

DARLINGTON PRIMARY CARE NETWORK Newsletter

Connecting Darlington's communities with their local GP practice



What is Darlington Primary Care Network?

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) form a key building block of the NHS long term plan.

By bringing General Practices together to work in partnership, it's hoped that this will improve the ability of practices to recruit and retain staff; to manage financial and estates pressures; to provide a wider range of services to patients; and to more easily integrate with the wider health and care system.

Enhanced Access Hours

Moorlands Surgery	Wed 6:30pm-8pm Fri from 7:30am
Neasham Road Surgery	Mon to Fri from 7:30am
Blacketts Medical Practice	Mon, Tues & Thurs 7:30am-8am
Orchard Court Surgery	Tues & Wed 7:30am-8am
Denmark Street Surgery	Mon to Fri 7:30am-8am
Whinfield Medical Practice	Wed & Thurs 7:30am-8am
Carmel Medical Practice	Tues to Thurs 7:30am-8am
Parkgate Surgery	Tues 7:30am-8am
Clifton Court Medical Practice	Mon 6:30pm-7pm Tues & Thurs 7:30am-8am
Rockliffe Court Surgery	Mon to Fri 7:30am-8am
St Georges Medical Practice	Tues to Wed 7:30am-8am
Primary Healthcare Darlington	Mon-Fri 6:30pm-9pm Sat 8:30am-5:00pm Sun 9am-1pm

DARLINGTON ENHANCED ACCESS

PROVIDING patients with responsive and convenient access to their care has always been a priority for Darlington Primary Care Network.

This ongoing dedication to enhanced access to care has been a defining feature of a raft of developments, innovations, and commitments the PCN has made over the last few years – some of which we're delighted to showcase within the pages of this newsletter.

At its heart, Enhanced Access is about making sure patients have a choice of convenient avenues to see or speak with a GP, nurse, or healthcare assistant outside

the core business hours of 8am to 6pm that most practices offer. These pre-bookable and same-day appointments are ideal for those who can't easily attend during normal practice hours.

The 11 GP surgeries across Darlington all provide a strong level of enhanced access to extend the usual hours of their practice, and are supported magnificently by the Primary Healthcare Darlington base on Woodland Road, where additional 'outside hours' appointments are offered.

Together, the PCN practices offer more than 100 additional hours per week of enhanced access appointments.

GP appointments are free, but what are the hidden costs?

Have you had to miss an appointment with the GP because you couldn't take the time off work? Has the cost of transport been so unaffordable that you were unable to attend your appointment? Are you able to afford your prescriptions?

Children North East (CNE) is partnering with Darlington Primary Care Network to understand the financial barriers impacting access to healthcare.

As part of the collaboration CNE will be working with Darlington GP practices to gain critical insight surrounding staff and patient experiences surrounding financial barriers to accessing healthcare.

In the meantime, if you like to be involved, we would love to hear from you.

If you've experienced financial barriers to healthcare and would like to share your thoughts or ideas on what can be done to help, you can call, text or email Heba Elsafy on:

07706364573

Ailbhe.Cashman@Children-NE.org.uk

Who are CNE?

CNE exists because growing up can be hard. As a charity CNE work with babies, children, young people and their families to ensure they grow up to be healthy and happy.

Darlington PCN is currently working in partnership with Children North East as part of a larger piece of poverty-proofing work with its medical practices



Because growing up can be hard

New website launched to supercharge access to care

Blacketts Medical Practice

A new patient website is making it easier than ever for patients to access the information they need, when they need it.

