

Devon Doctors

Monthly Monitor

The newsletter for Devon's out-of-hours GP service

GET IN TOUCH

Got an idea to improve our service ?

Got an initiative that we could help with?

Get in touch:
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All other feedback & contributions email the editor:
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Our Bay Health Centre helps fight flu

By Chris Wright, Chief Executive

On May 5th the Torbay 8-8 GP health centre (Bay Health Centre) opened within the Emergency Department at Torbay hospital. The fundamental principle is to ensure access to GP services between 8am-8pm 365 days a year.

The health centre is located on the hospital site, building on the strong foundation and good working relationship between Devon Doctors out-of-hours service and the emergency team.

The health centre will benefit from a strong link to secondary care and access to mental health services. A core purpose of this service is to help tackle health inequalities in Torbay.

Don't panic Captain Mainwaring!

What we didn't expect was that our first few weeks would be perfectly timed to coincide with the first confirmed pandemic Mexican flu cases in England!

The Bay Health Centre was asked by Torbay Care Trust to provide an 8am to 8pm swabbing service ('swab doc') for patients who may have been at risk of swine flu in South Devon.

These arrangements have been in place for two weeks

and will continue for the foreseeable future. As it has turned out we are still in something of a phoney war but Torbay Care Trust, and indeed the other PCTs, were all amazed at how quickly and flexibly Devon Doctors / Devon Health reacted to the threat. At the time we didn't really know how the thing was going to progress and so we had to prepare for a spike in demand.

With pandemic flu I suspect our time will come — maybe even this Autumn but I am confident that in Devon we will cope as well as anywhere else in England and perhaps a little better.

Ticking along nicely

Sadly, Health Minister Ben Bradshaw had to cancel our official opening of the Plymouth 8-8 GP health centre. (I suspect he, along with the rest of the House, needed to recheck his expense claims!)

But the service is progressing well. It saw over 423 unregistered patients in April without minimal advertising and publicity. We expect demand to progress much further but there is some really good work progressing with groups who have difficulty accessing mainstream healthcare.

Devon County Show 2009: Third time's the charm

With queues forming out the door our marquee at this year's Devon County Show was busier than ever.

For the third year running Devon Doctors provided free health checks to the public. The draw proved too powerful to resist, with most people wanting just one thing... their cholesterol checked!

Veteran campaigners Dr Paul McDermott, Ray Bowden and Jason Hinrich returned once again to work those cholesterol and blood sugar monitors. By the end of Saturday they had seen over 550 people.

Volunteers, including drivers Mark Stone and Mike Howard, call operator Sophie Palmer and operational administrator Elaine Marshall, ensured that the captive audiences were informed about all of our services.

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Hands off! When Cap'n Jack Sparrow and his female accomplice turned up our street nurse Ray Bowden was tempted to peg leg it to the nearest pirate ship.

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CLINICAL FOCUS with Dr Chris Bastin, Medical Director

Why do we ring patients after 999 is called?

There's been recent feedback from colleagues querying the need for clinicians to ring patients after the control centre has dialled 999 for an ambulance.

One of the views was that it would be a 'very brave doctor' who would stand down an ambulance.

I can only emphasise that it is good clinical practice to telephone patients at home:

- ◇ To confirm that an ambulance is on its way.
- ◇ To confirm that an ambulance has arrived.
- ◇ The crew may also find that admission is not necessary on arrival.
- ◇ To advise crew if treatment is required.
- ◇ To see whether a GP visit is required as a follow-up.

Triage support on the intranet

Have you had a chance to look at the triage information on the intranet yet?

Everything that was in the old triage folders at the treatment centres is now available online for you to quickly access.

At the start of your shift, click on the internet explorer button on your PC and it should take you to the intranet home page. Click on 'Treatment Centres' and select 'Triage Operational Support'.

This will take you to various documents that should help you with your triage.

We are keen to improve this information so if you feel something needs changing or you can think of anything else that should be on there please email loujones@nhs.net.

