

December 2018

HELLO



Dr Sarah Humphery

Another busy year comes to a close and I know we are all feeling the pressures but in good news, I have had great experience of using the Rapid Response Team (see below for details) to see some of my complex frail patients in the Community. They were seen quickly with good feedback to me, which meant they avoided admission and saved me doing a home visit during a very busy duty doctor session – invaluable! Great strides are being made in the community with improved waiting times in many areas – well done to podiatry. Also, when texting patients, you can send the web links for [MSK](#) and [self-referral forms](#). Finally, exciting redevelopment work has begun on our Maternity department – I will keep you posted.

HOW TO REFER TO WHITTINGTON HEALTH

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to refer your patients to the Whittington Hospital so they are seen in the appropriate place by most appropriate team. With this in mind, we have put together a guide for urgent referrals – please see attached.

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT – RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

Our Rapid Response Team works in partnership with the hospital's emergency department and medical assessment unit, community teams and social services teams across North Central London. They exist to prevent avoidable admissions to hospital and help to get medically fit patients safely home as quickly as possible.

The team can respond to referrals in as little as 2 hours, undertaking a holistic functional assessment, providing adaptive equipment/walking aids where appropriate and they can make referrals to home care agencies or rehabilitation schemes if necessary. It consists of an inter-professional team including therapists and carers.

The service operates between 8am -10pm, 7 days per week. To make a referral please call 020 7288 3670 – referrals need to be made by 7pm each day.

For information advice or more information please [click here](#).

NEW MATERNITY FACILITIES

You may already have seen that we are building an additional dedicated maternity operating theatre. At the same time, we are also refurbishing the postnatal ward to improve the experience for all the families giving birth at Whittington Hospital. The work started in September and is due to finish in April 2019.

I know from personal experience the great care provided by the midwives and obstetricians at Whittington Health. There is good continuity of care, especially in the community, and patients have fed back that many of them choose Whittington Health because of the care, compassion and flexibility of staff.

We offer a range of options where your patients could have their baby:

- Our midwife-led Birth Centre – five calm and homely rooms with ensuite facilities, double beds, mats, bean bags, birthing stools and balls. Four of these have a birthing pool, meaning a good capacity for water births.
- Our Labour Ward – seven individual rooms, two of which also have birthing pools, featuring mats, bean bags, birthing stools and balls.
- At home – our Community Midwives offer support and care for low-risk pregnancies in the comfort of the patient's own home – they can also provide advice to patients on hiring specialist equipment, such as birthing pools, if necessary.

No matter where they give birth, new mothers are discharged into the care of our Community Midwives for ongoing support following the birth.

The majority of antenatal care is provided in our community locations, although appointments are available in the hospital as well. We also provide complementary therapies during pregnancy, including acupuncture, and we are pleased to work with Dr Gowri Motha, who provides Gentle Birth classes to pregnant mums. Any of your patients interested in our maternity can find a wealth of information at <https://maternity.whittington.nhs.uk>, including our online self-referral form.

And should any of you or your patients who have experience of our maternity services want to get involved, the Whittington Health Maternity Voices partnership always welcome new recruits – see [here](#) for more details.

DIABETES UPSKILLING COURSE

I was delighted to hear that the Diabetes Upskilling Course, developed by Whittington Health and the Haringey GP Federation, has had some great feedback.

The course is being run by the Federation – anyone interested in attending the training can [click here](#) for more information.

ADULT COMMUNITY

The WH Community Services Clinical Directors (Nadine Jeal for Adults, Lesley Platt and Claire Rohan for Children's and Young People) would like your feedback on community services. Please [click here](#) to fill in a very short survey – I know from experience that it only takes 2 minutes.

In other news on our adult community services, it may be useful for you to know that access times across many services have significantly improved in recent months, for example podiatry, where access times have improved from 35% seen within 6 weeks in March to 85% in November. There has also been some great feedback for MSK, where 89% of patients report a clinically significant improvement in function.

