

# Alwoodley Medical Centre

## Patient Participation Group Newsletter

### November 2021

Tel 0113 393 0119 or 111 for urgent calls out of hours



#### **Let's meet....Dr Stewart Manning**

Retired GP Stewart became chairman of AMC's Patient Participation Group (PPG) two years ago. He worked as a GP in Leeds for 36 years at his practice on Dewsbury Road. He is married to Caroline and has two daughters, Vicky and Alex and two grandsons, Noah and Teddy. He is a Goodwill Ambassador for The Robert Sinclair Davidson Foundation and also a trustee of The Yorkshire Cancer Community.

*Stewart, why did you decide to become a doctor and did you always want to be a GP?*

I was inspired to become a doctor after watching medical programs like Dr Finlay's Casebook, Emergency Ward Ten, Dr Kildare and Carry on Doctor with my parents in the 1950's

*Did you have any specialties or interests while you were practicing?*

I was assistant medical officer to Leeds United AFC from 1979 to 1990 and I also worked for several firms in Leeds as their occupational health adviser. These included Lewis's, Burtons, Yorkshire Rider, De Puy and Leeds City Council.

*How is being a GP today different to when you were a GP?*

Modern GPs have to deal with far more complex medical problems than I did when I entered general practice. For instance, I referred all patients with diabetes and raised blood pressure to general physicians at hospitals; now the majority of these patients are dealt with by the GP.

Also, GPs have much more administration to deal with every day. Far more tasks are organised by GPs as a result of issues that arise from blood test results and hospital letters. I also saw far greater numbers of patients face to face in the surgery, sometimes 40- 50 each day. We did more home visits and when I worked for the out of hours service between 1978-1979, I could log up 60 home visits in a 12 hour Sunday session!

Another major change which has accelerated over the past 10 years is that many GPs do not work full time, partly due to the increase in stress now associated with the job. Significant numbers of family doctors mainly work five or six sessions per week; full time is 10 Sessions.

I wouldn't describe it as either better or worse, just very different!

*Do you think GPs can no longer be described as the family doctor?*

At the present time I think senior GPs who have known the patients and their relatives for several years still consider themselves family doctors. However, I think this will gradually change as practices get bigger and there are significantly less full time GPs.

*Do you think patients have different expectations compared to when you were practicing?*

I think patients have increased expectations today. This is partly due to the amount of information that is available online and in the media. Patients are now encouraged to 'take ownership' of their condition. Sadly, these expectations are not matched by what the NHS is able to deliver, both in primary and secondary care.

*What impact do you think the pandemic has had on GP care?*

I think doctors and patients have found the reduction in face-to-face contacts stressful which has unfortunately led to problems for many patients. Even though a number of zoom consultations have taken place, there has been a steep rise in mental health issues especially amongst older teenagers and young adults. A friend of mine in Manchester was informed he had cancer by his GP in a letter, not even in a phone call. This is unacceptable. GP care and appointments for patients with chronic health conditions have been delayed although AMC is now inviting patients to attend for these checks.

Sadly, many patients, because of government and local health authority advice, did not visit their GP for many months and this has led to delays in diagnosis and treatment of some cancers. Unfortunately, this will lead to poorer outcomes and survival rates for what would have been treatable cancers.

*Do you think GP care can be improved and if so, what changes would you make?*

I believe that GP care can always be improved and most GPs that I know constantly audit their performance to try to make changes that will benefit patients, staff and the doctors working in the practice

I would like all practices to have a nominated doctor or nurse to be the focal point for patients on their cancer Journey. This would be from diagnosis through treatment and continue during follow up. Several practices already have this system in place but this will be increasingly important for patients as the NHS deals with the backlog of cancer post-Covid.

*Does the NHS need to be overhauled? Some critics suggest that it is running on a 1948 model.*

The NHS no longer runs on the 1948 model. Many of the changes in general practice evolved slowly until the COVID pandemic. I think 10 years of changes happened in 12 months! One major problem is the funding of the NHS. Medicine has had so many new treatments and innovations since 1948 that the costs have risen dramatically year on year. It may be necessary to find additional ways of funding the health service and even more importantly social care.

*What is your involvement in The Robert Sinclair Davidson Foundation?*

I am a goodwill ambassador. This was set up by Robert before he sadly passed away with Motor Neurone Disease. Robert's father is a lifelong friend and that is why I am involved. The charity offers financial support to young couples and families affected by life threatening and terminal illness.

*What other organisations are you involved in?*

I have been involved with raising money for several local cancer charities including St Gemmas and Wheatfields Hospices and recently I have been helping with a variety of cancer related projects.

I believe I am in an excellent position as a link between doctors, patients and charities because of my medical career as well as looking after both my parents who had cancer.

*Now that you have retired, how do you spend your time?*

Looking after my two grandsons, although this has been very difficult during Covid and I have not seen my grandson in the USA since October 2019. I love reading, and still prefer books to a Kindle. I also listen to a lot of music and am looking forward to going to live concerts and musicals again.

*What other ambitions do you hope to fulfil?*

I would really like to write and publish the story of my medical career. I have the title Memories of an Inner City GP from Smear to Maternity. I just need to write the content!

*What drives you?*

I want to make a difference and leave some type of legacy. My mantra is: "As one person I cannot change the world but I can change the world of one person."

