

Brampton and District 50+ Forum

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 October 2017 in Brampton Community Centre. The meeting took place after lunch in the community café. 21 people attended the meeting; there were 4 apologies.

The Chair, Carol Saunders, welcomed members and introduced the guest speakers, Lynne Harte and Erica Turnbull, the nurse practitioners at Brampton Surgery.

The speakers began by describing their varied nursing experience before working in Brampton. They then asked Forum members 'What is a nurse practitioner?' and looked to one of our members, who had been a nurse practitioner 50 years ago, to describe her experiences in the job. All three stressed that they were not surrogate doctors but, first and foremost, nurses. It is not listed as a grade on the nurse and midwifery scale because the job has many variants but nurse practitioners are all educated to at least degree level, some to masters level. Many have then taken further courses: both Lynne and Erica are qualified to prescribe medicines but usually only prescribe for recurring conditions such as constipation or ear ache and so most usually for young or older patients. They are also qualified to assess patients. A key part of their work in Brampton is triage - prioritising treatment. Under the old system in Brampton there used to be an 8:00am telephone free-for-all for same-day appointments. There was no prioritisation so some people who didn't really need to see a doctor - perhaps they just needed a replacement inhaler - were given an appointment to the exclusion of someone who did. Under the new system the patient will speak to either Lynne or Erica so that their needs can be assessed and be more usefully met. Sometimes a patient needs an ambulance, urgently, not an appointment with a GP, and this too can be identified under the new system. The nurse practitioners have 15-minute appointments.

In response to comments and questions from Forum members the guest speakers described some of the stresses within the health service resulting partly from an increasingly aging population and also from a shortage of doctors and nurses. Some of changes being introduced under the 'Integrated Care Community' programme involving better liaison between the health service and social services, links with the voluntary agencies and the local hospital were briefly discussed, as were changes in procedures at A&E.

Several members expressed regret that entry into the nursing profession had become too dependent on academic qualification and suggested that there should be a way into nursing for individuals who had the right personal attributes but insufficient school qualifications.

Carol Saunders thanked the speakers for their interesting talk - it had stimulated plenty of discussion.

In the brief time that remained Ann Oswin made members aware of recent information and leaflets from Age UK about smart meters, keeping warm and staying sharp. These are available on-line at:

www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/mind-body/preparing-for-winter/
www.ageuk.org.uk/stayingsharp

After the meeting refreshments were available in the café.

The Forum will hold a tea party for members on Thursday 9 November 2017.