

Holbrook Surgery Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Holbrook Surgery Newsletter

Winter

January 2024

Welcome to the first issue of the 2024 Newsletter

On behalf of the doctors, staff at the Surgery and your PPG Committee can we wish you a very happy and healthy New Year



Hopefully you found our 2023 newsletters and email updates helpful. In October, we held our first Open Evening at the surgery. Over 30 patients came which exceeded all our expectations. There is clearly a lot of interest in what is going on and patients wanting to support the surgery. We were also very pleased to have our Practice Manager, Lisa Ellis, the surgery's Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Lisa Jelley, a number of the new Social Prescribers, and the Health and Wellbeing Coach.

As a result of the Open Evening, we have three new Committee members and in

future we will be holding our committee meetings at the surgery which Lisa Ellis is also going to attend for part. Our first meeting of the new Committee is planned for later this month.

We asked the Social Prescribers and the Health and Wellbeing Coaches who came to the meeting if they would provide us with more information about what they do and to give us examples of their work with patients. They have done this, and we are really pleased to attach this as a supplement to this Newsletter. We thought it might be useful to invite other new health professionals to do this and we hope to be able to have further supplements to explain their roles.

We would be really interested to know if you would like further meetings and if there were any particular subjects you would like us to cover. Do please let us know if you have any thoughts or ideas about this.

As always if you know of friends or family who are patients of Holbrook Surgery and would like to receive the newsletter, please contact us on holbrookppg@gmail.com.

Melanoma Support Group

One of our members, Neil Harrison, is the Treasurer of the local support group **MelaNoMore** which has been set up to help anyone affected by Melanoma. He has asked us to bring this to your attention. Here is the link for information about the group <https://melanomore.net>

URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT MEASLES

An estimated 60,000 children were unvaccinated by their second birthday last year. There has been a drop in MMR vaccinations rates in England compared to pre-Covid pandemic levels. NHS advice is all children to have a dose by the age of one. Measles cases have risen sharply, with 149 confirmed between January and September 2023 - compared with 54 for the whole of 2022. Parents and carers are urged to check that their children are up to date on their vaccinations.

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Problems getting your prescriptions from your local pharmacy?

We know that there are real problems at the moment. People are having to queue for a long time often to find that either their drugs are not in stock, or they can only be offered a small amount of what they have been prescribed. This is a national problem not a local one. There are currently difficulties about supply, there is a shortage of pharmacists, and there are also issues about NHS funding. At the same time pharmacists are being asked to take on more to relieve the pressure on GPs – see below the item about this.

As a PPG, we believe that for repeat prescriptions, the best advice is to seriously consider using one of the online pharmacies which do NHS prescriptions. A number of us are already using one and all our experiences have been positive. All you do is request a repeat prescription on an app you download on your mobile/device. Everything is then done for you and usually within a week your drugs are delivered to your home through the post. There are no additional costs, and it is completely hassle free. The NHS website lists four online pharmacies which deal with NHS prescriptions please look at the following links for further information.

Boots <https://www.boots.com/online/pharmacy/>

Hey Pharmacist <https://heypharmacist.co.uk/>

Lloyds Direct <https://www.lloydsdirec> [HYPERLINK "https://www.lloydsdirect.co.uk/"](https://www.lloydsdirect.co.uk/) [HYPERLINK "https://www.lloydsdirect.co.uk/"](https://www.lloydsdirect.co.uk/) [.co.uk/](https://www.lloydsdirect.co.uk/)

Pharmacy 2U <https://www> [HYPERLINK "https://www.pharmacy2u.co.uk/"](https://www.pharmacy2u.co.uk/) [HYPERLINK "https://www.pharmacy2u.co.uk/"](https://www.pharmacy2u.co.uk/) [pharmacy2u.co.uk/](https://www.pharmacy2u.co.uk/)

The Lloyds Direct link has a short video which explains very clearly how it works. The other ones operate in a similar way.

If you are not able to access the internet don't be put off, you can give permission for a family member or friend to order your prescription online for you using their mobile/device.

