



Growing pains...

There's undoubtedly been a huge increase in patients' expectations of the NHS in recent years and the Pinn Patients' Association hears from many of you who have had difficulty getting an appointment, a repeat prescription or another need met *writes Lis Warren*. At this time of significant expansion, it was perhaps inevitable that there would be frustrations and challenges for patients and doctors alike. The Association has now held discussions with the Partners and we would like to reassure patients that difficulties are being addressed.

Firstly, additional doctors are being recruited to replace those from the Village Surgery who have now departed. Temporary staff have been brought in to help transfer thousands of new records on to The Pinn's IT system. The appointments system is being rigorously reviewed and changes to prescribing arrangements are in hand. New leaflets will soon be available, but here are some key points:

On appointments:

- Phone lines open 8.15am. The automated telephone booking service, which requires date of birth and the telephone number held by the surgery, is open 24 hrs a day
- A percentage of slots are available up to 3 weeks in advance for Partners, 2 weeks for other GPs
- A percentage of appointments are available on the day (not guaranteed to fit in with work/school commitments)
- Medical emergencies are seen on the day, but you may have a long wait
- Register at Reception for online booking (only for doctors, not nurses/blood tests).

On repeat prescriptions:

- Should be requested 5 days before required. Post, fax or hand-deliver requests
- Register at Reception for online requests (very quick, very easy – tuition available!)
- Only housebound patients can request by phone
- Your chemist can request/collect prescriptions if you sign up for this service with them
- GPs review medication regularly. If review is overdue, prescriptions may not be issued
- No new medicines issued without first seeing a doctor
- Some sleeping pills, anti-depressants and painkillers will not be issued without a consultation.

If you do have difficulties, please take this up with the management team not the receptionists or doctors, who only have 10 minutes to deal with your clinical needs. Finally, please call if you need to cancel so that someone else can take your slot.

The Patients' Association would urge you to exercise patience as new arrangements and staff settle in. Let's be grateful for what we have: wonderful facilities, a great range of local services and very talented doctors. If you have suggestions for the Practice, why not email pinnpiper@gmail.com and volunteer to help our Patients' Association...?

Pinn Quiz raises £800



"The Amnesiacs" were the winning team!

Once again this March, the Pinn Patients' Association hosted a very successful quiz and raised £810 – £300 for St Luke's Hospice and the remainder for the Pinn Patients' Association. The competition was fierce and, as in previous years, one of the doctors' teams came last... We all had great fun and there was a great deal of laughter.

Who is YOUR GP?

When you register at The Pinn, it will be under one of the Partners' names. *This is for administrative purposes and does not mean that Partner is your GP.* The surgery will allocate a 'usual doctor' depending on whom you choose to see on a regular basis, but your medical card will show a Partner's name, not the name of your usual GP. Partners cannot physically see all patients – the surgery is considering the use of clinical teams led by a Partner. Patients could then see another member of the team if their usual GP is unavailable.

staff news

The Pinn Medical Centre has never before experienced such a challenging time as that of the past year and staff have never worked so hard in order to provide the best possible care for patients. Some have weathered the storm and some have not and moved on.

We recognise and are thankful for the contributions made by Drs Sheridan and Wong who have now moved to pastures new. Dr Dave has taken up the opportunity of a new life with his family in Dubai, where he will be working for Emirates Airlines. He will be missed by patients and colleagues alike. Sadly, Drs Ghani and Kaye have also decided to leave in order to pursue new careers. We would like to thank them all for their hard work and wish them the very best for the future.

We are however very fortunate to welcome some new salaried doctors to the team. Drs Arti Chandarana, Mathi Woodhouse, Melissa Holz, Giovanna Russo, Geena Kirpalani and Jamila Sherif have all started working at the Practice in the last couple of months. Dr Nitha Patel has now returned following her maternity leave and Dr Nallamala will be joining us in May.

The nursing team has also seen some changes: Practice Nurse Ulrikke Elmakbachi has left to take up a post closer to her home, but I am pleased to say she still wants to help us out occasionally at weekends. She is replaced by Nurse Mary Gill, whom we were delighted to welcome to the team in March. Congratulations are offered to Nurse Mubina Panju, who has completed her training and is now a fully-fledged Practice Nurse.

