



Rydal Group Practice

### **Rydal Patient Participation Group Newsletter - Editorial**

Greetings to all Rydal Patients and Staff,

Welcome to our first RPPG Newsletter for 2024.

Thanks to John Rowlands there is plenty of catch up information on what is happening in the Rydal GP Practice. The Practice Manager Sharon Smith, has provided a piece on Diabetes Services. There are also many ideas for self help and wellbeing, including the Expert Patient Programme. We hope all of these will enhance your health and enjoyment of life. Please do get in touch if you wish to share anything with us.

The present RPPG Chair and Secretary are retiring in April, so please consider taking these positions to keep RPPG going with the valuable work we do on behalf of patients.

With sincere best wishes,

Rhonda Anderson Chair RPPG

### **Contact the PPG:**

We cannot deal with personal clinical matters which must be dealt with through the existing system of contacting the surgery, but please let us know if you have any comments.

Due to inappropriate use and confusion on its purpose, the RPPG email account has reluctantly been closed. Thanks to John Pattrick who has managed it on behalf of RPPG for very many years.

To contact us please write to us via our Mailbox in Reception.

### **Report of RPPG meetings**

By John Rowlands

### **PREAMBLE**

The COVID pandemic and subsequent pressure on the NHS and general practice in particular has led to a hiatus in the production of periodic newsletters from the PPG.

The PPG is a group of patients that maintains contact with Rydal Practice that aims to provide a patient perspective on the GP service. In addition we aim to keep patients informed about the current state of affairs and developments in our general practice. Our aim is to promote and help patients to maintain their own health as best they can and engage with the practice as effectively as possible.

### **CLINICAL STAFF**

After a period of struggling to recruit, Rydal now almost has a full complement of clinical staff. In addition to doctors, a nurse and a health care assistant, the practice now has a pharmacist, FCP (First Contact Practitioner), social prescriber and use of a paramedic.

Depending on need and the prevailing issues, patients may find themselves being contacted directly by these practitioners. For example, pharmacists may call to review your medication, an FCP appointment may be offered as a direct response to a referral or signposted by the receptionists following patient contact. The social prescriber may proactively seek patients requiring follow up or be referred by a GP or staff member. A respiratory nurse conducts annual asthma and COPD reviews but will also be completed by the practice pharmacist. Paramedics will be asked to visit certain patients at home if deemed necessary by the GP.

#### WHEN YOU NEED TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE ABOUT YOUR HEALTH

The difficulty contacting doctors has been an issue in the media for a long time now. However PPG members have reported considerable improvements of late. In particular a new telephone system at Rydal invites you to request a call back rather than hanging on in a queue with annoying repeated messages. This is working well and is far less frustrating when trying to make that initial contact with the surgery.

For patients with non-urgent health issues, it is recommended that e-consult is used as a preference.

However, writing a letter explaining one's concerns and dropping into reception at Rydal, has proved an effective way of progressing matters.

It is with regret that the practice decided to end the facility of sending a written message via Patient Access, but they noticed that the messaging was being used too much for non clinical matters and was sometimes inappropriate and also resulted in patients contacting the practice at the weekend with matters that had resolved themselves by Monday morning.

For patients who are working or have day time commitments, there is an Enhanced Access Clinic run by the local primary care network that operates in the evenings and on a Saturday. The contact number for appointments is 020 4506 8827 which is available for patients to call Monday to Friday 6.30pm to 8pm or Saturday 8.30am to 5pm. These appointments can be booked by practice staff outside of these times. We also offer a new same day access service at a local GP surgery. This is run by Healthbridge Direct. GP appointments are available in the evenings Monday to Friday, and Saturdays and Sundays but are only bookable via 111.

#### FRONT ENTRANCE CLOSURE

PPG members are more than conscious about the general appearance of Rydal. In particular the front entrance is no longer safe to use due to subsidence. The problem is with insurers and loss adjusters.