P.S. One of our Committee reports *'Can't believe it I ordered my repeat prescription via the [Online Chemist] app on Sunday evening [17th Dec] and my tablets arrived in the post today [Thursday 21st Dec] and that's with the Christmas mail!!'*

'Pharmacy reforms to bring new services to the high street'

From December, pharmacies have been able offer the contraceptive pill without women having to see their GP first. From early this year, pharmacists will also be able to offer treatment for seven common conditions without the need for a GP appointment or prescription - sinusitis, sore throat, earache, infected insect bites, impetigo, shingles and uncomplicated UTIs in women. These changes have been introduced very specifically to relieve pressure on GPs. Whilst this is a very positive development and is what happens in most of Europe, we are concerned about the pressure that this will put on pharmacies who are already overstretched.

For more information about this development see link

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2023/11/pharmacy-reforms-to-bring-new-services-to-the-high-street/>

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I can't be dehydrated, can I?

Our body needs PLENTY OF WATER to work. The recommended amount of fluids is about 1.7 litres every 24 hours, this means 6 to 8 glasses of fluid a day. Having sufficient water lubricates the joints, eyes, aids digestion, flushes out waste and toxins and keeps the skin healthy as well as improving balance, concentration, memory, and mood! It seems that older people are more susceptible to dehydration than younger people. This is partly due to lack of a thirst sensation and changes in water and sodium balance that occur naturally as people age. A study found that dehydrated individuals were at higher risk for dementia!! If you are thirsty, then you are already dehydrated! <https://www.alzdiscovery.org> blog

As the sensation of thirst reduces as we get older, it's not easy to know if we are dehydrated or not. What are the signs of dehydration? Some of the symptoms can be:- feeling lightheaded, tired, or confused causing you unsteadiness on your feet; falls; dry mouth, lips, or tongue; constipation; passing urine more often or less often than usual. (This can also lead to urine infections which are very unpleasant).

How much should we drink a day, and what counts?

- Have 6-8 drinks a day of hot and cold drinks. Better to stick to water, milk, or juice as well as coffees and teas. Why not keep a chart on your fridge to keep track?
- Take medication with a full drink
- Keep a water bottle with you and sip water throughout the day
- Have food that is high in fluid e.g., extra milk on cereals, creamy sauces.

Sometimes we worry about not making it to the toilet in time if we drink too much water. This can be managed by your GP. Age UK have a toilet card which you can get to let people know discreetly that you have to go!

HILS West Sussex - Health and Independent Living Support

Meals on Wheels

Health and Independent Living Support (HILS) is the largest not for profit meals on wheels service in the UK. Established in Hertfordshire in 2007 as a charitable social enterprise and delivers meals in partnership with West Sussex County Council. HILS operates out of AUK, Lavinia House, Dukes Square, Horsham and helps people to stay happy, healthy, and independent at home for as long as they wish.

About the meals service

Meals are delivered across West Sussex 365 days a year, whatever the weather. Every visit includes delivery of a hot meal and desert, along with a caring welfare check. This service is chargeable. Please call 0330 2000 103 or check the website www.hils-uk.org for prices.

You can order meals as one-off temporarily, or for as long as you like them. Meals are delivered hot and ready to eat between 11.00am and 2.00pm and are usually delivered at a similar time every day. There is a wide selection menu range of delicious and nutritious hot meals and deserts for you to choose from and include Kosher, Asian, Halal, and West Indian food, Pureed, Minced and Moist, and Soft and Bitesize food for people following special diets.

How to order your meal

Step 1: contact HILS on 0330 2000 103 or fill out our referral form which you can find on www.hils-uk.org

Step 2: HILS will send you a menu so you can choose your favourite meals, you can also find the menus on their website.

Step 3: Your meals can be delivered the same day if you place your order before 9.30am, or they can start from a date you select.

Step 4: At the end of every month, you will receive a bill for your meals you have had.

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Staying well in winter

During the winter months we are at a greater risk of illness and injury, with the NHS is at its most stretched. There are number of things that we can do to help ourselves, and others, to stay well during the winter.

