



WRSG Newsletter

WOLVERHAMPTON RHEUMATOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP

Charity No. 1041181

CARING IS SHARING

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Reminder

Information Session

We have arranged an Information Session about the benefits system. on the morning of the 17th June, at the Holly Bush from 10.30 to 12.30 a.m. We will provide tea, coffee and cakes on arrival.

The talk will be given by Denise Pearson a Welfare Rights Officer working for Wolverhampton City Council. They are based at Heantun House, Salop Street Wolverhampton and undertake benefit advice and benefit take up campaigns for the Social Services department.

Members will be able to ask questions and there will be no charge for the event.

I was also asked to include advice on the Direct Payment Scheme but Denise says that is covered by a different department so maybe that will be one for the future.

Booking forms are included with this newsletter.

Information Session by the Falls Prevention Team

We had a good turnout for this meeting on 7th April. I had some calls from members who couldn't attend saying did we have any information to pass on.

ADVICE LEAFLET ENCLOSED

Falls in older people often results in reduced mobility, fractures, fear of falling, loss of independence and isolation. The Wolverhampton Falls Prevention Service is a multidisciplinary team offering tailored assessment, treatment and advice on how to reduce the risks of falling and enable older people how to cope after a fall. They promote independence and improvement in physical and psychological functioning.

How to access the service

Anybody can be referred who meets the following criteria. We also accept self-referrals.

60 years or older

**Living in the Wolverhampton borough
Not wheelchair or bed bound**

NOTE: Where a person is living in a residential or nursing home, information/training will be offered to the care provider.

Contact details

Falls Prevention Service

West Park Hospital

Park Road West

Wolverhampton

WV1 4PW

Telephone: 01902 444502

Fax: 01902 444345

When is the service available?

Monday to Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm

Harm Gordijn

Falls Co-Ordinator / Physiotherapist

Holidays – Take your pick

Joyce and June have been busy organising holidays for members who wish to join in. For further information on the holidays and to book places contact Joyce between 4.00 and 6.00 p.m

(Please do not ring on a Sunday)

A £30 deposit is required on booking

Historic York Weekend

Friday 9th May to Sunday 11th May

Half board staying at the Garforth Holiday Inn Hotel £110.00 per person

The Itinerary

Friday – Departing from around 2p.m we travel to the Holiday Inn Hotel Garforth. Settle in and explore the facilities in time for your evening meal.

Saturday – Take your time over a tempting breakfast before our 9.30 a.m departure to York City Centre. After a full day at around 5.00 p.m we travel back to our hotel in time to relax and change before enjoying Dinner.

Sunday – After breakfast we travel back to York. There is so much to see so much to do, so much history. We offer an optional excursion to McArthur Glen Designer Shopping Outlet.

The Hotel has 144 modern en suite bedrooms over 2 floors.

The Hotel's Triangle Health and Fitness Club is the perfect place to unwind and relax.

Aiolis Bar & Lounge – Guests can relax with a cold beer or light meal,

Eastbourne – The Oban Hotel

Monday 8th September to Friday 12th

September - £185.00 including travel

5 Days and 4 Nights Half Board

The Oban Hotel is situated on the seafront with breath-taking sea views and easy access to all the local attractions.

The Oban Hotel is in the West End of Eastbourne with theatre land just a two minute walk away.

It is a traditional thirty bedroom Victorian establishment run with a relaxed family atmosphere.

All floors are serviced by a lift.

They have a large but cosy lounge with a fully licensed bar and offer a variety of entertainment most evenings.

The Compton Restaurant can accommodate up to fifty-five diners and has a variety of delicious traditional dishes for breakfast and evening meals.

Monday – We will depart early morning taking a leisurely journey to your holiday destination. You will then have time to settle in and explore the accommodation and its beautiful setting and array of entertainment facilities before dinner.

Tuesday – A day for yourself

Wednesday – Following breakfast we offer an optional included excursion to Hastings.

Thursday – Following breakfast we offer an optional excursion to Brighton for only £5 per person

Friday – After breakfast we aim to depart at approximately 11.00am

Alveston Hall Character Hotel

Monday 17th to Friday 21st November

Turkey & Tinsel, Half Board 5 days,

4 nights - £235.00 per person

At this beautiful hotel the staff are dedicated to your wellbeing. With a whole variety of indoor and outdoor activities you will always have something to do.