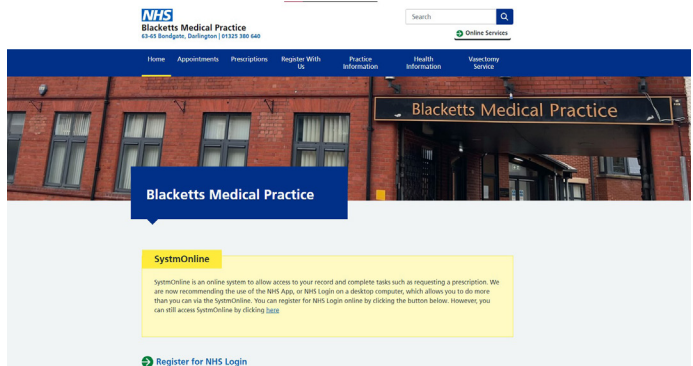
Digital resources are an essential tool in the bid to enhance access to primary healthcare, and Blacketts Medical Practice is working hard to stay at the cutting-edge.

In its latest innovation, Blacketts has launched a brand-new patient-focused website, designed to bring together in one place as much information as possible.

Dr Matthew Bremner, one of Blacketts' GPs who helped lead development of the website, said: "We looked at the old website we had, and realised we could make it much easier to use, and we could make the information on it much more relevant and easy to find.

"We're rebuilt the website from scratch, made it much easier to navigate with much more concise information that patients really want and need to know.

"We've also implemented a Health Information page with lots of good info on it about health management, how to self



refer, that kind of thing. The aim is to really empower patients to have the confidence to make decisions about their health and their needs."

From the new website, patients can find information about a variety of services, including podiatry, eye clinic, muscular-skeletal clinics, and more.

"It lets patients access the care they need directly in far fewer steps, rather than going through the practice and us acting almost as middlemen to refer them onto the right service," explained Dr Bremner.

"It improves access by speeding up their treatment, with fewer phonecalls and appointments before they're seen, and GPs are freed up to focus on other cases."

The website also links up with the NHS App, which allows patients to manage their health needs easily from a mobile device.

"The App is a fantastic tool," says Dr Bremner. "It lets patients make appointments or access their records and test results at any time, day or night, regardless of whether the practice is open or not – no need to worry about getting through to the practice on the phone."



Surgery Contact Info and Opening Times

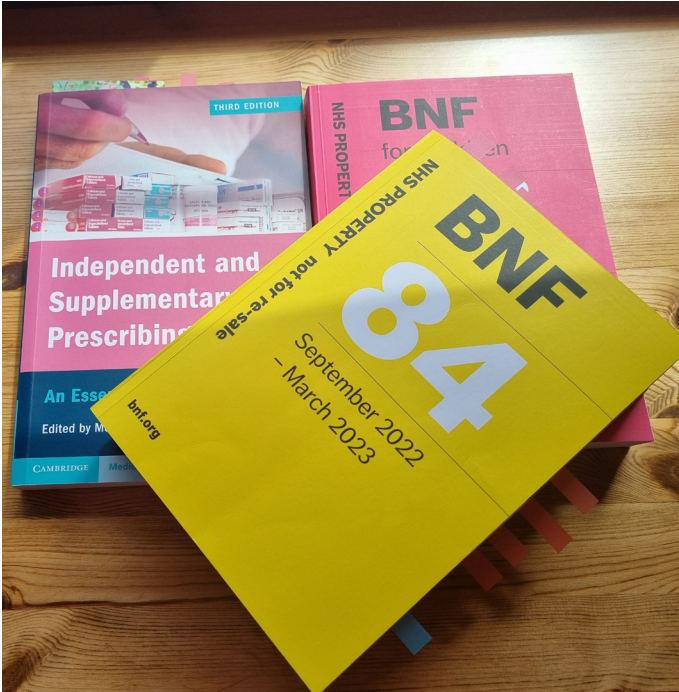
Main Reception: 01325 380 640
63-65 Bondgate, Darlington DL3 7JR
www.blacketts.nhs.uk

Mon: 7:30am - 6:00pm
Tues: 7:30am - 6:00pm
Wed: 8:15am - 6:00pm
Thurs: 7:30am - 6:00pm
Fri: 8:15am - 6:00pm
Weekend: Closed

Two nurses at Carmel Medical Practice have recently completed a non-medical prescribing course to allow them to prescribe medicines, within their fields of expertise, without having to refer patients to the GP.

