

Dear Patients,

Welcome to the first edition of the **New River Health Newsletter**, where we keep you informed about the latest updates and improvements at our practice.

Practice Improvements & Access

Over the past six months, we have been working hard to improve our services, making changes to our processes and appointment system to enhance patient care and access. By restructuring our GP clinic structure, we have significantly increased appointments, improving both routine and same-day access.

We have also extended our reception phone coverage during peak times, helping to reduce waiting times. In February, we took 9,500 phone calls, with an average wait time of just over 7 minutes.

New Team Members

To improve patient continuity, we have welcomed two new salaried GPs, Dr Marianne Hanna and Dr Parul Srivatsav and a new Healthcare assistant Jodie Davey.

Additionally, we are pleased to announce that Thushy Selva will be joining us as our new Practice Manager in May. Thushy brings a wealth of experience, and we are excited about the positive impact he will bring to the team.

New Online Services

In December 2024, System Connect replaced eConsult as our online tool for routine clinical and administrative queries. For more information regarding this please visit our website.

Missed Appointments - Help Us Help You!

Unfortunately, we continue to experience a high number of missed appointments. In January, there were 36 hours of lost appointments due to patients not attending. Each missed appointment is a lost opportunity for another patient who needs care. If you can't attend, please cancel in advance so we can offer the slot to someone else.

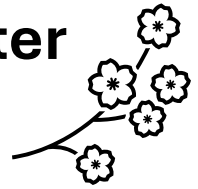
Website Updates

We have updated our website to provide clearer information on:

- Referral tracking & self-referral information
- Pharmacy First – community pharmacists can assess and prescribe antibiotics for minor illnesses without the need to see a GP first
- Monthly feedback from our Family & Friends Test
- Blood tests ... and more!

Visit newriverhealth@nhs.net to explore these updates.

March 2025



Additional Services Available

Extended Access Clinics – In addition to our GP appointments we offer nursing appointments for smears and contraception outside regular hours. Extended access smear appointments are now in Ware as well as Hertford.

In-House Physiotherapy - Our physiotherapists can assess, diagnose, and treat joint issues. Appointments are 20 minutes long and can be booked from reception- no need to see a GP first! Physios can arrange specialist referrals and work closely with GPs when imaging, medication, or other advice is needed.

Mental Health Support - We have two dedicated mental health nurses, Luke and Kevin, who offer 30-minute appointments for patients needing longer consultations.

Social Prescribers - Our social prescribers work in partnership with the surgery playing a vital role in connecting people to activities, groups and services within the community to address practical, social and emotional needs that impact health and wellbeing.

Future Plans

We are always looking for ways to improve your experience at New River Health. Here are some of plans coming soon:

Patient Partner Automated Phone Service – This service will allow patients to book, change, and cancel appointments independently, as well as receive guidance on appropriate care pathways. Of course if you prefer to speak to one of our receptionists, this option is always available.

Pop-Up NHS App Sessions - Helping patients learn how to use NHS apps for managing their health.

Primary Care Network (PCN) wide Practice closures for teaching

This is for protected learning and training (PLT) for staff and occurs in GP surgeries across Hertfordshire and West Essex. This is funded by the NHS and commissioned by the Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated care board (ICB). The surgeries will be closed from 1.30pm – 5.30pm on Wednesday 2nd April, Tuesday 13th May and Thursday 12th June. During this time extra GPs are available for appointments through the Hertfordshire Urgent Care (HUC) team which can be accessed via 111.

Patient Participation Group (PPG) – Patient Voice

Patients' Voice provides an opportunity for patients to raise and discuss general issues regarding patient services, and to make suggestions for improvements to the service you receive. If you want to join the group you can contact the PPG chair via newriverhealthppg@gmail.com.

Thank you for being part of our community, and we look forward to continuing to provide you with the best care possible.

Best wishes from the New River Health Management Team.