The local towns of Chester and Nantwich are full of fine shops too.

Every evening after a sumptuous meal enjoy the entertainment. Ambassador rooms are included in the price of your break and include Tea & Coffee making facilities, TV with radio and En-suite bathroom, Hairdryer and Direct dial Telephone

Live nightly entertainment

Coffee shop, Gift Shop, Golf shop

Indoor Pool, Spa Pool, Sauna and Steam room

Decleor Health and Beauty Therapies
Pool Table, Darts, Card & Pub Games.

9 hole EGU Standard golf course

Floodlit 250m Driving Range

Included Excursion – Chester

Optional Excursion – Llangollen £5.00

Various Pick up Locations

Delivering Care Closer to Home Development plan for the City

Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust and its partners including Wolverhampton City Council have plans for new health and social care developments across the city.

This article gives information about those developments, and about how services will be affected.

As well as providing new buildings we plan to change the way that we deliver care. Maxine Espley, managing director for provider services at Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust, said: “We want to improve access and provide a one-stop service where people can not only see their GP but also receive a range of additional services such as diabetes care, physiotherapy, social care and general advice on health and well being.

“A very broad range of health and social care needs will be met under one roof - and will be local to the communities where people live. We want to increase the range of services which are delivered away from a hospital site, and which focus on helping people remain independent for as long as possible.”

A range of services are set to be transferred from New Cross Hospital, helping to further establish health services closer to where people live. These include the further development of palliative care services, establishing more community diabetes clinics, increasing the community-based care for stroke patients and increasing access to a range of primary care staff.

As part of the refurbishment of West Park Rehabilitation Hospital, 18 of the current elderly community rehabilitation beds are to be relocated to three primary and community care centres so that patients can be as close to their families and neighbours as possible.

Proposed venues for care closer to home facilities

**Three major primary and community care centres to be developed jointly by Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust and Wolverhampton City Council. The centres will include both primary health and social care services, including GPs, at: West Park – serving the south west locality
Bilston Urban Village – serving the south east locality
Showell Park – serving the north east locality**

Three combined community health centres and mental health resource centres to be developed jointly by the PCT and City council at:

Whitmore Reans health centre – serving the south west locality

Low Hill – serving the north east locality

Portobello – serving the south east locality

Six developments planned by the PCT and partners:

Community health centre at Warstones

Community health centre at the Scotlands

Community health centre at Heath Town

Primary care centre at the former Royal Hospital site

Redesign/refurbishment of West Park

Rehabilitation Hospital

Castlecroft Medical Centre

A range of refurbishments including:

Alfred Squire Health Centre at Wednesfield

Ashmore Park Health Centre at

Wednesfield

Both due to be completed later this year

Schemes already open:

Phoenix Health Centre, Parkfields – opened end of 2005

Gem Centre for Children and Young People, Bentley Bridge – opened 2006

Mayfield Medical Centre, East Park – opened 2006

Partnership development

It is planned for each centre to have an information shop offering local people a range of guidance and information on how to improve their health and well-being. Staff will also offer information on other services provided by the NHS, council, charities and community organisations across the city such as where to find a toddler group or the venues for stop smoking sessions, or how to access support for carers or join an expert patients’ programme.

The list of other services at each centre has not been finalised but may include cardiac rehabilitation, exercise sessions to support the city's falls prevention programme, adult education classes, library services, information communication technology and e-learning facilities.

Each centre will have dedicated space to host this wide range of leisure and other activities, which may be available to the public out-of-hours.

Brian O'Leary, the council's chief officer for older people, said: "This is an exciting opportunity for us to make a real and lasting difference to local people's lives and to provide affordable yet high quality facilities in local communities.

"People will have more choice about where their care is provided and better access to it through local centres that are clean and modern and which have flexible opening hours.

"And these health and social care services will be integrated with opportunities for people to access leisure, culture and community services and learn new skills that will improve their quality of life and help them live more healthily."