Enhanced skills benefit patients and staff

Carmel Medical Practice



options for each patient. This means that the patient doesn't have to wait for the GP to be advised of what is needed, which results in a much faster prescription service, and frees up GP time to see other patients.

"It was an 18-week, part-time course, so we were still working at the surgery while we were attending lectures and doing the assignments," explains Vicky. "We had to complete a massive portfolio of work, but we had the support of the practice throughout.

"It's really nice to part of a practice that values practice nurses to do the non-medical prescribing, and that also allows personal development of the staff."

Rebecca Willson and Vicky Bradbury both joined the practice because they knew of the positive support they would get to further their skills, which would mean greater job satisfaction for them, and a better outcome for staff and patients.

The nurses already see patients

within their areas of expertise – asthma, COPD and diabetes, for both, while Rebecca also looks after heart failure patients and women's health.

They can now prescribe medications during the appointments, because they understand the best treatment



How are we doing?
Please scan the code to give us your feedback on Carmel Medical Practice!

Surgery Contact Info and Opening Times

Main Reception: 01325 520 794
Nunnery Lane, Darlington DL3 8SQ
www.carmelmedicalcentre.co.uk

Mon: 8:00am - 6:00pm
Tues: 8:00am - 6:00pm
Wed: 8:00am - 6:00pm
Thurs: 8:00am - 6:00pm
Fri: 8:00am - 6:00pm
Weekend: Closed



The two newest faces at Clifton Court Medical Practice are already making a big difference to patients' lives.

Six months reveals impact of new care coordinators

Clifton Court Medical Practice



IN our last issue, we introduced Clifton's new Care Coordinators, Laura Bruce and Chelsea Graham.

The two joined the practice shortly before Christmas last

year, and have already helped reduce numbers of missed appointments by offering patients additional support, such as arranging transport to the practice.

Laura said: "It's been really positive since we joined Clifton Court. We've been working hard with our colleagues to establish what our patients' needs are from us as Care Coordinators.

"A lot of patients just contact their GP for clinical needs, but there's a long list of social and economic issues which may have a bearing on their physical and mental health - things like housing, benefits, home life - and that's where we come in. We're able to look at the bigger picture, establish what other help they might need, and coordinate that or signpost them to the best people for their care.

"I think even now we're still adapting and evolving to meet the needs of our patients - Chelsea and I are both also training as phlebotomists, since one of the things we realised was that a lot of people that are

housebound were struggling to get blood tests done."

Charlotte Lodey, Clifton Court's Quality Improvement Lead, said: "Laura and Chelsea have already become very valuable. Instead of overloading other staff, they can share that workload and support us as well as supporting patients.

"Like with our Did Not Attends, now when it becomes clear there's an issue at play - maybe there's mental health considerations, agrophobia, and so on - I can put a plan in place with the Care Coordinators to support that patient, so they get the care they need, and less of the practice's time is taken up and is freed up for other patients."



How are we doing? Please scan the code to give us your feedback on Clifton Court Medical Practice!

Surgery Contact Info and Opening Times

Main Reception: 01325 465 646

Victoria Road, Darlington DL1 5JN

www.cliftoncourtmedicalpractice.nhs.uk

Mon: 8am-12pm, 2pm-6pm

Tues: 7:30am - 6:00pm

Wed: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Thurs: 7:30am - 6:00pm

Fri: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Weekend: Closed



Enhancing same-day care | Denmark Street Surgery

Denmark Street Surgery has been focusing on giving patients a better service and relieving pressure on clinical staff.

A new Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) team has been set up, bringing in two paramedics and an extra nurse practitioner to deal with all the on-the-day demands.

Practice Manager, Paul Conroy, explains: "By working together with the duty doctor and registrar, we are ensuring that, at the start of every single day, we have guaranteed capacity available when patients contact us for appointments.

