



Can I get this on the NHS?



The newspapers often run stories, sometimes harrowing tales, about people who have been unable to get the treatment they want from the NHS writes *Lis Warren*. To shed some light on what to do if you find yourself wanting a costly treatment, or one that may not be available due to lack of proven clinical benefits, here is a summary of how the Commissioning Groups in North West London make decisions about funding treatments that are not normally funded by the NHS.

A set of policies to help new Clinical Commissioning Groups make decisions about whether treatments can be funded was agreed last year in NHS North West London. These treatments are called **Planned Procedures with a Threshold** or PPwT. A panel of doctors, public health specialists, pharmacists and lay representatives has been set up to decide upon patients' individual funding requests. A request has to come from a clinician, so if your GP or consultant will not support you, then you cannot apply via this route.

Resources are limited so before agreeing to fund certain treatments, Clinical Commissioning Groups must look at evidence for the safety and effectiveness of a drug or treatment, ensure that all people get equal access to treatments, and that patients get maximum benefit from the available funding.

Before you begin the process, check out any national guidelines for your condition via the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) web site - and if you don't have internet access, get a friend or relative to help. A Department of Health spokesperson recently said "**Patients have a right to drugs and treatments that have been approved by NICE and we expect the NHS to provide them if they are needed.**" It is reported however that some NICE guidelines are being ignored, with only two thirds of patients who might benefit from certain drugs receiving them. The postcode lottery is alive and well! For example, osteoporosis drugs are prescribed ten times as often in some parts of the country and heart and stroke drugs twenty nine times more often in others! (Survey undertaken by the Health and Social Care Information Service.) If preparing to make a PPwT application, it's also worth contacting the specialist charities and patient advocacy groups with an interest in your condition, as they will know the basis on which any previous funding has been agreed.

So having reviewed national guidelines, if you then want to request funding for a PPwT:

- * Discuss the matter with your GP or consultant and ask them to make the request;
- * Provide any relevant information, giving permission for the use of confidential details from your records, if appropriate (such information will be treated according to data protection law and handled confidentially);
- * The panel will consider your application, usually within 4-6 weeks, and make a decision;
- * The panel will let your doctor know what's been decided.

If you feel all relevant information has not been considered or the proper process has not been followed, you and your doctor can make a written appeal, but this must be made within 3 months of the panel's initial decision.

By reducing spending on treatments that are not clinically necessary, the CCG can safeguard and continue to do what is essential or urgent.

The most common PPwT procedures are for cataracts, IVF treatments, some hip and knee operations, and varicose veins. *This does not mean that all such procedures will come under this new approach - all cases are different and will be handled individually, depending on your doctor's and other clinical experts' advice.* Your first port of call should always be with your own doctor, who will guide you through the procedure.

More information about NHS North West London's PPwT policy, including a list of which treatments are covered, can be found at www.northwestlondon.nhs.uk/IFR or telephone 020 3350 4242. Good luck...!



Quiz Night

Saturday 5 April 2014
at 7.30pm
St Luke's Church Hall,
Love Lane, Pinner
£7 per person

Nibbles provided (no full supper this year)
Please bring your own drinks

Bookings and information: Jim Bradford 020 8866 6400



staff news

I am delighted to report that since the last staff news, **Dr Leah Keylock** has given birth to a bouncing baby boy named Sebastian Henry. There is nothing like leaving it to the last minute though to start your maternity leave; Dr Keylock left on a Friday and gave birth on the Monday - now that's dedication!

You may have also noticed a couple more 'bumps' walking around the Pinn Medical Centre. Nurse **Mubina Panju** has just gone on maternity leave and is expecting her baby in March, while our Registrar **Dr Hannah Bundock** is hoping to be able to finish her exams before her new arrival makes an appearance! We wish them both lots of luck.

We will be sad to lose **Dr Giovanna Russo** who is leaving in February to spend more time with her family. We wish her all the best for the future.

Although **Dr Naheed Sarwar** and **Dr Priya Moorthy** left their permanent posts here at The Pinn at the end of last year, it is quite likely that you may see them occasionally helping out with some locum sessions. We were glad not to lose them altogether.

