
SUNBURY HEALTH CENTRE UPDATE

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By: Neil Huntingford, Chair, Sunbury Health Centre Patient Participation Group

This month we take a look at how our local Health Centres can work together, focusing on certain aspects of health care, to improve services to patients.

Sunbury Health Centre is now part of a *Primary Care Network* (PCN) working collaboratively on certain projects with:

- Shepperton Medical Practice
- Studholme Medical Centre, and
- Halliford Medical Centre

The aim of our local PCN is to make health services more effective for our communities, to improve the way primary healthcare teams work across the area, and to allow GPs and other primary care health workers to develop new improved models of care for their patients and communities.

Blood Pressure Readings at Home (BP@Home)

Our first PCN joint Project, starting this month, is looking at enabling certain patients with high blood pressure issues to take blood pressure readings at home, and have the results reported to the Practice through a Care Co-ordinator.

The cost of blood pressure 'cuffs' has dropped significantly in recent years, and these will be available on loan from the Practice, if necessary, for those invited to participate in the BP@Home Project.

New software will allow text messaging to patients, inviting them to submit their readings, including via a link.

This will enable the Practice's clinical staff to review significant numbers of potentially high-risk patients more efficiently, whilst still helping those patients who are unable to do their own testing.

Studies in Europe and American have shown that this approach reduced the instances of 'white coat syndrome, leading to more accurate results and appropriate medication. Instead of, as in the past, waiting several weeks for an available appointment, sitting and waiting to see a GP (which for some is stressful), who in turn may only have time available to do a single reading, people can do their own readings in their own time and have the results reviewed more quickly.