"It means that, rather than people needing to get in touch to make an appointment first thing in the morning, and finding that all the appointments have gone, most days we've still got capacity throughout the day, and beyond.

"The number of GPs has also increased to 12, so we're better staffed than we've ever been, which has resulted in an overall increase in sessions."

"There are more patients being seen by a wider array of staff. We have a good skills mix across the whole clinical team – nurses, paramedics, health care assistants – because you don't always need to see a GP.



Sometimes that's not the best person to see, and it's the key to success for us and also our patients."

In addition, a physiotherapist now works from site every Wednesday, and there is the provision of more mental health team appointments available on-site.

Further good news show that people missing booked appointments is relatively low, however, Did Not Attends (DNAs) still costs the practice around 90 hours a month in missed appointments that could be cancelled for other patients to be able to book.



Surgery Contact Info and Opening Times

Main Reception: 01325 460 731
Denmark Street, Darlington DL3 0PD
www.denmarkstreetsurgery.nhs.uk

Mon: 7:30am - 6:00pm
Tues: 7:30am - 6:00pm
Wed: 7:30am-12pm, 2pm-6pm
Thurs: 7:30am - 6:00pm
Fri: 7:30am - 6:00pm
Weekend: Closed

GP's uplifting Nepal mission | Rockliffe Court Surgery

A HIGH-FLYING doctor has joined Rockliffe Court Surgery following a stint helping remote communities in Nepal.

Dr Susie Walden recently returned from mentoring healthcare workers with PHASE Nepal - which stands for Practical Help Achieving Self-Empowerment.

"We actually lived in Nepal as a family about ten years ago," she said. "My husband is also a doctor, and he was working with the Gurkhas while I worked as a GP.

"A colleague of ours started PHASE Nepal while we were out there, and when we came back to the UK, I always dreamt of going back and volunteering for the charity one day when my kids were older. This year, I finally had the opportunity. I was away for three weeks, but a week of that was just travelling to a very remote rural part of Nepal."

From Kathmandu, Dr Walden travelled for days to reach an isolated spot on the India/China border, right on the edge of the Himalayas.

"It was two flights, a jeep, and a walk to reach the first village. I was there for five or six days, and then I moved on to another village. In both I mentored and



taught healthcare workers provided by PHASE Nepal.

"We were two days travel from the nearest health centre, so these workers were doing all the treatments, the nursing, the midwifery and so on. There was really quite a lot of responsibility put on them, but the villagers are so appreciative.

"It was a life-enhancing experience to see how the healthcare workers out there do such an incredible job with very few resources," she said. "I had been looking to recapture my love of being a GP, and that time away was amazing. It really helped me rediscover that spark of passion I have my job, having that one-on-one contact with

patients.

"I'm glad to be back, it's made me think about my relationship with my patients. It's almost like a good reboot! But I'm already thinking about going back again one day!"

For information on PHASE Nepal, visit phasenepal.org



How are we doing?
Please scan the code to give us your feedback on Rockliffe Court Surgery!



Surgery Contact Info and Opening Times

Main Reception: 01325 720 605
Hurworth Place, Darlington DL2 2DS
www.rockliffecourtsurgery.co.uk

Mon: 8:30am - 6:00pm
Tues: 7:30am - 6:00pm
Wed: 8:30am - 6:00pm
Thurs: 7:30am - 6:00pm
Fri: 8:30am - 6:00pm
Weekend: Closed

The moving story behind GP's part in prostate cancer campaign

Neasham
Road Surgery



THE son of a distinguished medical officer in the Polish resistance during the Second World War, Dr Andrzej Hubert Szemis was a brilliant, active, and intensely proud man.

Having been the director of a hospital in Poland, the eminent psychiatrist came to England at the end of The Cold War in 1984, settling in Leicester with his wife, Lucyna, and their young son, Piotr.

Sadly, Andrzej's fate was to die, aged 85, in a hospice in Leicester, in January 2021, five years after being diagnosed with prostate

cancer.