As I reported in the last Pinn Piper, we needed more receptionists and since then Lisa Wooldridge, Sherrill Powell, Natasha Hayles and Omar Hussein have joined us. They have all settled in incredibly well and very quickly became part of the team – in what you might call a baptism of fire!

I am aware that some patients have also found the last few months difficult, but I would like to reassure everyone that we continue to do everything in our power to provide the best possible service for our patients.

Hilary Scott
Practice Manager

an appointment with...



Dr Arti Chandarana

How long have you worked at the Centre and where did you work previously?

I've only been at The Pinn for 3 months. I did my medical training at The Royal Free Medical School. I was part of the Medway GP Vocational Training Scheme, before covering maternity leave for my small semi-rural training practice. I returned to Harrow this year when I started at The Pinn.

What do you like, and dislike, about your job?

I love being a family doctor – I enjoy the relationship we as doctors are able to build with our patients. I feel it is central to helping me - and the patient - make decisions about their care. The paperwork associated with the job is increasing and sometimes detracts from consulting time with patients.

What makes you laugh?

My friends.

How do you relax after work?

With a good book and a cup of tea.

If you were stranded on a desert island, what 3 things would you like to have with you?

My library, my iphone and internet connection. I'm afraid I may not survive more than a week without communication from the outside world.

What's your favourite film, TV or radio programme?

Favourite TV would be the BBC adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* or *Jane Eyre*.

What's the last book you read?

I'm usually reading a few at a time recently finished *Of Mice and Men* and just about to finish *Sophie's World*.

If you could have dinner with any 3 people, living or dead, who would they be?

Stephen Fry, Colin Firth and Joanna Lumley.

If you were Health Minister for a day, what would you change?

I would make a point of recognising that NHS staff work hard to do the best they can for their patients, despite constraints on their time and resources. The system is not perfect but the fairest solution is that people should get the care they need when they most need it.

NHS Harrow reviews services

Our Primary Care Trust (PCT), via the new GP Clinical Commissioning Board, is currently reviewing urgent and unscheduled walk-in services in Harrow. The PCT told us that they are looking for "ways in which the present system could be improved", linked to the need to make efficiency savings. Consultation is underway: an informal fact-finding survey of residents is being conducted. No timescale is available, but please make your views known to the PCT if you are concerned about the possible loss of access to some of the excellent services we are so lucky to have at The Pinn.

Dr Nicholls Graduates



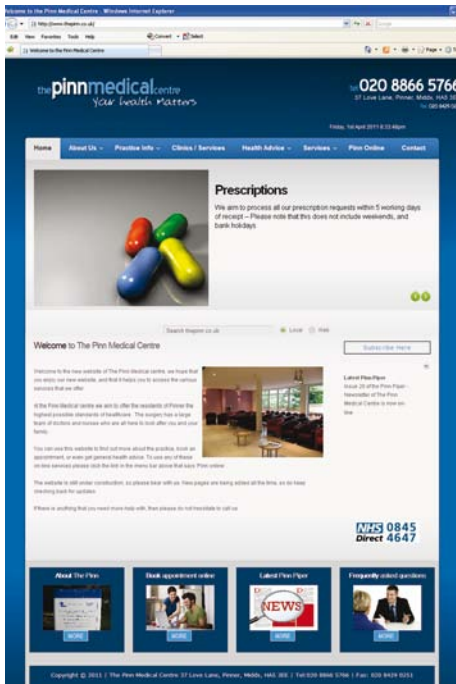
Dr Anthony Nicholls, who recently retired from The Pinn after 34 years, is congratulated by the Marquis of Douro, Chairman of Council of King's College

London, on being awarded an MA in Jewish Studies.

He commented that writing a 15,000 word paper was a big change from his previous writing, e.g. "Dear Dr. This patient has a hernia. Please cure him/her"!

Website updated

Visit the new, improved Pinn Medical Centre website to save time in booking appointments and ordering your pre-prescriptions online. Subscribe to the new electronic newsletter, which will inform you of occasional important information (e.g. closure due to snow!). See www.thepinn.co.uk



Dr John Roberts CBE

One of our patients, Dr John Roberts, was awarded a CBE in the New Year's Honours. John is a Queen's Counsel and judge and he won his award for the Administration of Justice, Diversity and Equal Opportunities. Many congratulations from us all!

