

Profile of the Longfield Practice

The Location

The practice operates from two sites, three miles apart, in the village of Longfield in the Dartford borough of Kent. Longfield is located ten miles south east of Dartford and near to Gravesend and Sevenoaks. The practice serves a population of patients living in traditional village properties, new housing developments and in the surrounding rural communities. The village is well served for local shops, other facilities and a railway station.

Off-the-beaten track and surrounded by attractive countryside, Longfield is actually only minutes away from the arterial M25 motorway, and the M2 and M20 motorways leading to the Kent coast. The new international railway station of Ebbsfleet, situated only two miles from the practice, has recently opened, providing high speed connections to central London (19 minutes to St Pancras) and the Channel Tunnel (2 hours to Paris).

The area is primarily commuter belt, with good local schools. The prestigious Bluewater shopping centre is within easy reach.

The Patients

The practice provides general medical services to around 17,000 patients in and around Longfield and nearby villages. The socio-economic profile of the patients is mostly middle-class, private home owners with little social deprivation and very low unemployment. The practice list size is stable. The practice list includes a number of patients in nursing and residential homes.

Services to Patients

In addition to general medical services (offered via a traditional General Medical Services Contract), the practice provides the following:

- Antenatal clinics
- Anti-Coagulation
- Asthma services
- Baby clinics
- Child health and immunisation services
- Contraception, including IUD fits
- Coronary Heart Disease care
- COPD care
- Diabetic clinics
- Minor surgery
- New patient health checks
- Palliative care
- Phlebotomy

- Smoking cessation
- Travel vaccinations and advice
- Women's services, including cervical smears
- Wound dressings and ulcer clinics

The practice provides an enhanced diabetic service, overseen by one of the GP partners, and employing a diabetic liaison nurse and diabetic healthcare assistant. Retinal screening and a visiting dietician also provide services on site, as well as a visiting physiotherapist and a counsellor.

A community midwife provides ante-natal and post-natal appointments at the practice. Other community nursing staff are based off site.

Philosophy of the Practice

The practice's philosophy is to provide traditional general practice in an efficiently run practice. The commitment to quality is demonstrated by the practice's achievement of full points in the Quality and Outcome Framework (QOF) of the GMS Contract over the last three years. The partners are hardworking and are keen to promote team-working throughout the practice.

The Partners and the Practice Team

The partnership team is very stable and most of the partners have worked together for many years. The last two partners to join the partnership in 2003 had been previous GP registrars at the practice.

There are nine partners:

Dr David Rebel (senior partner)
 Dr Peter Smith
 Dr Andrew Dott
 Dr Paul Davies
 Dr John Luffingham
 Dr Jeanne Herring
 Dr Yvonne Davies
 Dr Naimish Gandhi
 Dr Susan Pimenta

Each partner takes a lead role in the management and clinical areas of the practice, such as finances, QOF, human resources, practice nurse liaison and IT.

There is also a stable team of staff with relatively low turnover. There are some 35 staff on the payroll, including four practice nurses and a healthcare assistant. The practice nurses are highly trained in chronic disease

management, treatment of minor illnesses and nurse prescribing. The nursing team is managed administratively by the practice manager and clinically by the partners.

A part-time diabetic liaison nurse specialist and a diabetic healthcare assistant are also employed by the practice.

The non-clinical team includes the practice manager, two office managers (one for each site), three secretaries, data entry clerk, summariser, and two teams of receptionists. Many of the staff are part-time and are developing multi-tasking skills.

Training and Education

The practice has been a training practice for at least twenty five years with Dr John Luffingham and Dr Naimish Gandhi being current GP trainers. Dr Luffingham is also Dartford GP Speciality Training Programme Director. At any one time the practice can employ two GP registrars. The Registrar will be expected to work at both the main surgery and branch surgery. Sessions start at 8.30 in the morning. The timetable is ten sessions of forty hours per week including seven clinical sessions, one personal study session, one protected-time tutorial session and one session for attending the half day release course at Darent Valley Hospital Education Centre. Home visits are shared and there is a rota for emergencies during working hours. Clinical supervision will be provided by the trainer but occasionally in his absence by one of the other partners.

The Premises

The two practice premises are of equal size and both owned by the partners. The site situated at 36 Station Road was a residential house which has been converted and extended, with a small doctors/staff car park. Further car parking is available in a supermarket car park opposite the practice. The site situated at New Ash Green comprises purpose-built premises with ample free car parking.

Both premises are open to patients from 7.00am, Monday to Friday. The Ash Green site closes at 6.30pm, whereas the Station Road site closes at 7.00/8.00pm. Patients can be seen at either site as there are telephone and computer links, although they tend to use one or other of the premises.

There is a common room for relaxation at both sites.

Due to the expansion of the practice over the years, the premises at Station Road are somewhat out-dated, with no room for further expansion. The partners have made tentative enquiries about the acquisition of new premises in order to relocate, possibly working with a private developer. The premises

at New Ash Green were purpose built and have ample space for both patients and staff.

Computing and Information Technology

The practice uses the Inpractice Vision 3 clinical computer system and PC terminals are networked throughout the practice. The practice is also connected to the NHS Net. Hospital test results are received on-line. The practice has implemented the "choose and book" system.

The practice is well advanced in computer use being virtually "paperless". No paper notes are used in the consultation and all letters are scanned on to the computer and all diagnoses are coded. The practice has developed protocols and templates to ensure consistency and quality in the management of chronic diseases, to achieve high targets.

The practice has a website which could be developed further. When available, on-line booking of appointments and repeat prescribing requests will be developed in the future. The practice would also benefit from the development of an internal Intranet providing a shared information system.

There is an up to date practice library which Registrars are encouraged to use. Suggestions for new books are welcomed. Naturally, Registrars have internet access from all consulting rooms.