

NEWSLETTER

Issue 57

SPRING 2022

PPG Committee Members

Sue Stanbridge (Chairman); Mary Chamberlain (Vice Chairman); Joanne Adam (Treasurer); Jane Al-Kailani; Pippa Doran; Ruth Ellis; Elizabeth Malik; Yvonne Massie; Stephen Parris & Fiona Pring.

The aim of the PPG is to give patients an opportunity to become actively involved with the doctors and staff in planning and developing new services and to take an active interest in their own healthcare.



Happy Easter

Surgery Closures

We are sorry but the Surgery will be CLOSED for essential staff training on the following dates:

3rd March from 12 noon

11th May from 12 noon

Opening Hours for Easter

Please remember that the Surgery will be closed on:

Good Friday, 15th April and Easter Monday, 18th April

If you require urgent medical advice during this period, please telephone NHS 111 for assistance.

DON'T FORGET TO ORDER YOUR REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS IN PLENTY OF TIME. ALLOW TWO WORKING DAYS TO COLLECT FROM THE SURGERY AND THREE WORKING DAYS IF YOU ARE COLLECTING FROM A LOCAL PHARMACY



Help us to help you:

Just a reminder that if your phone call is not urgent, you can telephone the Surgery outside of the busy times, which are Mondays—all day and Friday mornings.

- ◆ For telephone calls about prescriptions, please ring between 9am and 2pm.
- ◆ For results, please ring after 2pm.
- ◆ To speak to a secretary please ring between 9am and 12 noon.
- ◆ A routine face to face appointment can be obtained in 2—3 weeks.
- ◆ Patients can ask for a face to face appointment.
- ◆ At least a third of all appointments are now face to face and are normally held in the afternoons.



The new telephone system does inform patients where they are in the call queue as well as offering a call back system.

The call back system allows you to press the option for this. Once a Receptionist is free, the system automatically calls you back and puts you to the front of the queue. the Receptionist is aware that this is a call back.

This saves you time hanging on the telephone waiting for it to be answered.

If a patient on a mobile phone fails to answer, or is busy, a text message will be sent to inform them that they have missed the call.

Telephone Consultations

Due to the unprecedented levels of telephone-based appointments which the practice is being called upon to respond to, we are finding that patients are not always available when they are called by the GP.

Whilst the doctors will try to call again, this causes backlogs to arise, creating further delays for other patients and increasing the workloads faced by our GPs.

In order to ensure that this does not become unmanageable, Kingswood Surgery has implemented the following procedures:

For a missed pre-booked telephone appointment:

- The GP will attempt to call the patient twice. If unsuccessful the appointment will be treated as a patient non-appearance.
- Both attempts to call the patient will be recorded on the patient's EMIS record.
- If the patient subsequently calls, they will be invited to re-book the appointment for another day or be redirected to the practice's eConsult system.
- The patient will not be able to have a telephone consultation with a GP that day.

For a missed triage call:

- The GP will attempt to call the patient twice.
- Both attempts to call the patient will be recorded on the patient's medical record.
- If unsuccessful, in some **very urgent cases** the second call may include a direct request for the patient to call back to the surgery. However, patients should be aware that current wait times can be up to 20 minutes to get through to reception at busy times of the day.
- **Please note**, that once you get through to reception, it may not be possible to have your call forwarded to the GP at that time, as they may be conducting another appointment with another patient.
Patients who call back having missed their calls from the GP, but have not received instructions to call back, will be asked to call the following day or use eConsult as an alternative option.

What is an eConsult?

eConsult is a clever bit of software that allows you to quickly and safely get help and advice from your GP. It is a form-based online consultation and triage platform that collects your medical or administrative request and sends it through to your GP practice to triage and decide on the right care for you and everyone else.

eConsult is available to use any time, day or night, from any device connected to the internet. There is no need to wait in a phone queue or visit the practice. It takes just 3-4 minutes to complete an eConsult and the practice will get back to you by the end of the next working day or sooner.

6 easy steps:

1. Log on to the Kingswood Surgery website www.thekingswoodsurgery.nhs.uk and click on the econsult box at the top left of the welcome page.
2. Complete the questionnaire about your problem or request and submit the form.
3. Once your form has been submitted, it will go either to your own GP, if available, or to the duty GP and will be placed on your personal medical record.
4. You will then be put on the triage list. Following triage, if the GP decides that there is an urgent need for you to either see or speak to one of the medical team you will be called back by the end of the day.
5. If, however, the matter is regarded as routine, you will be contacted within the next 48 working hours, but may be sooner.
6. You can do a 'practice run' to see how it works; but simply not submit it.

Give it a try!



Tinnitus Awareness

If you've ever wondered what tinnitus is, sufferers hear a variety of noises that are not caused by external sounds. It is estimated that over 30% of people will experience tinnitus during their lifetime, and around 13% (1 in 8 people) live with tinnitus on a persistent basis.