## **NHS Absolute Heroes**

Finding out you are pregnant during normal times can bring about a wealth of emotions ranging from excitement to trepidation. It can be an uncertain time for many parents-to-be, but being pregnant during 2020 must have been different. Here, Alex Sharp talks about her experience.....

When I found out I was pregnant with my first baby at the start of 2020, I had no idea what the year ahead would hold. Looking back, it was a good year to be pregnant; I got to work from home and rest a lot. However, it was a worrying time because I did not know how Covid would affect me or my baby if I caught it. I was also worried about the impact the pandemic would have on the services available to me.

I thankfully had my husband with me when I went for my first scan but then had to attend two others alone. As we couldn't be together when I went for my subsequent scans, we decided not to find out the sex of the baby. Fortunately, we were lucky to



have a healthy baby with no issues; I can't imagine how it would have felt to find out bad news about your baby on your own.

All the midwives and healthcare professionals I dealt with were wonderful. Face to face midwife appointments continued at AMC as did blood tests while other appointments took place over the phone. These worked well and meant I did not have to travel unnecessarily. The practice was very organised even during the height of the pandemic and I never felt unsafe going into the building.

I was very nervous about having to be in hospital on my own when I had the baby. At that time partners were only allowed to be present once the mum was in active labour. I stayed at home as long as possible because of this and fortunately we had a very positive birth experience where I was only without my husband for a short time when I first went on to the ward. Other than a Covid test after labour and my husband being required to wear a mask, I don't think my labour was too greatly affected by the pandemic. I realise this is not the case for everyone and I have friends who gave birth at a similar time who definitely were negatively affected, but I cannot fault the NHS or the midwives who were absolute heroes.

Baby Teddy was born last September and has received great care from AMC ranging from GP checks to vaccinations. I felt really supported by the midwives after he was born as they were always available for additional calls or visits if I had any concerns. He's had an unusual first year and lockdowns have made it tough at times but I can now see the positives of having had lots of time at home, just me and my baby. He still has lots of family and friends to meet but thankfully life is returning to normal and Teddy has no idea what an unbelievable first year he has had!

### **Appointment System Overhauled**

A new system for booking GP appointments was introduced at AMC earlier this month. Patients now have to ring on the day they need an appointment and will no longer be able to book in advance. They can request a GP of their choice but if unavailable they will be offered an appointment with another doctor. These will either be face-to-face or by telephone.

Patients can call for same day appointments until 12 noon but after this time, patients should only call if it is an emergency. Outside of the practice's opening times, patients should either call 111 or go to an [urgent treatment centre](#) at either St George's, Middleton or at Wharfedale, Otley. Appointments with a nurse or health care assistant can be booked in advance.

Dr Martin Sutcliffe explained: "We have had to alter the booking system to ensure patients see or speak to the GP of their choice at a specific time. We have responded to patient feedback."

He said that patients should still use the [online consultation form](#) but this should not be used if requiring an urgent appointment as it can take up to 48 hours to be dealt with. Dr Sutcliffe added that not all patients needed to see a GP and would be better served by a consultation with either a physiotherapist, the in-house pharmacist or a referral to another relevant expert. He urged patients to respect members of the patient services team who have been specifically trained to determine which expert a patient can be signposted to.

## Be Kind

A recent survey carried out by the British Medical Association has revealed that more than a third of GPs and their colleagues have faced verbal abuse from patients. Doctors, nurses and reception staff in general practice have been subjected to unacceptable behaviour from patients in recent months. At a recent meeting of AMC's Patient Participation Group (PPG), members were told that practice staff have and are facing abuse on a daily basis.

Dr Martin Sutcliffe said: "We understand that we are in challenging times for both doctors and patients but abusing our staff is completely unacceptable. We are all doing our best to provide the best care for our patients and are working under intense pressure. Please remember that we are all human beings with feelings and the abuse we have been experiencing has a profound effect on our well-being. I would urge our patients to be patient and kind – we really are doing our best to help you."

PPG chairman, Dr Stewart Manning, added: "The last 18 months have been unprecedented and all GPs are under immense pressure to ensure the best care for their patients. AMC is no exception and it is appalling to think that the staff at our practice are on the receiving end of rude and unacceptable behaviour. I would ask my fellow patients to be respectful."

## Helpers Needed for Covid Booster Clinics

Volunteers are being urged to come forward and help out at the covid vaccination booster sessions at AMC. To sign up, volunteers need to be over 18 years of age and happy to work approximately 4.5 hours either indoors or outdoors. Please email [cnlpcn.covidclinics@nhs.net](mailto:cnlpcn.covidclinics@nhs.net) and include your contact telephone number.

## Welcome to our New Patients

Three thousand patients transferred from The Avenue Medical Practice when it closed its doors at the end of March 2021. Two nurses, a health care assistant and 5 administrative staff also transferred to AMC. These include both part-time and full-time staff. Additional doctors have also been recruited.

## Have you downloaded the NHS app?

You can access your medical record as well as your COVID vaccination certificate using the NHS app. This is a different app to the COVID track and trace app. The NHS app can be downloaded from <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/nhs-app/id1388411277> for iPhone or <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.nhs.online.nhsonline> for android. Visit the [website](#) for more information about this service.



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