In addition, I am sure you are all checking the swine flu updates via the intranet home page. These are updated on a regular basis and include the latest Health Protection Agency algorithms.

Keeping us updated with your contact details

As part of your contract with us we need to have the following up-to-date information for all clinicians:

- NHS net email
- 1st contact number

- 2nd contact number
- Postal address

We also need to be aware of any periods when you cannot be contacted. Please email this information to rota@devondoctors.nhs.uk

And now for my own take on Shakespeare's Hamlet:

"To treat or not to treat? That is the question. Whether it be nobler to antibiotic or suffer the slings and arrows of outraged patients..."

Yes, the familiar issue of prescribing antibiotics for dental patients has raised its head again.

I've asked my colleague Simon McKinnel, who has practised as both a dentist and a GP, to tackle this topic (please see below).

Contact Chris

01392 822 340 or
christopher.bastin@nhs.net



Chris spends every Wednesday (9-5) with the governance team.



Doctors prescribing for dental patients

By Simon McKinnel, Medical Director (Devon Dental)

There have been some recent problems after the control centre has asked a doctor if they would speak to a patient with dental pain and the doctor has agreed:

Sometimes the doctor who is willing or available to triage them is not the most local to the patient. The doctor advises the patient to attend the local treatment centre (without speaking to the TC doctor) and the local TC doctor refuses to issue a prescription.

How often at the weekend have you given a prescription and known in your heart that it was either the wrong treatment, or perhaps inappropriate or you gave out an antibiotic because the patient suggested it and what an easy option that can be?

If you can answer "never" then you are an unusual being. We should all be concerned about antibiotic prescribing; if they are given out too much eventually they will no longer

work as there will be resistant bugs so the microbiologists inform us.

At the dental access centres at weekends please try to keep their usage to the appropriate patients only. Many GPs see patients with tooth pain out-of-hours and are asked to write prescriptions, and for many it is their only option!

However, antibiotics should only be given for infections, diagnosed with the appropriate signs and symptoms. Not for conditions with no diagnosis, not for the pain of pulpitis and not for patients who feel they need them!

Your efforts are much appreciated. If you see any exciting pathology during your work please share your experience with all of us in our newsletters as it always make interesting reading. Many thanks.

simon.mckinnel@nhs.net



Q&A with Dr Francis Fernandez at Barnstaple treatment centre

How long have you been working shifts for Devon Doctors?

If my memory does not fail me, roughly since 2003.

What other clinical roles do you/have you carried out besides your present one with Devon Doctors?

I am a half-time partner in North Somerset. Due to family reasons we still keep the house in Devon. I am on the PBC Board in my cluster in North Somerset.

What do you enjoy most about your work with Devon Doctors?

The fact that my main job is in North Somerset and I still want to work with Devon Doctors says it all, I think. The organizational level of Devon Doctors is very high, everybody knows their function and everybody is pulling in the same direction.

What do you find most challenging?

Sometimes, the feeling that you would like to do more for the patient and it is not possible under the circumstances. The continuity of care and the communication between the

surgeries and out-of-hours could always be improved.

Is there an incident that sticks in your mind? If so, why?

I went to visit an elderly patient and the daughter opened the door. She wanted to have a quiet word with me before I saw her mother. But we heard the door closing up and then there was just the two of us locked out in the rain.

We were ringing the patient to see if there was any possibility that she could come to the door. I was tempted to put it in my portfolio as a learning need!



A bit blurry! Squint and you can see Francis in this pic



Around the treatment centres

With Jane Moxon, Operations Manager

Working alongside the Plymouth 8-8 GP health centre

It has been agreed by the PCT that these two services will operate separately although co-located within the Mount Gould health centre premises.

Clinicians triaging from the Derriford or Mount Gould treatment centres:

If you feel that a patient needs to have a face-to-face consultation at the treatment centre please ensure that these calls are forwarded on the Adastra system as 'GP TC'.

On arrival, these patients will be booked in by the Devon Doctors OA and subsequently seen by the Devon Doctors GP.