Now, three years on from his beloved father's death, Piotr is at the forefront of a campaign by the Darlington Primary Care Network to raise awareness of prostate cancer, urging men to watch for the signs, and get themselves checked.

"Because of what happened to my dad, I'll always have a heightened awareness of prostate cancer, and I'm keen to do whatever I can to spread the word about the importance of staying vigilant," says Piotr, who works as a GP at Neasham Road

Surgery, in Darlington.

"If you catch prostate cancer early enough, it can be successfully treated," he says.

"Men mustn't bury their heads in the sand – they must talk to their GP if they have symptoms."

Piotr loves his job in general practice because it gives him the chance to help people, and the prostate cancer awareness campaign is an example.

And yet, it's strange to think that the 39-year-old Darlington GP might never have been born had it not been for a chilling twist of fate during war...

His grandfather, Captain Dr Zenon Szemis, was one of tens of thousands of Polish military officers taken captive by the Russians and transported to Siberia.

In the spring of 1940, nearly 22,000 Polish officers and intelligentsia prisoners of war were executed in 'The Katyn massacre' which was carried out by the Soviet secret police.

Captain Szemis would have been among those murdered but he was saved by the fact that he was a medical officer.

He was summoned to deal with an emergency involving a wounded Russian soldier, and so avoided being shot.



“When he returned, his fellow prisoners had all been executed, and my grandfather was able to survive the war, living until 1953,” explains Piotr.

Piotr qualified as a GP in 2017, and Neasham Road Surgery, in Darlington, was his first salaried job in general practice.

Within a year, he'd been made a partner, but he admits it was a challenging time, trying to manage the pressures of the practice in Darlington while also trying to help his dad through a range of health problems.

“Initially, he was diagnosed with an enlarged prostate, and had surgery, but then the symptoms reoccurred, and cancer was found.

“Dad had grown to love this country. He felt safe here and had confidence that the NHS would look after him and his



PROSTATE CANCER SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

MOST men with early prostate cancer don't have any signs or symptoms but if you do notice changes in the way you urinate, you should speak to your GP.

These include:

- Difficulty starting to urinate
- A weak flow when you urinate
- A feeling that your bladder hasn't fully emptied
- Dribbling urine after you finish
- Urinating more often than usual, especially at night
- An urgent need to urinate – sometimes you may leak before you get to the toilet
- Problems getting or maintaining an erection

YOU SHOULD ALWAYS SEE YOUR GP IF YOU EXPERIENCE...

- **Blood in the urine or semen**
- **Unexplained weight loss**
- **Unexplained bone pain**

family,” says Piotr.

“He was riddled with health conditions, but prostate cancer was the only cancer he had.

“He was a very proud man. He loved mountain climbing and being active, and the biggest problem he had was bone pain.

“He was in constant agony, but didn't want to be on medication because it made his brain less sharp.

“With prostate cancer, you can't predict whether you'll get it or not. It's just a question of staying vigilant and getting tested.

“In the end the cancer spread to his spine, and it was hard to see such a proud man getting weaker and frailer until he died in the

hospice.”

Darlington Primary Care Network's aim is to highlight the symptoms of prostate cancer, so other families are spared from losing their loved ones.



How are we doing?
Please scan the code to give us your feedback on Neasham Road Surgery!

Surgery Contact Info and Opening Times

Main Reception: 01325 461 128
186 Neasham Rd, Darlington DL1 4YL
www.neashamroadsurgery.co.uk

Mon:	8:00am - 6:00pm
Tues:	8am-12.45pm, 1.45pm-6pm
Wed:	8:00am - 6:00pm
Thurs:	8:00am - 6:00pm
Fri:	8:00am - 6:00pm
Weekend:	Closed

Regular cervical screening is offered to all women and people with a cervix, between the ages of 25 and 64, and is the best way to check for a virus called high-risk HPV, and any cervical cell changes.