The Pinn Piper is edited by Lis Warren and designed by Evie Efthimiou
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What is the Clinical Assessment Service (CAS)?

The Clinical Assessment Service was set up in June 2010 and is run by a group of GPs called Harrow Health Ltd. Their services are designed to arrange care close to home so that you can see a specialist within the Harrow area. These are normally consultants or GPs who specialise, known as GPSIs (GP with Special Interest). Here is a short guide to the process.

What happens to your referral when you see your GP?

GPs now make 95% of non-urgent referrals to the CAS. This means that your referral is sent to Harrow Health Ltd's team to process. A team of consultants and GPs (who are specially trained) assess and prioritise your case. Your referral is either sent to a hospital (secondary care) or to this 'community' to see a consultant or GP specialist. These doctors are the same clinicians who see patients in hospitals but they can see you locally e.g. at The Pinn or Alexandra Avenue.

What happens if your referral is sent to secondary care?

If your referral is sent to a hospital, you will be contacted for an appointment at a hospital of your choice. In some cases, the clinician who assessed your case may refer you to a particular hospital, but this choice can be changed. If you are not available when they have phoned you twice, they will make a provisional booking, but you have the option of changing this if it's inconvenient. You will receive a letter confirming your booking. The service is open: Mon - Fri 9am - 8pm & Sat 9am - 1.30pm (020 8339 7282)

What happens if your referral is sent to the CAS?

If the clinician feels that there are experts who can see you locally, then you will be referred to the CAS administrators who will call you and book an appointment. If you are not in, they will provisionally book an appointment and send you a letter. If the appointment is not convenient, then you have the option of calling the CAS administrators to change the appointment.

What happens if you need tests?

Some specialists require tests prior to your main appointment. These can be organised by the CAS administrators. These referrals can take longer as tests are normally done at hospitals, which can take up to 6 weeks.

What CAS specialties are there – and what's excluded?

Dermatology, Diabetics, Cardiology, ENT, Gastroenterology, Gynaecology, Musculo-Skeletal, Headaches Clinics, Ophthalmology, Urology and Minor Surgery. Exclusions: urgent or cancer referrals are sent directly to hospital, not CAS. These include: rapid-onset Chest Pain, Mental Health & Maternity referrals. GPs have a full guide to the exclusions. The CAS team is also involved in booking follow up appointments and arranging further tests.

Where can I get more information about CAS?

CAS has a Team Leader and Operations Manager to deal with queries – the Operations Manager is Huma Stone (07947 933362 or huma.stone@nhs.net). She will be happy to help with further information about CAS. PLEASE NOTE: Huma can only deal with CAS referral queries – NOT queries about the Pinn Medical Centre!

30 years under Dr Shah – and fit as a fiddle!



As an 80 year old member of British Veteran/Masters Athletics, Nurse Ann Leonhardt suggested that I should write to the Pinn Piper to encourage other 'young' people to participate in sporting activities writes Mr Jaroslav Hanus (pictured).

I registered at The Pinn on 15 April 1980 under the care of Dr Shashikant Shah. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking him for his care and I would also

like to emphasize how much I admire his very wide knowledge of his profession.

As a young man, I was very active in sport so when I was preparing for retirement, it was suggested that I try athletics again. So I did – and after 16 seasons I've won many British Championship titles and over 300 medals, both locally and around the world. During the 2010 season, I was the holder of 9 British records in events such as Hammer Throwing; Weight Throwing; Discus; Weight Pentathlon and Weight Decathlon (all outdoors) and Weight Throwing and Shot Putting (indoors).

So it just goes to show that even 80 year olds are not too old to be physically active!

(Many congratulations Mr Hanus – you put us couch potatoes to shame...! Ed)

what you need to know about...

Travel Vaccinations

With the summer holiday season on the horizon, it's time to leave the winter blues behind. But before you head off to exotic climes, remember your all-important travel vaccinations. After all, you wouldn't want to bring back any unwanted souvenirs... writes *Dr Brian Yim Lim*. Vaccinations help prevent and protect against certain diseases that you are at risk of catching abroad. Some of these diseases can be serious, or even deadly.