- Please note that these patients should not be entered on to the 8-8 practice system.
- The 8-8 practice system is for those patients with pre-booked appointments or those who walk into the

centre with no previous telephone triage.

- Don't forget, if you are completing a call as 'GP Advice', and you feel the patient can wait until their surgery is open, you may want to inform them about the walk-in 8-8 facility at Mount Gould hospital if that is more convenient.

Message to all using the Adastra system

⇒ Start of shift: **Log on** under your own **user name** and **password**.

⇒ End of shift: **Log off**

There have been occasions recently where this has not happened and clinical details have been recorded under the wrong name.



jane.moxon@nhs.net

Reminder to practices: special patient messages

- Please log on to the special patient website and audit information on your patients on a regular basis.
- If messages are displayed in red it means they have expired and will not appear when call operators receive a call about that patient.

Any queries: mhs@devondoctors.nhs.uk or 01392 823 159



Case study Triage patient waits in pain for follow-up call from local duty doctor

What happened?

At 22:36 hrs Dr A, at Exmouth treatment centre, triaged a call from a patient in Budleigh Salterton suffering from severe abdominal pain.

The patient said she felt as if she was dying. She was not vomiting, she was drinking OK, but had lost appetite and had had no bowel motion for four days.

Dr A gave the patient two options, to be seen at the treatment centre that evening or wait to see her own GP in the morning.

The patient said she needed to discuss this with her husband. Ten minutes later she rang back to say that she wanted to be seen.

Exmouth TC would be closing at 23:00 hrs so Dr A explained to the patient that someone would telephone her from Exeter TC instead, to arrange with her when to come in.

Dr A forwarded the call as 'GP TC' on the system. Nobody at Exeter TC telephoned the patient, who had to wait with her husband for over six hours before a nurse practitioner rang the patient at 05:54.

The patient's husband then drove her in to Exeter to be seen at Exeter TC at 07:00. The patient, who had been suffering from a bowel obstruction, later put in a formal

complaint.

What can we learn?

Overnight clinicians

- **Must contact all patients requiring a face-to-face consultation** from them.
- This applies to home visits (sometimes the GP will ask the driver to do this) or to arrange a suitable time for the patient to attend the TC.
- If you have triaged a call and it needs to be forwarded to another base for a TC attendance or home visit, save it with a priority of '**GP Advice**'. This will flag up to the GP / driver at the local base that the patient needs to be telephoned.

Overnight drivers

- When a call is received at the base **confirm what action is required of the GP** so that the patient receives the appropriate communication.

Catch up with the control centre

By Annette Hammett, Operations Manager

Control Centre staff rose to the challenges presented to them in May. Apart from the usual challenges of the month (two Bank Holidays) the additional pressure of the flu outbreak added to what is always a busy place.

We had to set up a line, affectionately called the 'swine line', independent of our existing incoming lines, to deal with surgeries wanting to access the Torbay-based 'swab doc'.

The flu meant that we were asked to put on extra shifts, mostly at very short notice, which gave the **rota team** some very tight deadlines.

Thank you to everyone who responded to calls, voice mail messages and e-mails to ensure that shifts were covered.

The implementation of the 8-8 GP health centres has also added to the team's workload.

New carer alert scheme goes live

The **bookings and referral team** also had a busy month as May 1st saw them dealing with the Devon PCT dental helpline. This has meant approximately an extra 100 calls a day being dealt with by the team.

A new carer alert scheme also went live. It's a low call volume service but will offer reassurance to carers who have signed up to the scheme. For example, if they're involved in an accident they can access help for their dependant by calling us.

The central call handling and administration for the 8-8 GP health centres comes under the bookings and referrals umbrella. Currently the number of calls has been low but there's been plenty to keep the team busy with preparation work and training on new systems taking place.

Contacting our Exeter offices

Just a reminder that anyone wishing to contact the general administration line should dial **01392 823 636**.

Name	Email	Phone
Control Centre	control@nhs.uk	01392 823 636
Exeter TC	exeter@nhs.uk	01392 823 636
Exmouth TC	exmouth@nhs.uk	01392 823 636
...