Cervical screening does save lives

Moorlands Surgery



Practice Nurse Catherine Wake

In England, cervical screening currently prevents 70% of cervical cancer deaths, but National statistics suggest that only 1-3 patients entitled to the free NHS screening test actually have it done. If everyone attended screening regularly, 83% could be prevented.

With Cervical Smear Awareness Week coming up on June 17 -23, the GP practices in Darlington are urging anyone in the right age bracket to take advantage of what could be a life-saving service.

Lucy Smith, managing partner at Moorlands surgery, says:

“The surgery has provided 2,490 cervical screening tests in the last 12 months, and it is the best way of detecting and treating changes before they get the chance to turn into cervical cancer.”

The procedure itself is very quick, with a small sample of cells taken from the cervix and sent to the lab to be tested for HPV (human papillomavirus). If HPV is not found in the sample, you do not have to do anything else, and you will receive your next routine screening appointment in 3 years, if aged between 25 and 49, and every 5 years for 50-64 year-olds.

If there is HPV found in the sample, the lab will check the same sample for any changes in the cells of the cervix. These changes can be treated, which is why the cervical screening test is essential.

Lucy urges: “If you are invited into your GP surgery for a cervical screening, please ring to book your appointment – it really is important. We understand that some patients might find the procedure awkward, or even embarrassing, but if you are concerned, unsure, or have further questions, you can speak to a nurse prior to having the test carried out. Your surgery is here to help you.”



How are we doing?
Please scan the code to
give us your feedback on
Moorlands Surgery!

Surgery Contact Info and Opening Times

Main Reception: 01325 469168

Willow Road, Darlington DL3 9JP

www.moorlandssurgerydarlington.nhs.uk

Mon: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Tues: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Wed: 8am-12pm, 2pm-6pm

Thurs: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Fri: 7:30am - 6:00pm

Weekend: Closed



Darlington's first 'Chatty Café' launched to help combat social isolation.

Come for a cuppa and chat | Primary Healthcare Darlington



Darlington's Mayor Jan Cossins (right) met with volunteer cafe host Sue Harland and social prescriber Jayne Ibbertson to lend her support to the scheme

Darlington's first 'Chatty Café' designed to tackle loneliness has been held at Sainsburys, Victoria Road.

Spearheaded by Primary Healthcare Darlington and social prescriber Jayne Ibbertson, the Chatty Café is now being held every Tuesday between 2pm and 4pm at the supermarket café.

Jayne said: "It's very informal – it's just a chance for anyone who would like to come down, enjoy a cuppa, have a chat, and meet people.

"One of the biggest issues we tackle in social prescribing is social isolation – there are a lot of people who maybe don't have the opportunity to just come out

and have a chat with others, and we wanted to give them that chance.

"I knew about the scheme and had seen Chatty Cafés were being set up around the country, and I thought it could be great to have one in Darlington. We were looking for a nice location to hold it, and we were overjoyed when Sainsburys came onboard."

The events are run by volunteer host Sue Harland, who welcomes visitors and makes them comfortable.

"It's been really well received," added Jayne. "We've had at least ten people at each event, and we have newcomers every week."

"It's really just about giving people something to look forward to on a Tuesday afternoon, giving them a space to socialise and meet new people.

"We're delighted with the success, and I'm hoping to set more Chatty Cafés across Darlington to make it even easier for people to access this kind of support and social interaction!"



Contact Info and Opening Times

Main Reception: 01325 952278

Woodland Road, Darlington DL3 7PL

www.primaryhealthcaredarlington.co.uk

www.socialprescribingdarlington.co.uk

Mon: 8:00am - 9:00pm

Tues: 8:00am - 9:00pm

Wed: 8:00am - 9:00pm

Thurs: 8:00am - 9:00pm

Fri: 8:00am - 8:30pm

Sat: 8:00am - 5:30pm

Sun: 9:00am - 1:00pm

A GP with 37 years of medical experience will bid a fond farewell to Orchard Court.

