

Northfields Surgery

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter, May 2024



Introduction to the Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Aim of the Group To represent the Northfields Surgery patients, advising on service improvements.

Membership The PPG is open to all patients who are registered at the practice.

Meetings The PPG met for the first time in person since Covid on 7th Sept 2022, and has met 6 times since, most recently on 26th February 2024.

The Practice Manager of Northfields Surgery, Omesh Sharma, attended most meetings together with GP Partners, Dr Folad and/or Dr Hearn.

Further information on PPGs can be found on the surgery website at the following link:

<https://www.northfieldssurgery.nhs.uk/practice-info/patient-participation-forum/>

Contact the Patient Participation Group to offer your services, or with any suggestions or comments. See **Feedback** box towards the end of page 2 of this Newsletter for how to contact the PPG.

Contacting the Practice: eConsult

The Practice encourages use of eConsult to replace the early morning scramble for appointments. It is an online system that can be convenient & efficient for patients & GPs.

eConsult is usually available from 8am Monday to Friday on the Surgery website at <https://www.northfieldssurgery.nhs.uk>

eConsult is not available out of office hours & may reach capacity. If this happens, & you are concerned about delay, feel free to phone the surgery.

eConsult prompts patients to describe their current medical concern & symptoms. eConsult is programmed to prompt you to contact 999 when urgent help is needed.

Once submitted, eConsult is reviewed by a GP within 48 hours: usually this is done as soon as it arrives. The patient or carer will be contacted as follows:

- If a GP decides that an appointment is needed they will text you with a date & time, on the same day if necessary
- A GP may call you for a telephone consultation
- In case of minor illness, e.g. cough or cold, a visit to a pharmacy may be advised in the first instance.

Patients unable to complete an eConsult, e.g. those without a digital device &/or those who are vulnerable, will need to telephone the surgery. Practice staff can take details & list the patient for review by a doctor.

For further information & frequently asked questions on eConsult, please click on the link below:

<https://northfieldssurgery.webgp.com/staticContent/fags>

999 BSL UK Emergency Video Relay Service

999 BSL is a new emergency VRS service for Deaf BSL users to contact the emergency services through a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.

- Call 999 through the app or website
- Make free emergency calls in seconds
- Available for iOS and Android devices
- 24/7 interpreting service all year round

Learn about the new life-saving service www.999bsl.co.uk

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British Sign Language Emergency Service

Pneumococcal vaccine

The pneumococcal vaccine helps protect against some types of bacterial infections that can cause serious illnesses including:

- **meningitis** (an infection in the brain and spinal cord)
- **sepsis** (a life-threatening reaction to an infection)
- **pneumonia** (an infection in the lungs).

The pneumococcal vaccine is recommended for babies, for adults aged 65 and over, and others who are at higher risk of, or from, these illnesses.

Speak to staff at Northfields Surgery if:

- you have not been offered the pneumococcal vaccine, but you think you or your child are eligible,
- you/your child have missed your pneumococcal vaccinations or you're unsure if you've been vaccinated,
- you need to change a vaccination appointment – note that if you or your child are unwell, you may need to wait until you're feeling better before having the vaccine.

Northfields Surgery staff can book or rearrange an appointment. For more information on the pneumococcal vaccine, please click on this link: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/pneumococcal-vaccination/>

Contacting the Practice: Telephone Lines

There have been problems with the practice telephone system in the past. On phoning you may have been told the number of callers waiting in a queue. If you waited while this counted down, you may have been cut off just as you appeared to be about to get through! This was a system fault, made worse by the volume of calls during the pandemic. The surgery worked with the telecoms provider to solve the problem which we believe has now been fixed. Greater use of eConsult reduced the number of early morning telephone calls and has helped avoid delays for those patients unable to use eConsult. Reception cover has also been improved. Telephone statistics show that the average telephone answering time is now less than 5 minutes. Should you have any difficulties phoning the surgery, please provide details to the reception team &/or PPG (see Feedback box below).

Feedback will be welcome on this Newsletter and on your experience of contacting the practice going forwards. Please visit, <https://www.northfieldssurgery.nhs.uk/practice-information/patient-participation-forum/> click on 'Contact the Patient Group', & fill out the form. Those unable to use the website may leave their details or a letter with Reception addressed to the PPG Chair who will contact you on receiving your message.

This Newsletter was produced by PPG members & the Practice Manager & reviewed by the GP Partners before finalising and approval by all parties for distribution to patients & carers. We look forward to your feedback.