Staff and clinicians working within our services can access an up-to-date contacts list (including extensions, direct dials and email addresses) via our **intranet home page**. Just click on the Internet Explorer icon on your computers in the control centre / treatment centres to view. Select 'HQ Contacts' on the left side menu.

annette.hammett@nhs.net



Supporting Stroke Awareness Day

Earlier this month Celia White, governance administrator, and Ray Bowden, nurse practitioner, went to Kingsbridge Evangelical Church to represent Devon Doctors at a stroke awareness event.

The event was organised by Kingsbridge Hospital and the services of our street nurse were called for. Ray stepped forward to meet his public once again and Celia was on hand to explain how our out-of-hours service works.

Our specially purchased stocks of cholesterol strips were hit hard by the high demand but it was nice to be popular with the public!



Devon County Show continued...

As usual there were lots of husbands and wives cajoling each other to get tested and some who bolted from the queue when the anticipation got too much. One woman's blood sugar was off the scale causing great alarm before she revealed she'd just eaten an iced bun.

There was also the farmer who hadn't seen his doctor for 20 years—his blood pressure was very low and had to be double-checked but it was accounted for by his high fitness levels.

The same couldn't be said for the team of helpers at the marquee with organiser Lou Jones finding medicinal solace in a large pint of cider after her final stint on Friday.

It was an exhausting but worthwhile effort which helped to raise awareness of healthcare issues as well as Devon Doctors' services. (Thank you to Devon PCT for providing swine flu leaflets and the British Heart Foundation for providing lots of health literature). The big question is - can we do it again next year? Watch this space...



Cool under pressure: Ray and Paul



Stampede!



Sophie does her PR bit for the service



Motley Crew: pirate, Lou, Mark and pirate.



Put that woman down sir!



Never mind free health checks— it was Mark who was the main attraction.



Dr Kathryn Shore takes the London marathon in her stride

"Thank you to all who sponsored me to raise money for Children's Hospice South West. I finished in 3 hours 30 minutes and 29 seconds, within seconds of my previous best marathon time which I was pleased about but still not quite getting under 3 hours 30 minutes. However the time is good enough to get a good for age place again next year. Having only previously run in much smaller events, the crowds and support were amazing all around the course. Let's hope the marathon training will make a positive difference to my racing over the summer over shorter distances and possibly an Autumn marathon if my family can put up with all the training again."

Thank you from Sophie

Sophie Palmer, who works on our referral team and in the control centre during holidays, has just flown off to the USA to help out with a summer camp. Before leaving she organised some fundraising in the control centre.

She said: "I would like to thank everyone for helping me raise money for the charity group "Autism Speaks". We managed to raise about £80 over the 2 days which is great. Thank you and see you in September, Sophie."

Grand Prix social event open to all staff & clinicians

Compete against colleagues on the track to be the ultimate Grand Prix champion

GRAND PRIX 2 (Exclusive Use) (Based on 30 - 60 drivers, 30 drivers minimum.)

Arrival and registration
A 5 lap practice session
4 x 4 lap heats
A 6 lap qualifier
All drivers race in the qualifier so
receive a minimum of 6 drives

A Grand Final for the top 8 drivers
Trophies are awarded to the top 3 drivers
The winner gets a bottle of bubbly

£30.00 PER DRIVER



Open to anyone over 16.
Driving licence not required.

Organised by Roger Gravestock (driver): 07933 549591 or rogergrave-
stock_surveys@yahoo.com

£15 must be paid up front as a deposit by each driver (non refundable),
by **Friday 19th June 2009**, before I can book.

So unfortunately I can't confirm a date yet, but it will probably be on a Friday evening.

Look forward to seeing you all there for a fun packed evening of racing!!"

<http://www.raceworld-karting.co.uk/>
Raceworld Ltd, Unit 3, Greendale Business Park, Sidmouth Road, Woodbury Salterton, Nr Exeter

Roger is organising this event after racing on the track many times. Experienced race stewards monitor the event at all times but obviously all participants take part at their own risk.

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