Farewell after 40 years of care | Orchard Court Surgery

Dr Richard Stevens, who joined the practice in 1996, will retire from general practice after a long and distinguished career at the sharp end of community service.

"I'm definitely going to miss it," he said. "I'm going to miss the team, and miss the patients. I've watched kids I've treated grow up and become parents, parents become grandparents, and grandparents... grow older! I'll miss those familiar faces.

"It's a bittersweet thing to leave a practice like this one, somewhere that's so well organised and well thought of. On the one hand, I'm slightly sad that I'll no longer be a part of everything, but on the other, it's great to know it will continue developing when I'm gone, led by partners who will keep taking the practice forwards."

After moving from his home in Blackburn to Newcastle to study medicine, the young Dr Stevens mostly stayed in the North East, accepting a role at The James Cook University Hospital, in Middlesbrough, but also working in Carlisle and even a couple of years in New Zealand.

Ultimately, he settled into general



A life-long adventurer, Dr Stevens is hoping to travel more in retirement

practice at Orchard Court nearly 30 years ago, and hasn't looked back since.

Luckily, the next generation are already gearing up to carry on the family legacy. Given that Dr Steven's father was a doctor and he married fellow Darlington GP, Dr Sally Stone, it was perhaps to be expected that their children would find their ways into medical careers.

"Two of the kids are doctors now, and one's a physiotherapist," he laughs. "Maybe it was inevitable!

"I'm looking forward to being able to travel some more, having time to cycle, to take care of

the garden, and try to play the guitar," he said, before quickly adding: "and avoiding playing golf!"



How are we doing?
Please scan the code to give us your feedback on Orchard Court Surgery!

Surgery Contact Info and Opening Times

Main Reception: 01325 465 285
Orchard Road, Darlington DL3 6HZ
www.orchardct.co.uk

Mon: 7:30am - 6:00pm
Tues: 7:30am-12pm, 1pm-6pm
Wed: 7:30am - 6:00pm
Thurs: 7:30am - 6:00pm
Fri: 7:30am - 6:00pm
Weekend: Closed



Success for new nurse training scheme

Parkgate Health Centre

A pioneering scheme being trialled at Parkgate Health Centre to create new nurse practitioners has seen success with its first trainee.



"I realised I wanted to work in a primary care setting, because I believe you can be much more effective by preventing health issues developing in the first place, than by treating them once they appear, and working in a GP practice allowed me to do that.

"So I am now a practice nurse, and that's really my focus: things like screenings, immunisations, childhood health, adult vaccines, and long-term condition reviews.

"Being at Parkgate is great. It's a lovely place, we have a lovely team, and the patients are very open and friendly - I think as long as you communicate clearly what needs to happen, they're more than happy to cooperate.

But Jeanell is also part of the practice's newly-launched advanced nurse practitioner training pathway, and hopes to become its first graduate.

She said: "As an Advanced Nurse Practitioner, I'll be much more involved with the diagnostic process, you do more investigating. I think if we can get in on the ground floor and access

someone early enough, you can save that person."

Not only will Jeanell's experience be used to inform how training pathway for future candidates, but she is also looking forward to making an even greater difference to the practice.

"It is more work, but it will be good," she laughs. "For example, I'd help deliver the practice's Enhanced Access hours, seeing patients until eight o'clock on a Tuesday evening. It's important to ensure patients have equal access to care."

Originally from Hartlepool, Jeanell Kirkpatrick joined the practice as part of a pathway to develop her as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner

"I came quite late to nursing, I did my Access to Health Degree at 25 and started nursing at 26," she remembers.

"I qualified in 2018 - right before COVID hit - and went into being a community nurse, which I loved. You learn to be quite autonomous, but you're part of a really good team.



How are we doing?
Please scan the code to give us your feedback on Parkgate Health Centre!

