



Meet the Beechwood Team

It may surprise you that the Beechwood Surgery has now been open for three years. It may surprise you even more to learn that the origins of the practice in Brentwood go back over 50 years! Some patients, including myself, can recall those early days even before the Avenue Road Surgery began. Beechwood's spacious new premises are quite a contrast to the cramped conditions at Avenue Road and have facilitated the expansion of services and the clinical team.

The Surgery now has eight permanent doctors and being a training practice, a variable number of registrars who are attached to the surgery for around six months or a year. There are also six nurses with three usually available on any day. The day to day administration is taken care of by a dedicated team of receptionists, secretaries and assistants, headed by the reception manager and practice manager.

The above team is available to serve the needs of around twelve thousand patients. Some of the team also have additional responsibilities, beyond Beechwood Surgery, being involved in other areas of health care provision for the local community. In future editions of the newsletter we aim to focus on the role of the different team members to give you a clearer picture of how the surgery functions within the community.

PPG Tours Brentwood Community Hospital

On Tuesday 28th July the PPG were given a tour of Brentwood Community Hospital by Dr Jon Tuppen and were able to see the full extent of all the services the hospital is now able to provide. There is only one area at present which is not in use but it is anticipated that this will be available soon for minor operations.

Together with outpatient and therapy departments there are assessments units, treatment rooms and a day hospital. Two wards cover inpatient services, between them they provide 52 beds

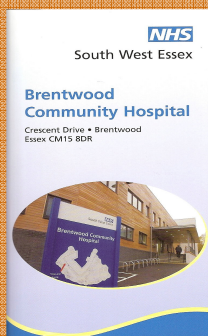
which are made up of 2 & 4 bedded units and a number of single rooms. Each ward has an allocated relatives' room should they require staying overnight. GP's are able to liaise directly with the ward sister to arrange for a patient to be admitted. All the beds in the hospital have been fitted with overhead hoists.

The hospital itself was built at a cost of £28 million which included a budget of £2 million for equipment, which was quite evident to see. It was also encouraging to

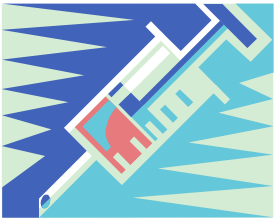
notice the high standard of cleanliness.

Whilst there we were able to view a random selection of questionnaires, completed by patients, and all appeared very positive. The overall impression gained was that of a well equipped hospital offering a comprehensive range of health services aimed at meeting the health needs of the local community.

The official opening of the hospital by Professor Sir George Alberti took place on 16th September 2009.



Swine Flu Vaccination Preparations



With the arrival of autumn it is expected that the number of swine flu cases will increase dramatically.

Until now the only treatment available has been antivirals but the availability of an effective vaccine is imminent so preparations are being made for a vaccination programme.

During October the Seasonal flu clinics are being held in the usual way but this vaccination does not protect against

the swine flu strain of the virus. It is anticipated that, for swine flu, people will require two vaccinations with at least three weeks between them.

The Department of Health has identified those most at risk from swine flu, who need to be vaccinated first. These groups are in order of priority:

1. People aged between 6 months and 65 years in the seasonal flu vaccine at risk groups.
2. Pregnant Women

3. People who live with those whose immune systems are compromised.

4. People aged 65 and over in the seasonal flu vaccine at-risk groups.

When the swine flu vaccine becomes available, invitations will be sent to the appropriate groups.

More information on swine flu is available at www.seessex.nhs.uk

Shared Care Records – Good idea or not?



Back in June letters were sent out by NHS South West Essex advising that a new computerised patient records service was going to be introduced this autumn. The service will consist of a **Detailed Record** which brings together detailed healthcare information from the NHS SW Essex services involved in your healthcare and a **New Summary Care Record** consisting of basic information from your health care record which you can choose to make available to healthcare staff anywhere in England if you are away from home, especially in an emergency. This last point would appear to be a major benefit as it would

be possible to quickly establish if a patient has any allergies or unexpected reactions to medication as well as information concerning current prescriptions. On the negative side some people have expressed concerns surrounding data security and those people who will have access to the information.

According to the literature supplied access will only be made after your permission has been given and the system will record the details of anyone who looks at your records. You may feel that is satisfactory but in some peoples' minds there is still considerable doubt about the ability of large

organisations to maintain the strict levels of security that they claim. Recent reports of data disks, etc left in public places and hackers breaking into supposedly secure systems have fuelled this mood of scepticism.

If you feel strongly that you not wish to have a Summary Care Record you can choose to opt-out by completing an opt-out form. You may also put access restrictions on your Detailed Record. For further details call the NHS Care Records Information Line on 0845 603 8510.

What can the PPG do for you?



As we stated in our last issue the overall purpose of the patient participation group is to help the Practice make improvements to services for the benefit of all patients and practice staff.

As part of this process we hope to improve communication and understanding between patients and practice staff. In subsequent issues we will try and focus on the wide range of activities undertaken by the GPs and other staff and how they affect the day to day running of the surgery.

We will also try to focus on patients' concerns and explore ways that these can be addressed with the surgery administration. In the absence of good communication it is easy for misunderstandings to arise.

For example, it was disappointing to read in the Brentwood Gazette recently that a patient of Beechwood surgery felt compelled to complain about a patient survey that had been distributed to a selected number of patients of the surgery. The patient felt it was a waste of the surgery's resources which could be spent on more pressing issues.

As explained in the article by Practice Manager, Kate Woolterton, this survey was instigated by SW Essex Primary Care Trust, not Beechwood surgery. However, the surgery is bound to comply with PCT requirements to ensure their performance ratings and allocation of funds from the PCT.

If the patient concerned had contacted the PPG,

we could have given the broader picture on why it was necessary and where it originated from i.e. PCT headquarters. In terms of resources, the survey had little impact on the surgery's time and money and the complaint would have been better directed to the SW Essex PCT. Instead, it was unfortunately, a case of shooting the messenger!

Needless to say, the relationship between the PCT and surgery is an area that the PPG intends to monitor closely with the aim of ensuring and supporting the surgery's perceived interests.

If you have any concerns about the surgery administration etc. we would be pleased to hear from you. Our contact details are below.

How to contact us:

Please give us your comments, concerns and suggestions below. Please hand to reception or alternatively, email us at ppg@beechwood.nhs