

The Limes Medical Centre, Epping, Essex

General background Information

Limescare is a pro-active team with a proven track record of multi-disciplinary education and training in partnership with service delivery, making a positive difference to health care. The Limes Medical Centre is the largest practice within the Epping Forest PCT, Essex. It currently serves a patient population of 15,500 and the services offered by the Practice are extensive and varied. The practice became a PMS pilot in October 2000, i.e. Wave 2 pilot.

The external environment in the healthcare arena is constantly changing; changes in governmental policy, revelations in research, and advancement in the information superhighway. As a Practice offering a service to a large customer group our approach to service provision needs to be one of a dynamic organisation. Demands on all areas of the health service remain high and the desire to provide an exceptional standard often put additional pressure on the providers. It is for this reason that the Limes operates a multi-disciplinary team approach in both clinical and non-clinical areas.

The mission of the Limes is to promote and deliver a continuing high standard of Health Care to the practice population in the atmosphere of a learning organisation, and to support this by ongoing development of research, training and education.

We have organised our practice in a way that we feel we can make this mission reality. Our team is made up of a Partnership Board, an Executive Director and an Operations team. The Operations team is composed of a representative of all areas of the practice, reception, secretarial, IT, nursing, physiotherapy and research. Communication is key in the effectiveness of today's organisation. It is a reality that "time is money" and we want our resources to be focused on patient care. We have focused over the past few years on the training and development of clinical personnel and we feel that we have an excellent skill mix within our team. We have, however, recently focused on the non-clinical support of that team and how we can ensure the whole team is "fit" for the future.

The Practice Objectives are laid out in our Practice Strategic Development Plan:

- Establishment of the Limes as an accredited research centre within the Eastern Region
- Effective management of Practice resources
- The provision of *GMS* services in line with patient need - this will include efficient organisation of the practice in order to achieve effective health care provision
- Maintaining the Practice as a training centre for professionals in all disciplines
- Appropriate development of services to meet patient needs

The team's goals are:

Limescare aims to promote and deliver a continuing high standard of health care, including the development of in-house service with an emphasis on prevention through,

- encouraging personal and professional development
- functioning as a well-organised team
- fostering good inter-personal relationships and communication
- encouraging constructive and supportive peer and self appraisal
- attention to morale, personal health and safety of team members

We aim to continue to develop the tradition of training in the practice for all members of the team, whilst maintaining appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes at all levels of the practice team, and to focus on the role of research in modern primary care. Currently four members of the practice are working on master's degrees, alongside considerable in-house training and development. The practice achieved its "Investors in People" accreditation in October 2001.

We aim to achieve the above within the framework of statutory regulations in a setting and climate of financial security and confidence in the future.

Innovation and achievement

LimesCare is a pro-active team with a proven track record of multi-disciplinary education and training in partnership with service delivery, making a positive difference to health care.

Key to the strategy of the Limes is the development of integrated working practises amongst clinical and non-clinical professionals based on prioritised need assessment.

Examples of the ways in which the Limescare team develops its multi-disciplinary approach

1. Ongoing research to support the needs of patients in the primary care setting - the Limes has achieved RGCP accreditation for its Primary Care Research Team
2. Nurse vocational training scheme
3. Development of in-house physiotherapy services
4. Secondary care diabetes and colo-rectal services within the primary care team
5. Nurse practitioner minor surgery
6. Patient teaching and information
7. Health care assistant training practice
8. Macmillan Primary Care Oncology Nurse

All of the above activities are supported or managed by the non-clinical team working alongside clinicians. Assessment, audit, evidence base, financial and operational viability are developed by the non-clinical team through their partnership with clinicians.

The Primary Care Research Team at the Limes is another example of the innovative approach to multi-disciplinary teamwork. The group is nurse led and has the involvement of a GP's, nurses, physiotherapists, and community pharmacists. The research network aims to make research accessible to all those involved in Primary Care.

In the past twelve months it has run a number of courses entitled "Demystifying Research". These have been open to all practice staff along with an invitation to any other practice staff within the PCT.

