



# VSG PPG

Village Surgeries Patient Participation Group



TATTENHALL & FARNDON NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2023 ISSUE 22 email – [vsg.ppg@nhs.net](mailto:vsg.ppg@nhs.net)



## Message from the new Chair of our VSG PPG



My name is David Williams and I'd like to introduce myself as the new Chair of The Village Surgeries Patient Participation Group (VSG PPG). I've been a patient at the Practice since 2010 following our move from Chester. I have been involved with the PPG since 2020 and I am delighted to be taking up the Chair along with a new Vice Chair, Jan Fereday-Smith and Secretary, Janet Foster. I do not have a background in health provision; I'm a retired Chemical Engineer who spent my career in the manufacturing industry. For many years I lived abroad with my family, so I hope to bring some perspective of what health provision looks like in other countries.

Without a medical background, I do bring a lot of curiosity and I have a passion for ensuring that, as patients, we make the most of the services available to us and that our voices are heard. In these challenging times for the NHS and, as a rural practice, it is critical that the PPG is a supportive community voice which works closely with the Practice to ensure the future stability for The Village Surgeries Group. We must seek to identify patients' needs and, together with the Practice, identify solutions to deliver those needs. We can see what patients see; what might appear to work in the eyes of the Practice may be viewed from an altogether different perspective by patients. This 2-way process allows us to work with the Practice to identify possible solutions.

Looking back at 2023, our main focus was the Patient Survey. The survey results will continue to guide our efforts in 2024 but the clearest message was dissatisfaction with the 8am booking rush. This required urgent action and we worked with the Practice to implement a new process. I'm delighted that this seems to have helped patients and receptionists in equal measure. Communication is our key purpose, and a regular quarterly Newsletter will continue to be our primary channel. We will also continue to work with the Practice to support patients getting online with the NHS App; amongst its uses I personally find it the easiest way to order repeat prescriptions. It remains a goal to make our PPG more representative of our overall patient population and although we are a young at heart and vibrant group, we are looking for ways to encourage some new members, particularly younger patients to join us. So, if you feel passionately that you can make a difference to our patient community, we would love you to join our group. Our very 'upbeat' meetings are at 6.30pm on the second Wednesday of every month, alternating between on-line via 'Zoom', and face-to-face at locations both in Farndon and Tattenhall. Details of upcoming meetings are printed in this newsletter. If you would like more information, please don't hesitate to contact me by email - [vsg.ppg@nhs.net](mailto:vsg.ppg@nhs.net)

Thank you and kindest regards for Christmas and 2024, David Williams

**DON'T DELAY  
BOOK TODAY**

**The Shingles  
National  
Immunisation  
Programme**



Have you turned **70**  
but not yet **80** years of age?

If so you are eligible for your shingles vaccination now



As you get older shingles can be very painful and really affect your quality of life. **Contact your GP practice about having your shingles vaccination.**



**Shingles is a condition that causes a painful itchy rash that tends to develop on one side of the face or body. The rash consists of blisters that typically scab over. It can sometimes lead to serious problems such as long-lasting pain, hearing loss or blindness.**

From September 2023, NHS England introduced the Shingrix Vaccine which comprises two doses and which helps protect against shingles.

The optimal time between the Shingrix doses is 2-6 months but for immunocompromised adults, a shorter interval of 1-2 months can be followed.

The shingles vaccine is available on the NHS for free and to:

- people aged 50+ with a severely weakened immune system (severely immunocompromised)
- people who turned 65 on or after 1 September 2023
- people aged 70-79

If you get shingles after being vaccinated, the symptoms can be much milder. The sooner you have the vaccine, the sooner you will be protected so don't delay!

Just check your eligibility and ring the Practice to book your first dose appointment.

Following your first dose, you should make a note to book your second dose. The nurse will advise you when to book an appointment for the second dose. The Shingrix is a non-live vaccine and you will need 2 doses for the best, longer-lasting protection. Whilst the Practice is likely to contact you to receive your second dose, it's always best to try and take responsibility for your own health too.