The development programme also includes three mental health resource and community health centres being planned at Low Hill, Portobello and Whitmore Reans. Mental health social workers and community nursing teams will be based at the centres which will offer day opportunities and therapy, consultation and treatments.

The first of the centres is expected to open in 2010, with the rest following over the next three years.

Warm Front

I am enclosing a flyer on the Warm Front Scheme for those of you who have not heard of it.

April 1st

Following on from my article about the April fool pranks over the years how many of you were fooled by the Flying Penguins on the BBC?

I was until I remembered it was 1st April!

Choice expands to all hospitals

Patients having non-emergency treatment in England will be able to choose from any hospital in the country from April as the government extends NHS choice

The policy began in January 2006 and now includes local hospitals, some private providers and elite units.

The changes will be advertised in newspapers and on radio, with individual hospitals also allowed to promote their services.

Patients' groups say most people just want a good local hospital.

This final push completes the phased expansion of the programme that has only had a lukewarm response.

And the expansion is also likely to be undermined by problems with choose and book, the online booking system for GPs. Choice is heavily reliant on the system as it allows GPs to view appointment slots electronically.

But it is currently only used for half of referrals as the implementation of the system has been delayed, leaving patients and doctors heavily reliant on phoning round hospitals.

However, ministers are still confident the extension of choice will benefit patients. Health minister Ben Bradshaw said:

"Choice is fundamental to the delivery of a personalized NHS.

"People would like to have more control and be more involved in the decisions about their illness and treatment.

"More choice will also help drive up quality and standards across the NHS."

However, research by the King's Fund suggested choice could worsen health inequalities as the most educated were more likely to shop around, while those from more deprived backgrounds just opted for their local hospital.

Cost

Patients are currently offered a choice of about five local hospitals and a range of independent sector treatments centres and private hospitals on an approved list that offer operations at NHS cost.

Patients are also offered the option of going to foundation hospitals, a group of top-performing trusts.

Information about hospital services is available on the NHS Choices website.

Anthony Halperin, of the Patients Association, said: "In theory it sounds good, but in truth patients just want to go to their nearest hospital.

"They often do not have time or the inclination to compare hospitals and consultants and travel constraints mean if they wanted to it is not always possible."

Dr Jonathan Fielden, chairman of the BMA's Consultants Committee, said patients should have real choice about their treatment, but this was best done in consultation with their doctor.

"Whilst it is likely that most patients will choose their local hospital, because it is close to where they live and easier to get to, there is a risk that by opting for another provider some other local services would be cut back because of the loss of funding.

"This may mean, for example, that crucial emergency services would be threatened or that patients would need to travel further from their home than they do now for some conditions."

"I am also worried that it will be difficult for patients to make informed choices.

"We still have a long way to go in collecting and having access to accurate, reliable and meaningful data that enables patients, working with their doctors, to make full knowledgeable choices about their treatment."

Commenting on the new code allowing hospitals to promote their services, Karen Jennings, head of health at Unison, said: "It's a great shame that we have come to the point where hospitals are expected to compete for business using advertising and sponsorship deals

"Hospitals need to concentrate on taking care of patients, not wasting time and precious money on their next campaign." Private firms will also be encouraged to work with NHS hospitals on sponsorship deals under the plans.

Who should I trust?

What I am about to write is controversial but true!

In July 2007 I visited my GP with very swollen painful legs. I asked for a re-referral to the Wolverhampton Lymphoedema Clinic where I was a patient from 1997 to approximately 2004 when I was discharged by agreement to take care of myself with support hosiery.

My GP did the referral and put me on water tablets to make my legs more comfortable. I got an appointment at the Wolverhampton Lymphoedema Clinic and the nurse wrote to my GP asking that my heart be checked to see why I had this water retention in my legs.

I didn't hear anything from my GP practice and in October I went for a routine flu jab. I asked the Practice Manager if they had received the letter and she said that they couldn't act on it because Walsall Primary Care Trust had decided I should have gone to a Walsall Lymphoedema Clinic in Short Heath. This is because although I have a Wolverhampton post code and pay my council tax to Wolverhampton I have a Walsall GP but I have been with this GP practice for 44 years.