Surgery Contact Info and Opening Times

Main Reception: 01325 735 000

Park Place, Darlington DL1 5LW

www.intrahealth.co.uk/surgeries/parkgate-medical-practice/

Mon: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Tues: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Wed: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Thurs: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Fri: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Weekend: Closed

Darlington surgeries are constantly looking for ways to improve their offer to patients, and one of those ways is enhanced access, which allows people who can't get time off work the opportunity to book an appointment outside of normal working hours.

Change underway at Middleton St George

St George's Medical Practice



appointments to anyone in the Darlington area who wants to discuss HRT, menopause, and non-hormonal coil fitting. Appointments can be made by contacting your own GP surgery.

The surgery welcomes back a familiar face – Rebekah Prosser (Bex), previously a Health Care Assistant, returns as a practice nurse.

Finally – great excitement as the new Middleton St George surgery nears completion! Anyone living in the village who isn't already registered with a Darlington practice is welcome to contact them to be added as a patient.

At the Middleton St George practice, early GP and Health Care appointments are now available at the surgery, from 7:30am on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Patients can arrange to see a GP, have blood taken, or have a blood pressure or health check, before they go to work.

Normal GP appointments are also still available during the usual surgery hours of 8am – 6pm, Monday to Friday.

Primary Healthcare Darlington, in Woodland Road, offers evening and weekend appointments for patients from all the GP practices in Darlington: Monday – Thursday 6:30pm-9pm; Friday 6:30pm – 8:30pm; Saturday 8:30am – 4:30pm; Sunday 9am – 12:30pm.

They have also just launched a new women's clinic on alternating Saturday afternoons and Thursday evenings, offering



How are we doing?
Please scan the code to
give us your feedback on
St George's
Medical Practice!

Surgery Contact Info and Opening Times

Main Reception: 01325 332022

Yarm Road, Middleton St George, DL2 1BY

www.stgeorgesmp.co.uk

Mon: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Tues: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Wed: 8am-12:30pm, 2pm-6pm

Thurs: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Fri: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Weekend: Closed



Total Triage, total triumph

Whinfield Medical Practice



Evan Lynch,
General Practice Assistant

Front line staff were often expected to make clinical decisions that they weren't qualified to do, while patients were expecting to see a GP, when their issues could be more easily and quickly dealt with by another clinician.

GP partner, Dr Laila Alali, says: "We were aware that demand was increasing, staff morale was low,

and patients not being allocated the appropriate appointment for their problems."

The practice decided to try Total Triage - a system whereby an initial patient enquiry is assessed by an on-call GP in order to direct them to the person best equipped to deal with their issue.

"Our biggest priority was patient safety," explains Dr Alali. "We noticed that patients were sometimes booking in for routine appointments for a problem that we actually deemed more urgent, and needed to be seen quite quickly.

"Conversely, some patients were arranging same-day appointments for issues that could wait to be seen."

Under the new system, patients complete an on-line form which is included on a clinician list for the on-call doctor, who then triages all the queries into either same-day, routine, or something in between, and books them in to see the most appropriate person in the practice.

This still might be a GP, or it

Whinfield GP practice has become increasingly busier, with enquiries, and requests for advice and appointments, having a negative impact on both staff and patients.

might be an advanced nurse practitioner.

Working alongside an admin assistant, urgent issues can be flagged up immediately, while other enquiries will be allocated a non-urgent appointment - potentially being booked in for tests while waiting - or can be dealt with over the phone.

Most enquiries are dealt with by the end of the working day, but if there's an urgent medical problem after the daily limit for the triage form has been reached, patients can still contact reception for advice, and discussion with the on-call GP, if needed.



How are we doing? Please scan the code to give us your feedback on Whinfield Medical Practice!



Surgery Contact Info and Opening Times

Main Reception: 01325 481 321

Whinbush Way, Darlington DL1 3RT

www.whinfieldsurgery.nhs.uk

Mon: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Tues: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Wed: 7am-12:30pm, 2pm-6pm

Thurs: 7:00am - 6:00pm

Fri: 8:00am - 6:00pm

Weekend: Closed



www.darlingtonpcn.co.uk