Thus LimesCare, is a team, which shows initiative, is innovative and works with an integrated multi-disciplinary approach involving patient's health, leisure and social service professionals. This team is based on partnership driven by performance and underpinned by education and training. Three members of our team, a GP, a Practice Nurse and a physiotherapist have, in the past two years, been awarded "Primary Care Research Development Enterprise Awards" to continue their education and research projects.

The Primary Health Care Team adopted a true "business like structure" to facilitate enhanced patient care. Meetings are centred on population issues whilst problems facing the individuals are never lost.

New Approaches to patients

Examples can be seen in the appendices of ways in which patient services and patient care have been improved.

The patients benefit from:

- Highly motivated, disciplined and flexible team approach, responsive to patient needs
- Systematic and organised care for chronic and acute disease management
- Enhanced access to health and leisure care
- All professionals on board including Social Services
- Wide range of in-house services
- Direct patient communication via LimesLink (our patient focus group)
- All activity underpinned by education, training and research

The Limes is a Beacon Practice for the training of Nurse Practitioners. This has given the Practice the ability to:

- Reduce patient wait times for an appointment
- Increase in job satisfaction for GP's, nurses and NP's and reception making for a strong practice team
- Improve morale in the practice

Making the Most of Resources

Our greatest resource at the Limes is our personnel. Limescare have a tremendous skill mix within the clinical team and we are using those skills to provide services to our patients.

For example we have a Nurse Practitioner who carries out a Minor Surgery clinic. With the growing demand and need for minor surgery it became clear that this was a service that needed to be made more accessible to patients.

In order to maximise our internal resources we have an active Education and Training programme:

- 📖 Nurse Practitioner Vocational Training Scheme
- 📖 Health Care Assistant GNVQ Course in collaboration with Anglia Polytechnic University, Chelmsford
- 📖 West Essex General Practice Vocational Training Scheme -
- 📖 Multi-disciplinary approach to evidence based medicine for cardiac and vascular care issues
- 📖 Royal London & Barts Undergraduate Medical Students
- 📖 Regular Multi-disciplinary Clinical Meetings
 - 📖 Research Methods Course in collaboration with the University of Essex
 - 📖 Advanced Nursing MSc Students, Clinical Skills Training, University of Essex
- 📖 Personal professional development planning
- 📖 Diabetic Eye Screening course
- 📖 GP/Pharmacist Regional Health Authority project on Hypertension
- 📖 Ancillary Staff Training Programme
Research

Effective Teamwork

Effective organisations are made up of people working together to achieve a common end. Our multi-disciplinary teams function due to the fact that they are:

1. a group that has a charter and reason for working together

2. members of the group are interdependent - they need each others experience, ability, and commitment in order to arrive at mutual goals
3. committed to working together as a group to arrive at more effective decisions than if working in isolation
4. accountable as a functioning unit within the practice

LimesCare offers an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to health care based on health needs assessment. It involves traditional members of the primary health care team in addition to community pharmacists, optometrists, leisure personnel and social services.

LimesCare is a comprehensive service which breaks down barriers between primary and secondary care and between previously isolated uni-professional individuals whilst, at the same time, maximising the effective use of resources resulting in clear benefit to patients.

Internally our organisation continually assesses its performance and ability to function at maximum efficiency. There are teams created to meet the needs of particular service areas and also teams to operate the day-to-day functions of the practice.

Individuals may be a member of a number of teams and may be lead of one yet a team member in another. For example our Lead Nurse, Joan Carbine is lead of the nursing team and a member of the Diabetic Service team, led by Dr Tareq Abouharb and Dr Andrew Ashford.

All personnel are part of our operations team and the key areas in the functioning of our that team are:

- Regular systems review - ensuring the system is meeting the needs of the Practice and not vice-versa
- Staff development
- Communications
- Information technology
- PR and marketing
- Finance

Our teams operate on clear and agreed guidelines and are constantly examining the feasibility of additional clinical services that will benefit the patient. The practice strategy feeds directly from current NHS strategy in order to ensure the development of services is in line with the national framework, as well as local PCT strategy and framework.