For more information, follow this NHS link <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/shingles-vaccination/>



# Self-Care and Signposting



## Tips for SELF CARE over CHRISTMAS

Self-care is particularly important over the Christmas and New Year period. Of course the holidays can be great fun – many of us will have time off work and we are likely to spend time with families, partners and friends. **BUT** the 12 Days of Christmas can also be very difficult for all sorts of reasons including financial pressures, social anxiety and the amplification of loss, pain or loneliness. If you need emotional or practical support at this time, your Social Prescribing Link Workers are here to help. Below is a sample list of contacts which signpost you to what's available in Cheshire West and in Wales.

### CHESHIRE WEST

- CWP Urgent Mental Health Helpline (open 24/7) - 0800 1456 6485 <https://www.cwp.nhs.uk/getting-help/need-urgent-help>
- Cafe 71 - a safe, non-clinical space for anyone who is struggling to cope in a crisis - <https://www.spiderproject.org.uk/cafe71>. Individuals can drop in or call them on 01244 2393139 (they are open 10am-10pm, 365 days a year)
- Mentell (Men's mental health charity) - <https://www.mentell.org.uk/> (also covers patients who live in Wales)
- Tomorrows Women - Offers support for women - <https://www.tomorrowswomen.org.uk/tomorrows-women-chester> - anyone can pop in or call them on 01244 906494 (they have a brilliant timetable of workshops and groups – they are amazing!)
- Womens Aid - Support for women who are worried or experiencing domestic abuse - 0808 2000 247 - <https://chesterwomensaid.org/>
- Kidsbank - needs a referral, but your Social Prescribing Team can do that (unless it's for nappies or toiletries, then a self-referral is fine via their website) - <https://kidsbankchester.com/>
- Foodbank (various locations) - you can get a food bank in numerous ways (Citizens Advice, HELP scheme and Social Prescribing Team), but a good generic number is the Help Through Hardship number (run by the Trussell Trust) - 0800 2082138 (this covers Wales too) <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/help-through-hardship-helpline/>
- CWAC Help Scheme - local welfare assistance for people in emergencies (can also help with food bank and other essential funding) - <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/benefits-and-welfare-help/help>
- Silverline - Run by Age UK and provides a free, confidential telephone service for older people. They offer friendship, conversation and support 24/7 (and on Christmas Day) <https://www.thesilverline.org.uk/> 0800 470 80 90 (this covers Wales too)
- Forfutures - help for homeless or at risk of being homeless - <https://forfutures.co.uk/> - 0808 175 3595

### WREXHAM (we've included these numbers, particularly for patients living in Wales)

- C.A.L.L (confidential listening and support service) open 24/7 - 0800 132 737 (or text "Help" to 81066 <https://bcuhb.nhs.wales/health-advice/mental-health-hub/c-a-l-l-helpline/>)
- Discretionary Assistance Fund - Support with financial hardship - <https://www.gov.wales/discretionary-assistance-fund-daf> (self referral)
- Housing Options (if you are homeless or at risk of being homeless) - 01978 292947 <https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/services/housing/homeless-or-risk/help-and-advice>
- Domestic Abuse Safety Unit (DASU) - 01978 310203 <https://dasunorthwales.co.uk/services-what-we-do/> (for males and females)

We might all need additional support when we least expect it and through no fault of our own. So, whether it's a daily walk, jog or swim, creating space for a mindfulness session, reading a book, finishing a jigsaw, fixing a time to see your friends and have a conversation, try and plan some time for yourself.

*Our thanks to our Social Prescriber, Claire Lockerbie, in providing such valuable information.*







# ARE YOU WINTER READY?

The cold winter weather is here ...