- Make sure our vaccinations are up to date, for Covid, 'flu, and, if we are eligible, pneumonia and shingles.
- Keep warm at home and when outside.
- Check our homes for safety risks, avoiding trip hazards, fire risks and providing a night light.
- Check our medicines cabinet. It is better to keep a supply of our usual medicines such as paracetamol rather than going out to buy them when we are already unwell. If you have regular prescription medicines, make sure you have enough to last over the holiday period and to cover periods of bad weather.
- Keep active. This may be more difficult during the winter, but it is worth exercising at home as well as getting outside for exercise when possible.
- If you have a vulnerable neighbour or friend winter is a time when they may need a little more help.

This information was taken from the seasonal health section in the NHS website where more details can be found. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/>

Public Transport to East Surrey Hospital

One of our Committee goes to the [Horsham District Older Peoples Forum](#). The difficulty of getting to East Surrey Hospital was raised at a recent meeting attended by our local MP, Jeremy Quinn. Here is Jeremy Quinn's subsequent letter to the HDOPF Chairman, Graham Sitton.

Dear Graham,

As discussed during the Horsham District Older People's Forum session, patients and loved ones can get to East Surrey Hospital (as discussed) via bus but this requires changing. (Using Metrobus' Route 200 from Horsham to Gatwick and then catching route 400, 460 or 100 from there or travelling on route 23 to Crawley and changing buses there but this is a slower option).

In their response to me, Metrobus have set out that they can understand the desire for a direct bus but this would involve joining two routes together which would have implications on reduced reliability, especially as the routes involved are quite long and can be subjected to delays. However, Metrobus are looking at making improvements which I hope will make this journey easier for residents. There will be a slight increase in frequency of the 200 route in the first quarter of 2024 and Metrobus are also intending to add a third "fast" bus per hour between Gatwick and East Surrey Hospital during 2024 which will further help with connection and journey times. Metrobus have assured me that they are confident that the improvements planned will make accessing the hospital via public transport easier.

This is far from ideal but it is at least an improvement whilst we continue to push for more services in Horsham Hospital and ideally a new hospital.

I would be grateful if you could share this information amongst your members.

Yours sincerely,

*Jeremy Quin
Member of Parliament for Horsham*

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SUPPLEMENT - SOCIAL PRESCRIBERS AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING COACHES AT HOLBROOK SURGERY

As part of the Personalised Care teams working for Horsham Central PCN (Primary Care Network), Holbrook patients have access to non-clinical care, for improving short and long term health and wellbeing outcomes. These services support patients in a number of ways, ultimately to give them confidence to take control of their own health and wellbeing.

Their GP, nurse, or other clinicians such as the clinical pharmacists and physiotherapists refer patients to the service. Patients can also self-refer via the Holbrook reception team or via the website.

Patients must give consent to be contacted by the team who will then call to introduce themselves, the service, and book them in for a first appointment.

Patients have up to 6 sessions when they engage in the services - appointments are 45-60 minutes each.

SOCIAL PRESCRIBER LINK WORKERS are able to support people with non-medical problems that affect their wellbeing and quality of life. Linking people to local support groups or services, including lifestyle, befriending or other social groups, benefits, housing, and other support services, can help people to feel more engaged and empowered to support themselves with their long-term illnesses and the difficulties they face.

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING CASE STUDY 1 - Patient referred to the team for support around her caring role for her husband as he has dementia, and she is struggling in supporting him. She was feeling low in mood, had no support and was becoming isolated. Social prescriber supported the patient during the sessions to look at social activities that she or both could attend for peer support, activity groups and other organisations that would be able to offer ongoing support. The patient and husband were able to access social activities that meet both their needs and helped with the isolation that they were both facing. Further conversations helped address counselling services for low mood. The patient consented to a referral to Richmond Fellowship Emotional Wellbeing team. The patients' needs were met by the end of 6 sessions, having fully engaged.