The team are developing new patient and GP websites with lots of leaflets and helpful self-care information:

- MSK services: www.whittington.nhs.uk/msk or follow us on Twitter at @WhithealthMSK
- Bladder and Bowel services: www.whittington.nhs.uk/BB
- Nutrition and Dietetics: www.whittington.nhs.uk/diet
- Podiatry: www.whittington.nhs.uk/podiatry

The team is also focusing on reducing our 'back to GP requests' to reduce GP workload and better integrate care for our patients. If you would like to invite Nadine Jeal (Clinical Director for Adult Community Services) to any of your practice meetings, please do email her on Nadine.Jeal@nhs.net.

eRS

Following an issue raised with me by a local GP, I would like to reassure you all that, when booking a 2 week or routine referral via eRS, the 'Defer to Provider' option will mean that your patient receives an appointment. This comes up as an option when no appointments appear to be available. However, all appointments 'deferred to the provider' are checked by us at least once a day and where capacity isn't available, we have been increasing it to ensure that your patients receive their appointment within the appropriate timescale.

EDUCATION

Just a reminder that GPs can also get access to [Whittington Moodle](#), our e-learning platform which includes access to the weekly Grand Rounds. If you would like a login to the system or want to suggest any content, please email Jana.Smith@nhs.net with your name, the name of the GP practice you work in and your NHS email.

SCOPE CREEP

An audit was completed by Haringey CCG across the 8 local Trusts which looked at work GPs were being asked to do from secondary care which they should not be, as per 2017-19 NHS Standard Contract provisions across primary and secondary care. This is known as 'scope creep'. Scope creep is an important issue as it has the potential to delay care and also negatively impact on patient experience, as well as unnecessarily increasing GP workload within a time of limited resources.

We are taking action in the following areas:

1. Local Access Policy

Whittington Health has reviewed its Access Policy in light of national guidance and do not adopt a blanket policy for DNAs. All routine patients who DNA their first outpatient appointment will be discharged back to their GP, provided that the provider can demonstrate that the appointment was clearly communicated to the patient and that discharging the patient is not contrary to their best interests. If the patient is discharged we will communicate this to the patient and their GP/referrer without any undue delay. If patient has a suspected cancer or the patient's consultant agrees being discharged is contrary to their best clinical interest then a second appointment should be offered.

2. Discharge Summaries

Whittington Health has agreed to the 24 hour standard for discharge summaries. The teams are working towards achieving this.

3. Clinic Letters

Whittington Health has agreed to a seven day standard for clinic letters.

4. Onward Referral of Patients.

This standard is within the Access Policy and is also covered by the North Central London Consultant to Consultant Referral Protocol. Issues have been identified with this standard as it is a significant change to the previous requirement to refer back to GPs for all onward referrals.

5. Medication on discharge

Whittington Health has implemented plans to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of patient discharges and supply patients with medication. A high proportion of issues that have been raised regarding prescription requests to GPs emanated from Midwives asking GPs to prescribe antibiotics, iron or anticoagulants. Systems have now been put in place where Obstetricians will write the prescriptions for the Midwives before discharge.

6. Results and treatments

Issues have been identified with this standard where clinicians are unclear of

the new procedures and so it will also form part of the clinical engagement and communications moving forward.

If you are requested to do any of the above please let us know so we can improve our systems and avoid extra work burden to GPs. There are BMA GP letter templates embedded in EMIS which you can send to the trust via whh-tr.WhittHealthPALS@nhs.net if there has been a breach of one of the six 'scope creep' areas.

The PALS team will forward your letter to the relevant department who will respond within 7 days and will also let PALS know the outcome. We will be monitoring these scope creep letters and feeding back to the CCGs in order to improve.

I also run a 6 weekly group, GP Forward View, which is working on improving the above areas and to help communication and integration between GPs, the community and secondary care. There has been representation from local GPs via the LMCs, CCGs and the trust including senior clinicians and management.

ICE

We know that many GPs in our area use ICE (Integrated Clinical Environment) to see radiology and pathology results for tests performed at WH for your patients. If your practice doesn't currently use it, access is free – please email Cathy.Parker2@nhs.net for instructions on how to set it up.

...AND FINALLY

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I'll be in touch in March 2019 with the next GP Connect.

Do contact me if any issues at sarah.humphery2@nhs.net.

Sarah