The British Tinnitus Association supports sufferers of tinnitus. Help is available Monday to Friday (9am till 5pm, excluding public holidays). You can access support via phone, email, text or web chat, but if you need medical advice, you'll need to contact your GP instead.

<https://www.tinnitus.org.uk/all-about-tinnitus>

Heart Month

February was Heart Month. So, what does that mean? It's all about raising awareness of



heart issues and making sure that they are at the forefront of our minds. The British Heart Foundation is 60 years old, and has funded vital research and supported many thousands of families.

In the 1960s over 7 in 10 heart attacks were fatal. Now, thanks to improvements in treatment and research, over 7 in 10 people who have a heart attack survive. An increase in the number of people who know how to perform CPR helps to improve the survival chances of anyone suffering a heart attack. Would you know what you need to do? If you've not been trained in CPR, or it's been a while, The British Heart Foundation has a brilliant guide to point you in the right direction should you ever need it.

<https://www.bhf.org.uk>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/how-to-save-a-life>

Keeping active when you don't feel like it



Sometimes, when it's cold and grey, or when you're not on top form, you might prefer to skip the exercise. Keeping active in our daily lives is the best way to stay fit and healthy long-term.

It's important that keeping active works for you in your daily life. Starting an exercise plan is brilliant, but it's important to make sure it's sustainable. The NHS offers advice on how to get fitter in ways to suit your needs and lifestyle. Keeping fit can help to reduce your risk of developing a number of serious conditions including heart disease, diabetes and stroke.

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeand...or-ever-25-tips-keep-exercising-expert-advice>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-active-your-way/>

Depression

We tend to think of depression as a problem that some adults have. Children and young people can suffer from depression too, and recognising the signs early could have a positive impact on their lives. Changes in their temperament, sleeping patterns and eating habits may be signs that this is something your child is struggling with.

Diagnosing depression is something only a professional can do, but if you have felt down or you're struggling to enjoy life, it's possible that you are depressed. The NHS has a tool that can help you to establish whether you might be suffering from depression.

If you are depressed, it's vital that you seek support. If you're already receiving appropriate treatment from your GP or psychiatrist, you may find that joining a support group of people who understand can also help.

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/ch.../advice-for-parents/children-depressed-signs/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/clinical-depression/support-groups/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/clinical-depression/overview/>

International Prenatal Infection Month

February was International Prenatal Infection Prevention month. Pregnant women and their unborn babies are more at risk from many infections.



While you can't avoid all risks during pregnancy, and most infections are not likely to cause serious consequences, it is a good idea to reduce risk where you can. Tommy's has some good advice to offer.

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/infections-that-may-affect-your-baby/>
<https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/pregnancy-complications/infections/infections-pregnancy>

Childhood obesity

Almost a third of children aged 2 to 15 are overweight or obese. If you're not sure whether your child is a healthy weight, the calculator provided by the NHS can help you to check. Unlike adults, children are measured against centiles rather than BMI, and the calculator uses an easy to understand graph to show you where your child sits on the chart.

If your child is overweight, there are a number of steps you can take to help them as they grow. The NHS advocates appropriate healthy eating and exercise to ensure you stay healthy for life.

If you have a child who is underweight, what can you do to help them attain a suitable weight for their age and height? The advice varies depending on the age of the child.

Whether your child is underweight, or overweight, helping to set healthy eating habits in childhood can help them with their long term health.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/health.../very-overweight-children-advice-for-parents/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/childrens-weight/>

Children and their safety and wellbeing

As technology advances and becomes more prevalent in our everyday lives, how can we make sure our children are supported to stay safe online? Internet Matters was founded in 2014 by some of the UK's biggest internet service providers to help us keep our children safe online.

Many young people report that the internet and social media are a major source of pressure in their lives. Try as we might to keep things light and easy for our children, stress is becoming more prevalent in younger people. The Children's Society has brilliant advice for supporting your children in all aspects of their lives.

<https://www.internetmatters.org>

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/information/young-people/well-being/resources/stress>

Sexual abuse and consent

The NSPCC want to make sure all children are kept safe throughout their lives. One of the ways that you can help your



children to stay safe is to talk to them about the pants rule. The pants rule makes it clear to children that they can say no to someone who asks to see or touch the parts of the body that their pants cover. Using language that is easy for children to understand, this helps to start a difficult conversation.

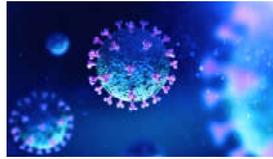
If you have older children and young adults, talking about consent is really important for both boys and girls. Young people need to know that consent is vital in any relationship or sexual encounter. Consent is everything has a brilliant video about tea, which explains the concept of consent really simply using tea as an analogy.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/pants-underwear-rule/>
<http://www.consentiseverything.com>

DID YOU KNOW?

Covid Vaccinations

As covid 19 remains highly infectious, we need to continue to take steps to keep ourselves and others around us safe from the Omicron variant.



Two vaccines and a booster give you the best possible protection against the virus, and should significantly reduce your risk of serious illness and hospitalisation should you catch Covid.