#### DOCTORS IN TRAINING

Rydal is participating in the training of doctors at registrar level by giving them experience of general practice. The first of these trainees was Dr Hussain who has now moved on. The current trainees are Drs Butler and Mithawala. They see patients in half hour slots and are supervised by a GP.

#### TEST RESULTS

A prevailing issue for patients is the follow up after being referred for tests such as blood tests, ultrasound or X-Ray. The practice doctors assure us that if the tests show up an abnormality, patients will be contacted. However, it remains the responsibility of the patient to follow up on a test results. They can do this by phoning the surgery. Reception staff can look up the results and convey these to patients if the GP has reported on them. However, these results are also available to patients directly via Patient Access or via the NHS app. This is useful for patients who keep track of results, for example blood sugar levels, to check how they are doing when trying to control their diet.

The last meeting of RPPG was on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2024.

We thank the staff who attended and generously gave their time to RPPG and the issues we raised.

### **Practice Service for Diabetic and Pre-Diabetic Patients**

By Sharon Smith, Rydal Practice Manager

A pre-diabetic patient should be offered a referral to the NHS diabetes prevention programme and also have an HbA1c blood test on an annual basis. Of the patients on the non-diabetic hyperglycaemic patients at Rydal, 88% have had a blood test in the last 12 months. The aim is to get to 90% by the end of March. With regards to Diabetic patients we recall them annually for the following with the practice nurse or HCA:

Foot pulse check

Blood Pressure check (repeat as appropriate if not controlled)

Urine ACR check

They will have annual blood tests including Us & Es, cholesterol and an HbA1c. The HbA1c will be repeated at an interval deemed appropriate by the practice pharmacist i.e. 3 months, 6 months, annually. The pharmacist will advise the patient when to next have a blood test with the information written on the patients notes. We expect the patient to follow up on this. When the results of the latest test is received then a call is booked with the practice pharmacist if necessary. They should also be on a statin if indicated (GP or pharmacist would start this).

(Note: What is a Us and Es blood test? The most important aspect of U&Es is what they tell us about kidney functioning.

A thorough explanation of what HbA1c is, can be found at [diabetes.org.uk](https://diabetes.org.uk) together with other information about Diabetes and its treatment and prevention. There is also a helpline for patients. R. Anderson)

### **Enhanced Access Clinics – from 1 October 2022**

Evening and weekend appointments are now available.

We wanted to let you know that evening and weekend appointments are now available for our patients, in addition to our normal opening hours of 8am to 6.30pm.

These evening and weekend appointments may take place by phone, video, or face-to-face depending on your clinical need.

These clinics will be held at Glebelands Practice (2 Glebelands Ave, London E18 2AB) on Saturdays and The Shrubberies Medical Centre (12 The Shrubberies, London E18 1BD) in the evenings – our practice is part of a small group of practices called the 'Wanstead & Woodford' Primary Care Network. This group of practices works together in a number of ways to deliver services in your area.

You can make an appointment after GP core hours by calling 0204 506 8827 on Monday-Friday between 5pm-8pm and Saturdays between 8.30am-5pm

## **Self Help information**

**The Expert Patient Programme (EPP)** Copied from the website.

<https://www.nelft.nhs.uk/epp/>

The Expert Patients Programme (EPP) is a six-week course for anyone living with one or more long term health conditions such as asthma, chronic fatigue, COPD, depression, diabetes, heart disease, MS, Parkinson's disease, HIV, ME, on-going back pain etc.

The course is designed to help you cope with your health condition, find solutions to common problems & feel more in control.

### **What can self-management offer me?**

People with long-term health conditions face many similar issues such as fatigue, pain, frustration, stress and depression. The course looks at how to manage these whilst working alongside your healthcare providers.

By participating in the course you will:

- Learn new skills to manage your health condition better.
- Develop confidence in the daily management of your specific condition.
- Meet others and share similar experiences.
- Learn about developing more effective relationships with health professionals.

### **What do we learn?**

The course focuses on what you can do, rather than what you can't. Weekly sessions cover useful topics such as managing symptoms, dealing with pain and tiredness, coping with depression and other feelings, relaxation techniques, healthy eating, exercise, setting realistic goals and communicating effectively with health professionals.