Is your medicine cabinet **WINTER READY?**

- Paracetamol
- Ibuprofen
- Anti-diarrhoea tablets
- Cough syrups
- Indigestion remedies
- Rehydration salts

- Make sure you have had your free flu and Covid-19 boosters if you are eligible
- Ensure you have ordered Repeat Prescriptions in good time. If you have a Repeat Prescription that you will need over the festive period, the last date to request this is Monday 18 December
- Stock up on over-the-counter medicines and supplies
- Keep warm and hydrated
- Avoid slips, trips and falls – wear good fitting non-slip footwear
- Keep moving – whether indoors or getting outside for short walks
- Make time for yourself and your own wellbeing. Self-care is also important!
- Know that you can speak to your Community Pharmacist about lots of minor conditions and ailments without the need to visit your GP
- Continue to contact the Practice about any worrying symptoms
- Use NHS 111 for advice on the most appropriate service for you
- Only use 999 for life-threatening conditions

**Personal winter plan**

- Keep an eye on elderly or frail friends, neighbours and relatives.

LET'S TALK WINTER

the lullaby trust

**Visiting a new baby?**

**T · H · A · N · K · S**  
Think · Hands · And · No · KisseS

Icons: Hand being washed (checkmark), Lips (cross)

**CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OPENING HOURS**  
For information and advice regarding what to do when the surgery is closed please visit our website.  
<https://www.thevillagesurgeriesgroup.co.uk/when-we-are-closed>

**DRY JANUARY**  
by Alcohol Change UK

**ARE YOU IN?**

And when the Christmas and New Year celebrations are over .... Don't forget that the month of January embraces the annual health campaign that encourages people to abstain from alcohol for the entire month of January. It's a voluntary challenge that has gained popularity worldwide as individuals commit to starting the new year with a fresh, alcohol-free perspective.

DATE	TATTENHALL	FARNDON
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> December 2023	8.00am - 6.30pm	8.30am - 5.30pm
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	CLOSED	CLOSED
Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	CLOSED	CLOSED
Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	8.00am - 6.30pm	8.30am - 5.30pm
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	8.00am - 6.30pm	8.30am - 5.30pm
Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	8.00am - 6.30pm	CLOSED
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2024	CLOSED	CLOSED

## Meet Your Community Pharmacist Manager



Holly Wood is a good 6 months into her new role as our Community Pharmacist Manager in Tattenhall and most recently she took time out to have a chat with this member of the Patient Participation Group (PPG). If you've had no reason to visit the Well Pharmacy on Tattenhall High Street, then you may know nothing of Holly.

Originating from Lancashire, qualifying in Liverpool and having worked in a variety of roles both at hospital pharmacies and in the community, Holly lives with her blended family (*that's her partner, 4 children and two dogs*) right here in the village. She frequently runs 3-4 miles before work, walks the dogs, loves to cook and to spend time with her family and is simply loving her new role within the village.

Keen to invest in her professional development, Holly is also a qualified Independent Prescriber. With the demands of winter facing all communities, Holly outlined some of the most recent challenges which confront Community Pharmacist Managers such as herself.

Administering this season's Covid-19 seasonal booster has been fully embraced by Holly. She has been acutely aware that for those residents with mobility issues and/or who have no available transport then, on this occasion, no other local provision has been available. At the time of writing, Holly was delivering 150-200 Covid-19 seasonal boosters weekly. And, of course, this is extremely time-consuming and time-sensitive; management and handling of Covid vaccines is strict. Vaccines are delivered, are checked, are stored and are monitored in a designated fridge. They have a defined shelf life, and have to be drawn up and prepared from individual vials, with safe disposal of punctured vials and any remaining unused vaccines after 12 hours.

Mindful that when patients visit the Pharmacy they are a 'captive audience', Holly has also offered extra services to the community since signposting to Pharmacists has been a key NHS initiative in recent months. Holly has also administered just less than 500 flu vaccines and, at the same time, offered blood pressure monitoring too.