But even though Omicron continues to spread, some groups and individuals are wary about getting their booster jabs, while others are yet to have their first two vaccinations.

Those who are unsure have understandable reasons for being hesitant, including concerns about the safety or efficacy of the jab, or a phobia of needles.

If you remain uncertain, it's always worth reminding yourself of the official figures; shortly after having a booster you are at least 85 percent less likely to end up in hospital than if you are unvaccinated.

Furthermore, as of December, more than a million people in the UK were experiencing long-term effects of covid 19.

In short, it's just not a risk worth taking. Getting your vaccines and booster takes minutes. It can take far longer to recover from Covid.

Now is a good time to remind ourselves that we are doing this not only to protect ourselves but to protect our loved ones and those around us too.

At the time of going to press vaccinations and boosters are available at The Camden Centre, Tunbridge Wells

[https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site/profile/G6D1M-1?](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site/profile/G6D1M-1?UserLatitude=51.133331701130643&UserLongitude=0.26353361966264577)

[UserLatitude=51.133331701130643&UserLongitude=0.26353361966264577](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site/profile/G6D1M-1?UserLatitude=51.133331701130643&UserLongitude=0.26353361966264577)

Vaccination sites will welcome anyone, including those who still need their first, second or booster vaccines.

Better health for all

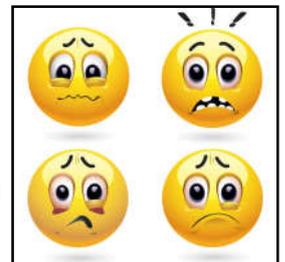
The Better Health campaign is encouraging people to lose excess weight, eat more healthily and be active as we begin the new year.

From reducing the risk of serious diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and up to 12 types of cancer, to lowering the chances of being hospitalised with Covid-19; the multimedia campaign highlights serious health conditions that could be prevented by losing weight and offers free support and guidance to achieve this goal.

[The Better Health website](#) has lots of free tips and tools to help people get started. Anyone can download the free NHS Weight Loss Plan to help with healthier eating, being more active, and losing weight.

Feeling down or low, stressed or anxious?

If the dark winter days and the Covid-19 pandemic are putting an extra strain on your mental wellbeing, don't forget there are services in Kent and Medway to support you.



Taking care of you and your family's minds, as well as your bodies, and feeling good on the inside, continues to be important at this time. Visit our [mental wellbeing information hub](https://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/mental-wellbeing-information-hub/safe-havens-kent-and-medway) at <https://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/mental-wellbeing-information-hub/safe-havens-kent-and-medway> to find out about the services to help you look after your mental health, whatever your age you are. It's OK to ask for help

Vitamin D – The sunshine vitamin

Many of us will be longing for those lazy summer days to return however did you know that it's the sun that provides you with most of your vitamin D not food? You make the most vitamin D under your skin whilst outside in the middle of the day in the summer months (between April and October). Vitamin D works with calcium and phosphorus for healthy bones, muscles and teeth. Some foods do provide a dietary source of vitamin D including fortified foods, oily fish, egg yolks, meat and offal. Even with the healthiest diet you cannot achieve an adequate intake by food alone. Strong sun also burns the skin, so we need to balance making vitamin D with being safe in the sun. Cover-up or use sunscreen before you skin turns red or burns. Everyone is recommended to take a supplement, especially during autumn and winter. Some at risk groups such as those over 65 or some people with darker skin tones are recommended to take daily vitamin D supplements all year round. If you are concerned you are not getting enough vitamin D, speak to your doctor.

DID YOU KNOW?

Self care

There are many minor illnesses you can treat at home, without needing to wait for a nurse or GP appointment. If you think you may need to see a GP to access treatment for a minor ailment, it's worth checking here to see whether you can buy medicine over the counter.

If you feel poorly, a well-stocked medicine box can be a real source of relief. Having medicines to hand means you can treat symptoms faster and don't have to go out when you're feeling ill. What should you keep in your medicine box?

We want to make sure all our patients get the care they need, when they need it. The North West Ambulance Service have spent some time thinking about who can best help you and how, and have put together this handy information, so you know who to call.

Do you know when you SHOULD call an ambulance? With lots of discussion in the press about how stretched the ambulance service is, would you know when to do it? You should call an ambulance when someone is in need of time-critical, life-saving help.

<https://www.westleicestershireccg.n...nd-your-medicine/self-care-for-minor-ailments>

<https://www.westleicestershireccg.n...at-should-you-have-in-your-medicines-box/file>

<https://www.nwas.nhs.uk/get-involved/campaigns/make-the-right-call/>

<https://www.yas.nhs.uk/our-services/emergency-ambulance-service-999/when-should-i-call-999/>

Where can you get help?

Sometimes calling 999 might seem like the easiest option but it should only be used in life-threatening emergencies. Calling 999 when it's not an emergency could take essential help away from someone who really needs it.

Choosing the right service will help you and your family get the best treatment. Use our thermometer below as a guide to help you make the right call about your healthcare and visit the [NHS website](#) to find a service near you.