### **How has it helped other people?**

People who have taken part in an EPP course have reported that it has helped them to:

- Feel confident and more in control of their life
- Manage their condition and treatment together with healthcare professionals
- Be realistic about the impact of their condition on themselves and their family
- Use their new skills and knowledge to improve their quality of life.

### **Do I need to pay?**

No, it is free.

### **Do I need to be referred by my doctor?**

No, the course is open to self-referrals as well as referrals from doctors and other professionals.

### **How is it structured?**

Each course runs for two-and-a-half hours a week, for 6 weeks. There is one session a week and refreshments are provided. A maximum of 16 people attend the course. All participants have different conditions.

### **Do I need to talk about my own condition?**

There will be times where you will be talking about how your condition affects your life and what you would like to change, however it is up to you what you want to share and how much detail you want to give. All discussions are confidential.

### Who are the tutors?

The course is run by Julie Atkins, NELFT self-care facilitator alongside another trained tutor who themselves have long-term conditions.

### Where are the courses held?

The courses are held at local venues, with facilities such as toilets and disabled access, as well as comfortable chairs and good access to public transport. You are free to stretch your legs, get up and walk around if you need to. It is not a hospital setting.

### Do I have to attend every week?

Yes, it is advised that you do in order to get the most out of the course. We do understand that there may be sessions you will miss due to appointments or feeling unwell.

### What do participants say?

"I've started swimming again which I never thought I would. It's given me a new lease of life!"

"Meeting people has helped me understand more about myself and ways of managing things... It has been a well run course and everyone has been very helpful and caring."

"It has helped me become more aware of my condition and how it affects me, and to feel that I can manage it to some extent through pacing, diet and relaxation techniques."

"There's a mix of people with different conditions on the course so it's a good leveller."

"It gave me more information and confidence to do normal things in life."

*To book a place please email [epp@nelft.nhs.uk](mailto:epp@nelft.nhs.uk)*

Phone 0300 3001867 or text 07827280219.

## **Health and Well Being Article**

### **How do you Breathe?**

We seem to be experiencing more stress than we would like, so I hope the following will aid your relaxation and enjoyment of life.

Many people do not breathe correctly, or are aware that they can concentrate on their breath for better health and wellbeing.

I have taught some of these techniques to participants, and they have found them very helpful to alleviate stress, aid relaxation and for distraction from every day pain.

Breathing techniques are powerful tools for relaxation and stress control, offering a simple yet effective way to manage the demands of daily life. By harnessing the innate connection between breath and emotions, individuals can cultivate a sense of calm and balance, promoting both mental and physical wellbeing.

One popular and accessible breathing technique is diaphragmatic breathing, also known as deep belly breathing. This method involves inhaling deeply through the nose, allowing the diaphragm to expand and the abdomen to rise, and exhaling slowly through the mouth. This deliberate and intentional breathing pattern engages the body's relaxation response, reducing the heart rate and promoting a sense of tranquillity. Practicing diaphragmatic breathing for just a few minutes can be a quick and effective way to alleviate stress.

Another effective technique is the 4-7-8 breathing method, championed by Doctor Andrew Weil. Inhale quietly through your nose for a count of four, hold your breath for a count of seven, and exhale audibly through your mouth for a count of eight. This technique helps regulate the breath, promoting a sense of calm and reducing anxiety. The extended exhale also stimulates the body's relaxation response, making it an excellent tool for managing stress in various situations.

For those seeking a more structured approach, progressive muscle relaxation combined with breathing can be highly effective. This involves tensing and then gradually releasing different muscle groups while maintaining a focus on deep, rhythmic breathing. The combination of muscle tension release and controlled breathing helps to release physical and mental tension, promoting a profound sense of relaxation.

Mindful breathing, rooted in mindfulness meditation practices, is another technique that emphasizes present-moment awareness. It involves paying close attention to each breath, observing the sensations as air enters and leaves the body. Mindful breathing encourages a non-judgmental awareness of thoughts and feelings, allowing individuals to detach from stressors and foster a more balanced perspective on their circumstances.