I was then in limbo until January when Walsall Primary Care Trust held a meeting and decided I could receive treatment in Wolverhampton.

On Easter Monday my foot was very painful, cold and numb. I panicked and rang the Doctors on Call. A Doctor came out and gave me antibiotics and he also said that one of the drugs I had been taking for years for my blood pressure was "not a good medicine for me" as it had probably damaged my circulation.

I made an appointment with one of the GPs at our practice on the Friday and was told to stop this medication. I have now been referred to a Vascular Surgeon.

The previous article was all about patient's choice but did this delay by Walsall Primary Care Trust aggravate my problems. I also feel that medication should be reviewed more frequently and properly because patients are put on medication but very rarely taken off it.

I have always taken the medication without question but who should I trust.

Dorothy

**I have received this take on aging from
Pat and Les Jones**

The other day a young person asked me how I felt about being old. I was taken aback, for I do not think of myself as old. Upon seeing my reaction, she was immediately embarrassed, but I explained that it was an interesting question, and I would ponder it, and let her know.

Old Age, I decided, is a gift. I am now, probably for the first time in my life, the person I have always wanted to be. Oh, not my body! I sometimes despair over my body, the wrinkles, the baggy eyes, and the sagging butt. And often I am taken aback by that old person that lives in my mirror (who looks like my mother!), but I don't agonize over those things for long.

I would never trade my amazing friends, my wonderful life and my loving family for less gray hair or a flatter belly. As I've aged, I've become more kind to myself and less critical of myself. I've become my own friend. I don't chide myself for eating that extra biscuit, or for not making my bed, or for buying that silly cement gecko that I didn't need, but looks so avante garde on my patio. I am entitled to a treat, to be messy, to be extravagant. I have seen too many dear friends leave this world too soon; before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging. Whose business is it if I choose to read or play on the computer until 4 a.m. and sleep until noon on a Sunday? I will dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 60s & 70's, and if I, at the same time, wish to weep over a lost love I will. I will walk the beach in a costume that is stretched over a bulging body, and will dive into the waves with abandon if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the young jet set. They, too, will get old. I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten. And I eventually remember the important things.

Sure, over the years my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child

suffers, or even when somebody's loses a beloved pet? But broken hearts are what give us strength and understanding and compassion. A heart never broken is pristine and sterile and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turning grey, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver.

As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong.

So, to answer your question, I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be. And I shall eat dessert every single day. (If I feel like it)

**MAY OUR FRIENDSHIP NEVER COME
APART ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S
STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART!
MAY YOU ALWAYS HAVE A RAINBOW
OF SMILES ON YOUR FACE AND IN
YOUR HEART FOREVER AND EVER!
FRIENDS FOREVER!**

Does he know any better?

During the Easter holidays Jessica and Jack were here for lunch. Jessica said she would have a "proper" lunch with me but Jack said could he have chips.

I did his meal with chips. He covered it with tomato sauce and then he left most of the chips. When I asked him if he was leaving the chips he said "Yes because they taste of potato" Perhaps he thinks chips grow on trees.

I think I know what he means though because I don't like the oven chips so I have washed my chip pan, bought my cooking oil and we are now having "proper" chips.

Dorothy

It's a confidence thing

I often get phone calls from members saying they would like to come to the events we put on but that they do not like coming on their own.

I always put "I wish to book ----- places" on the booking forms so that you can bring someone with you if you wish. They do not have to have arthritis but can just come as your guests.

I do know how you feel.

For many years I attended hydrotherapy at Dudley Guest hospital. We were a lovely group. There was Cliff and Jeff and Ted and Maureen and Maureen and Jean and Eileen. We all got on extremely well and they all belonged to the Sedgely Arthritis Group. They continually asked me to go along on the first Monday in the month to their meetings.

For three months on that Monday evening I got ready but then I didn't go because I didn't like walking into a room by myself. Eventually I plucked up courage and became a member of the group for many years so don't be shy bring someone with you!

This also applies to our outings and holidays!