It's a good idea to book a travel consultation well in advance of your trip – ideally four to six weeks before you go. The Pinn Medical Centre runs a Travel Clinic where our nurses will be able to offer valuable advice and administer any immunisations that you might need.

We take a look at some common travel-related diseases and what vaccinations are available at The Pinn:

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a virus that spreads through contaminated food and water. Vaccina-

tion is recommended if you are travelling to areas of poor hygiene and sanitation. Immunisation is particularly important if you have any underlying illnesses, or if your sexual behaviour puts you at increased risk. Two doses of the vaccine should protect you for up to 20 years (or 10 years in children, who have a lower dose).

Hepatitis B

This is a highly infectious virus that's spread through infected blood, contaminated needles and sexual intercourse. Vaccination is especially important for anyone travelling for long periods, or those who may be at increased risk, e.g. healthcare workers, those having unprotected sex or anyone having medical treatment abroad. Full protection requires three injections over a 4-6 month period, so it's important to start the immunisations early. There are quicker courses available, but these require a booster after a year.

Typhoid Fever

Typhoid is a bacterial infection that's spread through contaminated food and water. It can cause severe illness, and vaccination is recommended for travellers to countries where sanitation and hygiene are poor. The vaccine provides protection for up to three years.

Yellow Fever

Yellow Fever is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. It's an acute viral disease that occurs in tropical Africa and South America. There is currently a £55 charge for this vaccine (and the essential certificate).

digest this...

- The Pinn Medical Centre now has a register of **18,500** patients.
- At the end of March, there were **1,500** floating (unregistered) patients using the surgery on a 'walk in' basis. The contract to care for ex-Village patients on this basis ended in mid March.

Polio/ Tetanus/Diphtheria

Polio is an acute viral disease spread through contaminated food and water. It is particularly prevalent in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria. Tetanus is an infection acquired through dirty cuts and scratches. The causative bacterium is found all over the world. Diphtheria is an acute bacterial infection that's spread by droplet infection through close personal contact, or in high-risk areas by contact with cattle or dairy products. All children in the UK are vaccinated against these diseases in a single jab. If you haven't received a booster in the past 10 years, have this done before you travel.

Malaria

Malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal parasitic disease. It's transmitted by mosquitoes, usually in hot tropical climates. There is no vaccine and each year, thousands of unwitting travellers return to the UK with malaria, so visit a travel clinic before you go. You should take a course of the correct anti-malarial medication for the region you're visiting, and combine it with effective insect repellents. Use insecticide-treated bed nets when sleeping.

Rabies

Rabies is a viral disease that's almost always fatal if untreated. Present in saliva, it is transmitted in the bite of an infected animal (e.g. a dog or bat). Vaccination is advised if you're travelling to risky areas like the African and Asian continents, and many parts of Central and South America. If you're bitten abroad, you should seek immediate medical attention, even if you've been vaccinated. This vaccine is only available on prescription and requires a course of three injections.

Vaccinations for other diseases such as Cholera, Tuberculosis (TB) and Encephalitis are not normally done at The Pinn, but are available elsewhere.

waiting room gossip

In the hospital, relatives gathered where a family member lay gravely ill. The doctor came in looking sombre. "I'm afraid I'm the bearer of bad news," he said. "The only hope left is a brain transplant. It's risky and I'm afraid you will have to pay for the brain."

The family sat silently till one asked, "How much will it cost?"
The doctor answered "£5,000 for a male and £200 for a female brain."
Things turned awkward. The men tried not to smile. One girl blurted out "Why is a male brain so much more than a female brain?"
The doctor smiled at the childish innocence and explained, "Female brains are cheaper because they've been used."

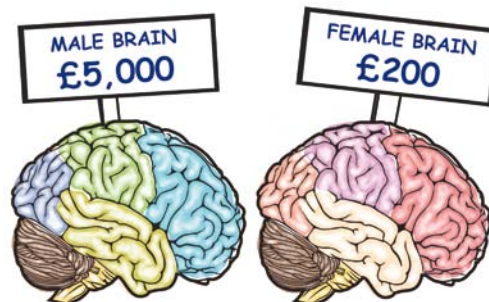


Illustration: Evie Efthimiou