Box breathing, also known as square breathing, is a structured technique that involves inhaling, holding the breath, exhaling, and holding the breath again—all for equal counts. This method promotes relaxation by regulating the breath and bringing attention to the present moment. It can be particularly effective in high-stress situations, offering a quick and accessible way to regain composure.

Incorporating these breathing techniques into a daily routine can significantly contribute to stress management and relaxation. Whether practiced as part of a morning routine, during breaks at work, or before bedtime, intentional breathing provides a valuable tool for navigating the challenges of life with greater resilience and calmness. As individuals explore and integrate these techniques into their lives, they empower themselves to take an active role in promoting their overall well-being.

With kind thoughts,

Rhonda Anderson

Various NHS Apps and other free Apps are available on Mindfulness, Relaxation and so on.

There are many healthy initiatives and it is worth looking up what your Council offers along the lines of **Park Run, together with Park Walk**. The same 5k route which you choose to run or walk.

Local churches offer **Bereavement** support and local authorities offer Bereavement Cafes. Check London Borough of Redbridge or Waltham Forest websites, according to where you live.

The NHS supports **Weight Control** through Slimming World.

'The group support provided by Slimming World is recognized as effective by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the NHS.' 12th Oct 2020

**Smoking cessation, and Addiction** services can be accessed through Pharmacies and GP surgeries.

**Cancer charities** such as, Macmillan, Marie Curie, Breast Cancer Now, can be accessed online.

Important resources can be found on the internet, but please be sure you are accessing a reliable site. NHS sites and well known cancer charities have correct, helpful and supportive information for patients, families and carers. We cannot list them all here.

Miracle cures and things that sound too good to be true, should be avoided, together with sites asking for money.

Self-help groups for various conditions such as, Diabetes UK, Royal Osteoporosis Society, Eczema UK, etc, can be found on the internet. Many groups have helplines that can be phoned. Or they have online question areas and forums.

Libraries provide some information.

### **Health and Wellbeing area at Rydal**

Not all patients now visit the surgery, but if you do, please look at the front reception area where RPPG have set up a Health and Wellbeing hub of information for patients to access and take away information for their own use.

Any comments on the helpfulness or otherwise of this area, would be gratefully received by RPPG so we can make improvements, for the benefit of patients and staff.

### **Out of hours pharmacy Churchfields**

<https://www.nhs.uk/services/pharmacy/churchfields-pharmacy/FJ842>

If you regularly have paid for **repeat prescriptions**, you can pay a fee in advance and this may be more economical.

<https://services.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/buy-prescription-prepayment-certificate/start>

**Social prescribing** enables GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services to support their health and wellbeing.

How do I access this? Follow this link.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing/>

### **Celebrating Random Acts of Kindness Day - 17 February**

Random Acts of Kindness Day is a reminder of the joy and connection that kindness can bring. Here are simple yet impactful ways to be kind to both yourself and others.

#### **Be kind to your mind:**

- Take a break: Dedicate time to do something you love, whether it's reading, a hobby, or just relaxing
- Self-care routine: Treat yourself to a self-care activity, like a warm bath or a walk with nature

#### **Show kindness to your family, friends and colleagues:**

- Compliment someone: Brighten someone's day with a genuine compliment
- Help out: Offer your time to assist a colleague or neighbour with a task
- Catch-up: Invite a colleague or friend for a coffee or meal to connect and share stories
- Listen: Sometimes, offering an ear to listen can be the kindest act of all

Although 17<sup>th</sup> February will have passed us by this year, (I am actually writing this on the day), why not make every day a Random Acts of Kindness Day?

Surely you will enjoy life more, feel happier and make others happy too!

What could be better?

We wish you a very healthy and happy 2024, and we hope you may wish to contact us, or even join us on RPPG.

Rhonda Anderson

Chair of RPPG on behalf of all members

Remember we represent you at our RPPG meetings with Rydal.