Holly admits that her role in Tattenhall has been a swift learning curve, not least because the IT systems of a new company which deals with a central hub have been quite different to her previous roles. She has prioritised this and the Well Pharmacy model. Holly processes everything herself before drug requests are sent to the central hub at Stoke. In addition, she individually manages fridge line drugs, controlled drugs and any shortages.

Holly cannot praise the local community enough who have been extremely welcoming, supportive and tolerant. She praises her fantastically enthusiastic team, including Kev the driver, and admits that they are collectively offering a seamless service with everyone doing everything within their capabilities and some, not least Helen, who have years of experience under their belt. Nikki, of course, with her ready smile is a hit with everyone and, in addition, Holly has already recruited a new member to her team, Becky, a Qualified Dispenser.

Understandably Holly and the team make it look easy but be under no illusion. Being at the front line in the community is emotionally exhausting, not least with seasonal demands. Holly is insistent on a life work balance for herself and for her terrific team – a happy team is a successful team!

So, next time you have reason to call at the Well Pharmacy, take a breath and consider how many plates individuals such as your Community Pharmacist Manager are spinning on a daily basis for the benefit of us all.

*Terri Hull, Patient Participation Group.*



Please remember to utilise the knowledge of your local pharmacists; they are there to help and provide advice.



## Update from Claire Lockerbie our Healthbox Social Prescriber.

GPs tell us that many people who visit them can feel lonely, stressed by financial issues and employment or are struggling to lose weight or stay active. There is no pill to fix these issues so we can help connect you with the right help, in the right place, at the right time.

### "It starts with a conversation"

Social Prescribing can help to support people with the social issues that affect their health and wellbeing, so if anyone is struggling with the cost of living, finances, employment, housing, support for being a carer, low level mental health (*including anxiety, low mood and stress*), loneliness and isolation, or if they simply want to be connected to groups in the community, then we will be happy to support them.

Please speak to a receptionist at the surgery for more information.

Monday: Chair Based Yoga Malpas

Tuesday: Talking Tables Kelsall Wellbeing Hub  
Healthbox Healthy Hearts Tattenhall

Wednesday: Wellbeing Walk & Brain Yoga Tattenhall

Thursday: Chatty Café Tarporley

Friday: Brain Yoga Kelsall

Please contact reception for more information regarding attending these group activities!

## CONSENT OR PROXY ACCESS

### YOUR CHOICE ... YOUR PERMISSION

Did you know that you can choose to give another person consent to speak to a member of the Practice about your health or provide them with proxy access to your online services on your behalf.

YOU choose to whom YOU wish to give access.

By way of example, this could be your partner, parent, another family member or a carer. Up to two people can be given consent or proxy access if you wish.

Giving consent or proxy access to another person is YOUR choice.

No-one can go to your GP surgery and discuss YOUR health needs or access YOUR online services without YOUR permission.

You can also choose which online services you want your proxy to use such as booking appointments, ordering repeat prescriptions and looking at your GP record.

YOU can remove the consent or proxy access if you no longer need it.

If this is something that you have been considering or wish to put in place, then contact the Practice and one of the team will help you with the necessary paperwork and permissions. Further information and forms can be found here [Additional Patient Information - The Village Surgeries Group](#)

Do you need to help an adult manage their healthcare?



### WHY GIVE ANOTHER PERSON CONSENT OR PROXY ACCESS?

1. You find it more difficult to look after yourself, perhaps due to age, memory issues or speech difficulties
2. You have a long-term health condition and require extra support to manage it
3. You'd like some support with checking test results, ordering repeat prescriptions and understanding your treatment
4. You have learning difficulties and want someone else to help you understand your health issues



Please email [vsg.ppg@nhs.net](mailto:vsg.ppg@nhs.net) for more information about becoming involved with the VSG Patient Participation Group.

Future Meeting Dates - all from 6.30pm

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January – Zoom

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February – Tattenhall – Vault St Albans

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March - Zoom