Furthermore we are delighted to welcome some new faces to the practice. **Dr Anjalee Jethwa** and **Dr Dina Patel** have recently joined us and we are currently in the process of recruiting two more full-time GPs. **June Elliott** has just joined the nursing team. We would like to wish them all the very best in their new roles.

Finally, congratulations to **Natacha Morar** who has been promoted to Assistant Practice Manager and is now working alongside our other Assistant Practice Manager **Kristina Lewis** who recently returned from maternity leave.

Hilary Scott, Practice Manager

The Pinn Piper is edited for the Pinn Patients' Association by Lis Warren and designed by Joanna Wan
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an appointment with...

Sharon Cranny, Receptionist



How long have you worked at The Pinn and what did you do before?

I have worked at The Pinn for 5 years. Before that I was a Receptionist for the Village Surgery and prior to that I worked in recruitment for a retail company in London.

What do you like and dislike about working at The Pinn?

I like working at The Pinn because it's busy all the time and the people I work with are great. I dislike working so near Marks and Spencer's as I always seem to be in there and it costs me a fortune!

What makes you laugh?

In the nicest possible way the people I work with make me laugh!! I think we have a great team at The Pinn. Even on challenging days we usually find something to smile about.

How do you relax after work?

I don't drive so I walk a lot and find that relaxing and, depending on the day, a glass of wine is very welcome too.

What is your favourite food?

My favourite food has to be Italian.

If stranded on a desert island, what three items would you want with you?

Water, sunscreen and a supply of antibiotics in case I got toothache!

If stranded on a desert island, what three records would you take?

Barbara Streisand for a sing along (nobody would hear me), some club classics from Hed Kandi (nobody to see me dancing), and anything from Pharrell Williams.

What's your favourite film or TV programme?

My favourite films are *The Godfather* trilogy and I'm a huge James Bond fan. On the TV I love watching *Friends* - it still makes me laugh even though I must know all the words!

What was the last book you read?

McCarthy's Bar by Pete McCarthy.

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

My dad, who passed away recently, the actress Jennifer Anniston, and the comedian Michael McIntyre. And if I could squeeze one more person in, it would be the actor David Niven.

What would you do if you were Health Minister for a week?

I would abolish all hospital car park charges as I don't think revenue should be raised from people when they are probably at their most vulnerable.

Walking for Health in Harrow

Has your GP suggested you exercise more? Regular walking can reduce the risk of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, asthma, stroke and some cancers. **Walk Your Way to Health In Harrow**, sponsored by The Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support, is FREE and provides opportunities to walk regularly in a friendly group whilst enjoying our local green spaces. Qualified walk leaders, who will encourage you to walk at your own pace, lead the way. Everyone is welcome regardless of age or fitness level. Walks take place every week in Pinner, North Harrow, Hatch End, Grim's Dyke and more – the full list is available at www.harrowhealthwalks.org or call / text the Walks' Coordinator on 8420 9525 / 07505 11650 for information.



do a 'winter wellbeing' check!

The winter months can feel bleak: short days with little sunshine, cold weather that restricts our activity, the long wait for the next Bank Holiday or break from work or college... You are not alone if you feel blue in the early months of the year, *writes Lis Warren*.

Di Hurley, Lead Occupational Therapist at Harrow Mental Health Service, suggests that we could all benefit from taking a look at a set of evidence-based public health messages known as the *Five Ways to Wellbeing*. They aim to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the whole population and were developed by nef (the new economics foundation) and launched in 2008.

The *Five Ways to Wellbeing* are positive, flexible and non-prescriptive. If you can incorporate more *Five Ways*-type activities into your daily life, evidence suggests that your sense of wellness, both physical and mental, will improve! So what are they?



The Five Ways to Wellbeing

Connect...

With the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. *Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.*

Be active...

Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy that suits your level of mobility and fitness. *Activity may be tough at first but can alleviate depression and anxiety and lift your mood dramatically.*

Take notice...

Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. *Reflecting on your experiences will help you to better appreciate what matters to you.*

Keep learning...

Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. *Learning new things will help you relax, make you more confident as well as being fun.*

Give...

