

# Holbrook Surgery Newsletter

Spring

April 2024

## Welcome to the Spring issue of the 2024 Newsletter



It has been a long wet winter! Hopefully the sun is out when you receive this and is here to stay. We are pleased to welcome Annette Munn, Gill Sampson, and Michael Wilson to the Holbrook Surgery PPG Committee. With the existing members Barbara Blamires, David Hawkins, David Searle, Ann Valentine and Nick Longdon, we are now eight strong. We meet every couple of months at the surgery for which part of this we are joined by Lisa Ellis, the Practice Manager. Three of us are going to be doing a slot at the GPs' training session at the surgery on 30<sup>th</sup> April.

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](mailto:holbrookppg@gmail.com).

### **SURGERY UPDATE**

You may have found it is more difficult to get an appointment recently. The surgery is really under pressure at the moment. Dr Ziyada is currently on long term sick leave, Dr Oozerally is on maternity leave, and it has not been possible to replace 1.5 days a week of Dr Heatley's appointments from when he retired last year. This means that the surgery is currently down 244 appointments a week when normally it would expect to offer 1008 appointments a week, including telephone consultations. Some of the 244 appointments are being covered by locum doctors including Dr Heatley who has returned and is working on Mondays. It is hoped the situation will improve later in the year when Dr Ziyada and Dr Oozerally return to work and to whom we extend our very best wishes.

We asked Lisa Ellis, our Practice Manager, if there was anything that we can do as patients to support the surgery. Lisa appreciates the frustration of patients having to wait for an appointment especially when they have been used to being able to get one quickly. She said that patients' understanding of the situation would be much appreciated. All the surgery staff are under immense pressure. She asked, in particular, we could be kind to the receptionists who are often at the brunt of a patient's frustration. Lisa also asked that if we could cancel our appointment rather than just not turn up if we no longer need it. This could be used by someone who needs to be seen urgently. As we have mentioned before 'DNAs' are a major issue throughout the NHS which is a terrible waste particularly when there is such a problem with waiting lists.

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Gill Sampson - Michael Wilson*

## Spring Covid Booster

This is now available. Those eligible include everyone over 75 or older by 30 June 2024, people in care homes for older people, and anyone immunosuppressed who is aged six months or older. Please note carers and household members of immunosuppressed are not eligible. If you haven't already received a text, email, app message or letter from the NHS you can book via the NHS website [see following link], NHS app, or by calling 119.

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/covid-19-services/covid-19-vaccination-services/book-covid-19-vaccination/>

The nearest vaccination centres are the new Bohunt School or Nories Pharmacy in Oakhill Road, Horsham. Christ's Hospital is not being used this time.

**Please do not call the surgery about this as they cannot book or deal with any queries about bookings.**

## General Practice Assistants

Here at Holbrook surgery, there are two **General Practice Assistants** (GPAs) that form part of the multi-disciplinary team. (not to be confused with Physician Associates who are licensed medical professionals who give "direct care" and work alongside doctors and discuss all medical matters). The General Practice Assistants or GPAs provide a *support* role for the doctors. They can carry out administrative tasks such as inviting and monitoring patients with long term care conditions, supporting the medical secretaries with their work, summarising the notes that come into the surgery for new patients. Secondly, they can sometimes carry out clinical duties such as ECGs and the NHS over 40s health checks, urine dips.

All of this work helps to free up the GPs time and contribute to the smooth running of appointments, improving patients experience.

These GP Assistants undergo training before they take on this role by doing a 9-month course working with doctors and supervised by two doctors.

## ***Telling my children, I had cancer was the hardest thing I've had to do'.***

Many will know that one of our GPs, Dr Anisha Patel, was treated for bowel cancer. She campaigns nationally for greater awareness of bowel cancer and has appeared on TV about this. On 25<sup>th</sup> March there was an article in the Daily Telegraph in which she recalls her memories of telling her children which had been stirred up by the Princess of Wales' recent shock

## Crawley Hospital Programme

With the difficulties of travelling to East Surrey Hospital we understand that services at Crawley Hospital are being redesigned with a view to offering more services. We will let you have details when we learn more.

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## Breast Screening for the over 70's.

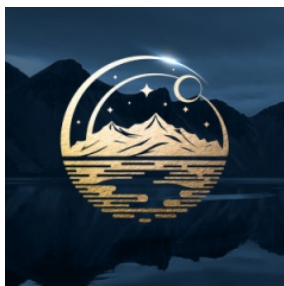
Ladies, you are not reminded to have Mammograms once you reach 70, but you can still request to have one every three years. We would strongly recommend that you do. One of our members aged 84, has been having mammograms every 3 years and this time a stage 2 cancer was discovered. This would not have been detected by feeling a lump,



because of the position, for another 1-2 years, when it would have been considerably more advanced. The risk of breast cancer, does not stop at 70, so please consider the importance of screening, in fact the risk increases with age. The earlier it is detected the chances are it will be far more treatable.

Ring the Breast Screening Service on 01903/239757, to make the appointment. They will be able to tell you where the mobile screening unit is, at the moment it is at the K2 Sports Centre in Crawley.

