptoms with high dose aspirin before the 1950s; then steroid therapy revolutionised treatment and allowed previously bed bound patients to mobilise again. The long term side effects of steroids drove the development and use of disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs), which are effective in around 70% of patients either as single therapy or combination drug therapy.

Treatment strategies have changed over the last 16 years, with a move towards more aggressive treatment to switch off the disease process and prevent joint damage and disability. Evidence from studies such as TICORA (tight control of rheumatoid arthritis), changed our use of DMARDs (such as methotrexate) so that we use it early and in combination with other drugs to target tighter control of disease activity (DAS scores).

1999 heralded a new generation of immuno-engineered drugs (biologic agents, Infliximab and Etanercept) formulated from scientific research into the mechanisms of inflammation in RhA. These drugs specifically target various inflammatory chemicals and cells in the body such as TNF-alpha to suppress the disease process. They are used when conventional DMARDs have failed. The high cost, £8,000 to £11,000+, means that these drugs have to be approved by NICE (National Institute of Clinical Excellence). This new era of research represents real advances in bench to bedside medicine and the choice of drugs for patients has expanded rapidly. New therapeutic targets include blocking chemicals such as IL-6 (Tocilizumab), CD20 cells (Rituximab), cellular signalling CD80-86/CD28 (Abatacept) and much more.

A whole new generation of small molecule drugs are now in development; we are currently trialling one in our research unit at Arrowe Park Hospital. These drugs look to be more effective in a greater number of patients and can be taken by mouth instead of injection. Recently, we have approved the use of biosimilar drugs which are based on previous biological agents but are much cheaper for the NHS.

[Dr.Yee Ho Chiu,](#)

[Consultant Rheumatologist and Clinical Lead,](#)

[WUTH NHS Foundation Trust.](#)





Concluding remarks.

The committee of West Wirral Group Practice's PPG hopes that you have enjoyed reading this inaugural electronic newsletter and that you have found it interesting and informative.

We welcome your feedback on the newsletter, preferably by email, ppg.wwgp@gmail.com or through the PPG suggestion box within the Warrens Medical Centre. The present members of the committee are the following, listed in alphabetical order: - Angela Carter, Anne Davies, Mike Hornby, Brian Knight, Jo Purdell-Lewis, Nigel Sach, Debbie Simnor, Karen Sohrabi-Shiraz, Peter Weston and Mike Zammitt.

Meetings are usually attended by the WWGP senior partner, Dr. Alan Johnston and by Mrs. Christine Mathieson, Practice Manager and are held at the Warrens Medical Centre, usually on a monthly basis.

We would like to recruit a minimum of six further members to join us in the main committee to help deliver an even better service to the practice and its patients. There are also opportunities to get involved in special projects and functions and you can also join as "virtual members" whose views would be sought from time to time, by email

It would be good to have representation in the PPG from young members of the registered patients in the practice. Students looking to a career in medical, para- medical or nursing services or, indeed, many other disciplines, such as information technology or journalism (to help with the electronic newsletter, or production of a PPG web-site, for example), or social services and secretarial services, should find participation in our patients group useful work experience to include in their CVs or profiles when making application for courses in Higher or Further Education.

Please contact us for further information, we would very much like to hear from you!

The Committee, West Wirral Group Practice, PPG.

Email: ppg.wwgp@gmail.com

1st. March 2017.