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING CASE STUDY 2 - Patient referred to the service for social isolation/loneliness and low confidence related to childhood trauma and deafness, which he developed in childhood because of parental abuse. From our first meeting he was keen to engage with support, and the social prescriber discussed what areas of his life he would like to focus on. He decided that building confidence and communication skills was of high importance to him as he felt very disconnected from other people. He had not learnt sign language and would mainly lip-read, and he was only able to communicate easily on a one to one basis in a quiet environment and with someone who spoke clearly. He had childhood trauma to process and heal from, and he also spoke about the loss of his Mum, who he cared for. During the course of the sessions, this patient engaged with self-help tools to build his own confidence and self-esteem. He enjoyed these and they had a noticeable impact on his confidence. He agreed to a referral to Emotional Wellbeing service for mental health support and got on well with this. He also self-referred to CRUSE bereavement support service and found these sessions very valuable. He decided to enrol on a course to learn sign language, began interacting more with his existing friends, and reported more fulfilment in these relationships. Towards the end of the sessions, he agreed to a referral to the befriending service and is now working with them to access social groups. This patient said the sessions were very helpful and he is in quite a different place in his life as a result.

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HEALTH AND WELLBEING COACHES help people actively engage with their own health and wellbeing. Supporting people to gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make healthy, sustainable lifestyle changes can help reduce the risk of developing long-term conditions and empower them to take charge of their own health outcomes. Coaching sessions help people achieve their goals, overcoming barriers that might hinder progress, by exploring options to achieve sustainable behaviour change. Finding sustainable ways to move more, achieve a healthy weight, manage stress, improve sleep and hydration can mean less stressed bodies and minds and living well for longer in good health.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING CASE STUDY 1 - Referred by GP for raised BP, weight gain and low mood. Feeling overwhelmed by life events, especially her daughter's long-term illness and caring for other close family members. Wanted support to find the motivation to look after her own health. Asked if she was happy to share her current lifestyle and habits and what losing weight would mean to her. She described how her life had always been about caring for other people, feeling frustrated and even angry. She realised that she had not been making any effort looking after herself or her home, not cooking properly. She described how if she lost some weight, it might help her feel she is able to take more control of her own life. She reflected on what she felt she might change and resolved to start walking again, something she always enjoyed. At the next session, she arrived feeling more positive. She described how she found ways to walk 30 minutes or more daily, parking further away from shops etc. Had asked GP for a reduced dose of antidepressants to help her think more clearly. She felt proud she had been able to focus on herself for a change. She is thinking more about meals felt she could reduce portion sizes and include more vegetables. As the sessions progressed, she noticed how she had felt much more positive. She has cut out sugar from drinks and is now enjoying cooking again. She got back into gardening again for exercise and to help her feel she could take more control of her environment and express herself. She was not only encouraged by weight loss and but that she started to get tasks done. Now started thinking about and planning for the future, something she had not been able to contemplate before. BP in the normal range, BMI reduced

HEALTH AND WELLBEING CASE STUDY 2 - Referred by GP for raised cholesterol and weight gain, reported low energy levels and motivation. He felt he should be able to 'do something' about his health but not sure where to start. Did not like doing exercise for the sake of it - is quite active in his work life, but frequently tired. Open to support for making changes.

Reflecting on what is important to him in his life, he said he felt good achieving things at work when he set himself goals and had a plan of action. He had not thought about having health goals before beyond losing weight. Did not think all his food choices were bad, but recognised he could miss meals and make poor choices when he was not organised. After sharing information on diet and lifestyle habits that support reducing cholesterol, he thought about what he might start to change, taking it one-step at a time. Had recently taken on an allotment, which he thought he might enjoy and recognised that might be a way of both improving diet and exercise levels simultaneously. Over the sessions, he reflected what was working for him and what was not and refined his goals at the end of each session. He experimented with healthier alternatives for snacks, introduced cooking with a wider range of vegetables, and stopped buying biscuits. He took over a second allotment and expanded his planting. He found exercise he could enjoy that was also useful. He reported having improved energy levels and clearer skin as well as losing weight and improving BMI. He felt he has made changes he could keep up and felt more in control of his health, time to plan meals and eat his last meal of the day earlier. He drank less tea and had more water.