## Mental Health



A mental health crisis is when someone feels at 'breaking point'. A mental health crisis disrupts usual thought patterns, mood, daily activities and feelings. People in crisis will usually need urgent help.

### Get help today

If you feel like you can't cope and are at breaking point, you can get same-day or next day help by:

Calling NHS 111 and select the mental health option (available 24/7)

Calling the Samaritans on 116 123 (available 24/7)

Texting the word SUSSEX to 85258 (available 24/7)

If your life - or someone else's life - is in immediate danger, please call 999.

Make an appointment:

If you are worried about your mental health, e.g., you are feeling anxious or depressed or there are things going on in your life that are affecting your mental wellbeing, please make an appointment with your GP.

If you would like to get treatment for symptoms of anxiety or depression, you can refer yourself to your local Talking Therapies service which are located at Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex.

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## Horsham Primary Care Network

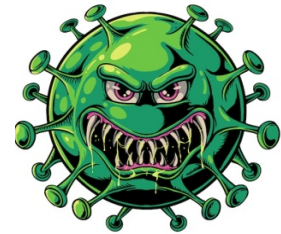
Nick Longdon, from our PPG regularly meets with the Chairs of the other three PPGs, the Park, Orchard, and Riverside surgeries. They recently met with Dr Sam Khan, Clinical Director of the PCN, Vikesh Malde, Riverside Surgery Practice Manager, and Dr Matt Davies GP from Riverside Surgery. This was a really useful meeting, and they gained a good understanding of the current situation. Despite all the political hype about money going into primary care they learned that funding is actually being cut which is affecting services like minor surgery which is currently being carried out.

## Norovirus

Although the surgery has not had any infections to deal with nationally, the number of norovirus infections have increased recently. If you are presenting with any of the symptoms, you should follow the advice below.

### Symptoms

The main symptoms of norovirus include a sudden onset of nausea, followed by projectile vomiting and diarrhoea, usually 1 to 2 days after becoming infected. Other common symptoms include a high fever, a headache and aching arms and legs.



### Prevention

Good hand hygiene is important to stop norovirus spreading and you should:

- wash your hands thoroughly using soap and warm water after using the toilet or contact with a sick individual and before preparing and eating food.
- stay off school or work until you have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days.
- not rely on alcohol gels instead of washing your hands, as these do not kill the virus.
- wash any contaminated clothing or bedding using detergent at 60°C using disposable gloves to handle any items.
- use bleach-based cleaners to disinfect surfaces.

If you catch norovirus, stay home for 48 hours after your symptoms clear.

### Recovery

Most people will make a full recovery in 2 to 3 days without needing any medicine. It is important to keep hydrated – especially children and the elderly.

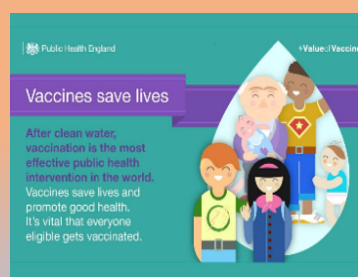
Try not to visit A&E (accident and emergency) or GP surgeries if you have symptoms of norovirus unless advised to do so by a healthcare professional, as this may spread the bug to others. Call ahead to a GP or ring NHS 111 if you are worried about your symptoms.

Further information is available from NHS 111 or [NHS.UK](https://www.nhs.uk).

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## Measles is back



In 2017 the World Health Organisation declared that the UK had eliminated measles. Unfortunately, in 2018, there was a sharp increase in reported cases, and measles, a disease that many of us will have remembered from our childhood, was back. Measles can be a serious disease, especially if complications such as ear infections, diarrhoea, or pneumonia, develop.

To stop measles from being transmitted 95% of children need to have been vaccinated. Although this figure has been reached for the first dose two doses are needed to achieve full immunity. Only 87.4% coverage on average has been achieved for the second dose. A campaign has been mounted to increase this figure and particular attention is being given to 10 and 11 year olds who may have only received one dose in childhood. The advice, as always, is to keep vaccinations up to date and ensure that all the necessary doses have been given. If you have a child who may have missed out, please contact the surgery for an appointment.

## Pharmacy Issues

We thought that things were getting better but certainly one of our Committee members recently had a nightmare experience trying to get medication for a friend. She queued for 30 minutes only to be told that the pharmacy did not have the medication. What we have learnt is that if you find yourself in this situation you can ask the pharmacist to put your prescription back on 'the spine'. You can then go to another pharmacy and request them to retrieve your prescription and make it up. You will be asked for your basic details and your NHS number [see below].

We understand that our MP, Jeremy Quinn, is interested in this issue and has met with local pharmacies. Please find attached link to his recent 'Pharmacy Update' on Facebook in which he assures us that the situation is going to improve. Let's hope he is right! Rishi Sunak also visited Boots when he recently came to Horsham.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1118027146016848>

## NHS Number

It is a good idea to be able to access your NHS number as you may be asked for this. If you have a smart phone we suggest, if you have not already done so, that you download the NHS app as your number is stored on this and is easily accessible. If you do not have a smart phone, you may want to carry a note of this. Your NHS number can be found on a prescription, letters from hospitals, etc.

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