Outing to Bridgemere Garden Centre

Sheila is arranging a trip to Bridgemere Garden Centre on Thursday 22nd May. The cost of the coach will be £5 per person. We will leave Falkland Street Coach Park at 10.00 a.m and leave Bridgemere at 4.00 p.m. for the return journey. To book places ring Sheila on 01902 686246 between 4.00 and 6.00 p.m. only please

I believe you can go on a tour for about £1.50. Liz says this is the right time to buy our plants!

The party

Maggie wore a pink dress,
Whilst I wore the blue,
We were going to a party,
Like most young people do.

Maggie had her hair done,
It looked very nice,
I put purple streaks in mine,
Against my mom's advice

We arrived happily at the party,
And had a glass of sherry,
The place was really swinging,
And everyone looking merry

The room was very crowded,
And music was blaring out loud,
We looked around for someone we knew,
And tried to mingle with the crowd

But no-one looked familiar,
No-one I had seen before,
And no-one even spoke to us,
So we quickly made it to the door.

Maggie looked bewildered,
Whilst I felt in some doubt,
So searching in my handbag,
I got the party invitation out.

Oh Maggie I said beginning to laugh,
We have got the wrong address,
The party's in Kings Road not Square
Oh what a blooming mess.

Maggie's hair now was getting frizzy,
And my purple streaks were in need of a comb,
Our new shoes were starting to hurt,
So off we went back home.

Bren

Sorry this edition is late
I will explain in the June
Newsletter
Dorothy

The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust – Foundation Trust Public Consultation

The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust, based on the New Cross hospital site, has entered the Foundation Trust application process. As a Foundation Trust we will continue to be part of the NHS and will always provide care based on need not the ability to pay. The services we provide will meet the national standards and targets for quality and waiting times.

We believe that becoming a Foundation Trust is right for this hospital and the community we serve. The freedoms we will have when we are a Foundation Trust will enable us to be more innovative about how we develop and deliver our services and increase our accountability to local people supporting our vision for the future –

“To be a first class hospital providing top quality care in every way”

As members of the Rheumatology Support group we would welcome your views on our Consultation proposals. The full consultation document is available in hard copy (please telephone 0800 046 6184 to request a copy) or visit our website www.royalwolverhamptonhospitals.nhs.uk to download a copy.

Membership Application Form

NHS Foundation Trusts are established in law as independent public benefit corporations. This means they are a membership organisation with local people, service users and staff having a greater say in what they do and how they do it. A Member can be a patient, carer, a member of the public or a member of Trust staff. We are now actively seeking people who would be interested in becoming members once our application for Foundation Trust status has been approved. If you are interested in joining us as a member please complete and return the enclosed membership application form as directed.

*Debbie Edwards - Patient Experience Lead
Patient Information Centre
The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust*

The Little Paper Bag

A little paper bag was feeling unwell, so he took himself off to the doctors.

"Doctor, I don't feel too good," said the little paper bag."

"Hmm, you look OK to me," said the Doctor, "but I'll do a blood test and see what that shows, come back and see me in a couple of days."

The little paper bag felt no better when he got back for the results.

"What's wrong with me?" asked the little paper bag.

"I'm afraid you are HIV positive!" said the doctor

"No, I can't be - I'm just a little paper bag!" said the little paper bag.

"Have you been having unprotected nookie?" asked the doctor.

"NO, I can't do things like that - I'm just a little paper bag!"

Well have you been sharing needles with other intravenous drug users?" asked the doctor.

"NO, I can't do things like that - I'm just a little paper bag!"

"Perhaps you've been abroad recently and required a jab or a blood transfusion?" queried the doctor.

"NO, I don't have a passport - I'm just a little paper bag!"

"Well", said the doctor, "are you in a homosexual relationship?"

"NO! I told you I can't do things like that, I'm just a little paper bag!"

"Then there can be only one explanation." said the doctor.....

"Your mother must have been a carrier".

Enclosures

Booking form for the Benefits Information Session

Warm Front leaflet

Form to become a member of the New Cross Foundation Trust

Information from the Falls Prevention Service

Disclaimer:

The views expressed in this newsletter are taken in good faith and are not necessarily endorsed by the editor or the WRSG. The use of a product name does not constitute an endorsement or a recommendation by the WRSG