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Wishing you and yours, a happy, healthy and peaceful
Christmas and Festive Season

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES

The Surgeries are open as follows over the holiday period -

Monday December 22nd - Wednesday December 24th 08.00 - 18.30

Thursday December 25th Christmas Day Closed

Friday December 26th Boxing Day Closed

Monday December 29th - Wednesday December 31st 08.00 - 18.30

Thursday January 1st New Year's Day Closed

Friday January 2nd 08.00 - 18.30

On days when the Practice is open, SystmConnect (online) is available from 07.00 - 20.00

WINTER PRESSURES

This winter, there are more ways to access care than ever before, making it simpler and quicker for people to get the help they need. Pharmacies give patients access to quick, easy support - including prescription-only medicines - for common conditions including sore throat, sinusitis and earache.

As reported last month, the health service is bracing for an unprecedented flu wave this winter. Cases are incredibly high for this time of year and there is no peak in sight yet. The NHS has prepared earlier for winter than ever before, but despite that, it's clear that ballooning flu cases coinciding with potential strikes, may stretch staff close to breaking point in the coming weeks. There have never been more ways for people can get the care they need, so when the Practice is closed, for non-life-threatening care, people should call NHS 111 or use 111 online, which can direct you to the most appropriate place. As always, use A&E & 999 for life threatening conditions and serious injuries.

PPG PATIENT SURVEY

The PPG carries out a Patient Survey every two years, on behalf of the Blackmore Vale Partnership. This year's Survey in October, asked the same questions about the appointments system and satisfaction with the process and outcome for patients.

The second half sought to find out what matters to patients, asked for suggestions for Health Event Topics and for the first time, asked what patients felt the Practice does well and what could be improved. There were 990 responses, 69% of which were from people in the 55-74 age bracket.

- 59% of patient contact was online (SystmConnect), 26% by Telephone, 14% in person and 2% by other means. (similar to 2023)
- Of those who had recently contacted the Practice - 72% said the experience was very good, or good. (69% 2023)
- SystmConnect was widely used but received mixed reviews - praised for speed, criticised by some for complexity and impersonality. Telephone and text were common for follow-ups and generally rated positively.
- 72% were satisfied with the outcome (73% 2023)
- 17% were partly satisfied (17% 2023)
- 11% were not satisfied (10% 2023)

Amongst the reasons for responding 'Partly' or 'No' were, treatment hadn't concluded; the Practice response was not as expected - e.g. an Advanced Care Practitioner had responded and not a Doctor; the patient had received a telephone call but would have preferred a face-to-face appointment etc.

The PPG and the Practice are very grateful to those patients who took part in the Survey. All the data, comments, concerns and suggestions have been passed on to the Practice and a fuller report is attached to this Newsletter in which there are responses to the main issues raised, as well as helpful advice for patients.

CANCER MATTERS WESSEX – READER PANEL

The Cancer Wessex Reader Panel members do an amazing job, reviewing information to ensure it is patient friendly and easy to understand. Once a month, the team is sent an item to look at – previous examples include a text around Lung Health Checks and reviewing Mouth and Throat Cancer information on Cancer Matters Wessex. We wanted to share this feedback, which reflects the impact the panel has.

A big thank you to those that contributed to the cervical screening video texting project. The report shows 9% of patients who had never previously attended cervical screening, were successfully screened after receiving this text message. Your input has made a difference to many patients.

If you are interested in finding out more or joining the panel (full briefing and relevant training available), please email involvingpeople@helpandcare.org.uk.

PRACTICE NEWS

- In November, there were 7288 SystemConnect requests, 88% of which were responded to within two hours.
- and 7823 Telephone calls answered, an average of 391 per day with an average waiting time of 1m 47 secs.
- Of the appointments with clinicians (excluding nurses) 4935 (76%) were Face to Face, 1456 by Telephone and there were 112 patients who did not attend. If you are unable to take up an appointment, please contact the surgery, so that another patient can have the slot and not waste valuable time and resources.
- Of those appointments, 67.1% were with GPs, 26% were with Advanced Care Practitioners and 6.9% with Mental Health Practitioners.
- Also in November, more than 17200 prescriptions were issued and over 10800 Test results reviewed.

FEMALE VETERANS TOOLKIT

The Female Veterans Toolkit is a practical resource designed to help organisations, professionals and services understand and better support the needs of female veterans in the UK. It's based on research, co-production, and co-design with women who have service in the armed forces and organisations who support them.

You can download the Toolkit here: [Female Veterans Toolkit](#)

BP@HOME

Are you living with high blood pressure?

BP@Home is a mobile app-based service which enables people to take their blood pressure readings in the comfort of their own home and share them directly with their clinical team, saving time for the patient and their general practice surgery.

As well as reminding the patient to take their blood pressure reading and to take their medication, the clinical team can make changes to the patient's medication when required.

Why use the BP@Home service

- Blood pressure readings when taken at home give a better reflection of your blood pressure as you are more relaxed.
- It gives you peace of mind knowing your clinician is aware of your recent blood pressure.
- No need for regular visits to your GP surgery.
- It's quick and easy.
- Clinicians can identify if your blood pressure is elevated quickly and optimise your medication.
- Help prevent serious health conditions such as heart attacks, strokes, kidney problems, atrial fibrillation (irregular heart) and vascular dementia.

[Register for BP@Home](#)

FLU VACCINATIONS

It's not too late to protect yourself, your family and people in your community and get your flu vaccine.

Local Pharmacies which offer free flu vaccinations are –

STALBRIDGE PHARMACY High St, Stalbridge. DT10 2LL – [01963 362246](tel:01963362246) – Walk-in or appointments

BOOTS – 1 Market Place, Sturminster Newton, DT10 1AS – [01258 472426](tel:01258472426) – Appointments only

BOOTS – 33 High Street, Shaftesbury, SP7 8JE. – [01747 852471](tel:01747852471) – Appointments only