Limescare Key Achievements

"Business-style" structure facilitating integrative care

Three Nurse Practitioners

- ☒ Four Health Care Assistants GNVQ Level 3
- ☒ Nurse Practitioner Minor Surgery Service
- ☒ Exercise Prescription Scheme
- ☒ Cardiac and Vascular Care Clinic
- ☒ Secondary Care Diabetes Service
- ☒ Secondary Care Colo-rectal Service
- ☒ Secondary Care Cancer Services
- ☒ Highly developed Well Woman Clinic
- ☒ Optometry based screening programme for Diabetic Eye Disease
- ☒ Close relationship with Social Services
- ☒ LimesLink - the patient participation group
- ☒ Integration with North Essex Health Promotion
- ☒ Multi-disciplinary Educational and Training ventures
- ☒ Multi-disciplinary Research Course
- ☒ Successful grant applications at Regional and Health Authority levels
- ☒ Men's Health Clinic

Exercise Prescription Scheme

Venue, Epping Sports Centre Easy Health.
(Exercise and secure Your HEALTH)

Epping Forest Leisure has been pleased to develop an Exercise Prescription Scheme with the Limes Medical Centre since 1996. Initially the disease areas for referral were hypertension, stress and obesity. Continuous professional development has made it possible to expand the remit of the scheme to include other areas such as ischaemic heart disease and diabetes.

In 1997 the fitness consultants and premises were assessed and approved by an independent organisation known as the Wright Foundation which is made up of medical and exercise professionals with an aim of assessing quality standards of GP referral schemes nationally.

There is no doubt that the co-operation offered by the Limes Medical Centre has been a key part in developing this service. Integral to this co-operation has been the involvement within the primary health care team. Being part of the team has given the health and fitness consultants the confidence and belief to operate at the highest possible level. This has been clearly reflected in expanding the areas of referral to a wider range of conditions under direct supervision of referring doctors.

As part of the team work approach the sports centre now receives referrals from Nurse Practitioners, Practice Nurses, Pharmacists, Physiotherapists, Dieticians, Mental Health professionals and also wider links e.g., Cardiac Rehabilitation professionals and Midwifery.

As a direct result of links with The Limes Medical Centre the following services are now available.

1. Exercise and Weight Management Course

This course takes the form of awareness talks on subjects such as nutrition, diet, the importance of exercise, overcoming relapse and so on. The course is being developed in conjunction with the practice dietician working hand in hand with the exercise and fitness consultants.

2. Smoking Cessation Clinics

The course consists of awareness talks and analysis of carbon monoxide levels via a smokalyser. One to one and group smoking cessation clinics.

3. Fitness Assessment and Lactate Testing

4. Health appraisal, Well Woman and Well Man Clinic

This will function with health and fitness consultants working alongside General Practitioners.

On the information technology side, Epping Forest Leisure has installed software packages relating to fitness analysis, which enables easy audit of results and transfer of information into client databases at the medical centre.

To summarise, the relationship between Epping Forest Leisure and The Limes Medical Centre has been an immensely fruitful one, allowing growth and development for both sides. The services and options that have become available in such a short time bode well for the future of patient care in this area.

Diabetes - a secondary care service

- Comprehensive provision for all types of diabetes

- A multi-disciplinary approach
- A secondary care service by Primary Care Health professionals
- Practice-based advisory group

Patient involvement

Fully computerised patient records

- Regular audit
- Call and recall register
- Optometry led diabetic eye screening service
- All activity underpinned by education and training

There is a myriad of shared care opportunities within diabetes care. The team has close links with local ophthalmologists, vascular surgeon and diabetologist.

Patient benefits are clear:

- Accessibility of care
- Same professionals consulting them on each occasion
- Systematic records ensuring systematic care
- Clear consensus between team members on management of diabetes
- More time

In partnership with:

North Essex Health Authority
 North Essex Health Promotion
 Essex & Herts Community Trust
 Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow Acute Trust
 Epping Forest Leisure Services
 LimesLink - patient participation group
 Community Pharmacy and Optometry
 University of Essex, Colchester
 Anglia Polytechnic University, Chelmsford
 The Royal London & Barts Dept of General Practice
 Thames Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education