

Supporting the NHS frontline



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A breath of fresh air for community health

Asthma sufferers are breathing easier at Dr Ian Greaves' Staffordshire practice. Instead of many patients having to go to hospital for urgent care, the services are coming to them.

The practice developed a new strategic partnership with their local acute trust after NHS Comparators revealed it referred many more sufferers than average for hospital admittance.

"We felt the high number of admissions could be avoided if urgent care services were better," said Ian.

"So we agreed with the trust to bring those services here to the practice."

From January 2008, junior doctors and doctors of registrar level have been based at the practice 6:30pm-10:30pm every evening, including weekends and bank holidays.

They see urgent cases, including asthmatics, as well as hospital outpatient follow-ups.

Ian said: *"Any new patient we refer will be seen by the doctors that evening so we can therefore easily meet the 18 weeks target."*

"The patient is presented to the consultant by the junior doctor, who gets apprentice type training. We are using the doctors who have failed to get onto specialist training posts and therefore they will have a better CV for when they reapply next year."

Four new nebulisers have also been bought for practice and home use.

The practice and trust are working together to improve patient safety for early discharge from hospital after NHS Comparators highlighted a high number of practice patients being delayed in discharge.

This process also streamlined the practice's aim to deliver a more community driven service. Discussions are in progress to integrate community, intermediate care and hospital nurses which will enable hospital care to be delivered at home.

"The NHS Comparators site enabled us to map and plan how we could change from a hospital based to a community based service," said Ian.

"By involving the hospital we did not undermine them; the site really helped them see what we were about."



Dr Ian Greaves, GP, Staffordshire