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time (could you help to deliver the *Pinn Piper*?). Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. *Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.*

Since their launch, the *Five Ways to Wellbeing* have been extremely popular. Groups as diverse as GPs and other healthcare professionals, mental health commissioners, arts practitioners, faith groups, community and voluntary organisations and local authority departments have incorporated the *Five Ways to Wellbeing* in their work. Further information is available online at www.nhsconfed.org

Di Hurley says "Getting involved in leisure activities and interests you enjoy can often be the best medicine – these give structure, meaning and purpose to life. Small lifestyle changes can make all the difference to your wellbeing - so have a go!"

getting your vitamin D?

Vitamin D is essential for bone health but recent research also suggests it may have other benefits, such as protecting against colds and fighting depression. Most people get what they need from sunlight and in their diet, but if you don't spend enough time in the sun or if your body has trouble absorbing the vitamin (particularly those who are older or dark skinned), you may not get enough.



Exposure of around one third of the body surface to summer sun for 15-20 minutes 2-3 times a week is likely to be sufficient if you have white skin. People with darker skin require up to 10 times more. Winter sunlight in the UK is not of adequate intensity to produce much Vitamin D, however, that stored during summer is often sufficient to maintain levels during the winter months.

You should also try to eat oily fish, cod liver oil, eggs, fortified breakfast cereal, or fortified fat spreads, and you can take a supplement: 800-1000 iu daily is recommended.

Taxi charity outings end

I would like to say a very big thank you to the staff and doctors who have supported and donated to the NW London Taxi Drivers' Charity over the last few years. Due to issues beyond our remit, the charity is no longer able to function and we have been advised to close it down. However, there remains some money in the account and I am proud to state that £1,687 has been donated to St Luke's Hospice for children's bereavement counselling services. Thank you all for your support.
Geoff Goodman (Fund raiser)



funding for health in Harrow – please lobby!

Although the Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) will receive 2% (£5m) increases in government funding over the next two years, we still have a long way to go to address Harrow's underfunding of some £22m per year according to **Dr Amol Kelshiker** (Chair of the Harrow CCG). He has asked for continued support from our community in lobbying our local MP and government ministers with constant reminders that Harrow is presently the 5th worst funded CCG in the country, as a result of demographic changes and serious underfunding in past years.

Because the pace of change in NHS funding is painfully slow, Harrow CCG will be left with very difficult decisions to make in respect of future funding priorities. Their priorities remain: a system of integrated care, accurate patient information and continued emphasis on quality and safety, coupled with equality of access to clinical services for all.



It is interesting to note that between 2005 and 2012, the NHS budget grew by 18% in real terms but funding for general practice fell by 8.3%. GPs carried out 90% of 'patient contact' in the NHS for just 8.39% of the NHS budget. 80% of GPs say they now have insufficient resources to provide high quality patient care.

The Royal College of General Practitioners has now launched a **Put Patients First** campaign - see www.putpatientsfirst.rcgp.uk Patients' support will be much appreciated.

new consulting rooms

The Pinn is now involved in helping to train more GPs. **Dr Rudolph** supervises a GP registrar - a doctor who is training to become a GP. **Dr Lakhani** supervises a foundation year 2 doctor, who is qualified and using The Pinn to gain more experience in general practice. Converting the present multi-purpose room into two new rooms will create additional consulting space to accommodate these doctors.



Trainees have weekly tutorials and work closely with their designated supervisors who will usually discuss patients with them as needed. They often use a video for their own training and to evaluate their consultation skills, but they will always ask for patients' permission before using the video. *The footage is confidential, and is not used outside the practice.*



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Waiting room gossip



Notes apparently found in medical records (but not, we hope, at The Pinn...)

- I saw your patient today, who is still under our car for physical therapy
- The patient refused autopsy
- Whilst at A&E, she was examined, x-rated and sent home
- The patient has been depressed since she began seeing me in 1993
- Examination of genitalia reveals that he is circus-sized
- Patient has two teenage children, but no other abnormalities
- Patient has chest pain if he lies on his left side for over a year

Fortunately, the *Pinn Piper* has an excellent poof reader.