



St. George's Patient Forum Newsletter

Connecting Patients, Empowering Lives

September 2025

Health awareness days/weeks/month: Key dates for September

1-30 September
World Alzheimer's
Month
(including Dementia
Action Week (15-21
September))

5 September
Walk to Work Day

22-28 September
Eye Health Week

29 September
World Heart Day

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Rushcliffe Social Prescribing Hub

Celebrating a Summer of Friendship and Fun at the Rushcliffe Hub

This summer has been truly special for Rushcliffe Social Prescribing, as our Friendship Calendar brought the community together through laughter, activity, and shared experiences. From our exhilarating open water swims at Colwick Country Park with Whole Health, to the gentle fun of outdoor bowls, each event reminded us of how much joy connection and movement can bring to our wellbeing.

Our allotment open days were another highlight. Sunshine, home-grown produce, and the smell of freshly baked courgette muffins and damson flapjack filled the air. Volunteers and participants alike enjoyed harvesting radishes, sampling colourful tomato varieties, and even planting Brussels sprouts ready for Christmas—proving that learning, growing, and sharing in nature is as nourishing for the soul as it is for the body.

The 7 Ways to Wellbeing Summer Calendar offered a variety of activities, from walking cricket to narrowboat cruises. Each session was designed to help participants try something new, meet people, and feel connected. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with attendees sharing how these simple yet meaningful experiences boosted their mood, built friendships, and encouraged them to embrace new hobbies.

A huge thank you to all our volunteers, partners, and community members for making this summer so memorable. As we look ahead, we're excited to share that a Winter Friendship Calendar is on the way, packed with new opportunities to connect, move, and enjoy time together.

Keep an eye out for updates and book your place at future events here:

🔗 www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/rushcliffe-social-prescribing-service-108969547441

Or explore the full Friendship Calendar at:

🔗 www.rushcliffehealth.org/friendship-calendars

Here's to more laughter, friendship, and wellbeing in the months ahead!

To be added to our mailing list for future updates or to express your interest in getting involved, email us at:

✉️ nnicb-nn.rushcliffesocialprescribing@nhs.net

Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/RushcliffeSP

Thank you Meg Kozian (Social Prescribing Link Worker)

Medical Insights: Eye Health 22-28 September

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the biggest cause of irreversible blindness amongst adults in the UK. It's a complex condition in which age, genetic and lifestyle risk factors play a part – and that includes what we eat. Studies show that a 'Western-style' diet, low in fibre and high in fats, sugar and refined foods, can contribute to AMD. "Your chances of developing AMD can therefore be significantly higher if you consume an unhealthy diet," explains Dr Arjuna Ratnayaka from the University of Southampton.

One study showed that the odds of developing AMD can be as high as 60 per cent in those with poor nutrition. An overindulgence of 'Western-style' foods can trigger retinal imbalances in the eye. This build-up of fats, such as cholesterol, can result in an accumulation of yellow/white spots or deposits (known as drusen) under the retina. An unhealthy diet can even damage our DNA. Regularly consuming foods high in refined fats and sugars generates unstable molecules called free radicals, which increase the risk of inflammation in the eye and can lead to the death of retinal pigment epithelial cells. These look after our light sensing photoreceptors. "The death of photoreceptors is irreversible," explains PhD student Anna Muir. "When photoreceptors in the macula die, it can lead to AMD."

So, what should we eat when it comes to our eye health?

Taste a rainbow

Research shows that a healthy, balanced diet significantly lowers our risk of developing AMD. People should opt for eating a wide range of colourful fruits and vegetables – these are a rich source of carotenoids, the plant pigments that give them their vibrant colours. "Evidence shows that the intake of more carotenoids is linked with lower risk of AMD," according to Professor of Ophthalmology, Andrew Lotery.

Two carotenoids, called lutein and zeaxanthin, are of particular importance, as they protect against free radical damage and potentially protect our eyes from harmful blue light. As we cannot make carotenoids within our bodies, we are solely reliant on a healthy diet for their regular supply.



Carotenoid cuisine

Diets such as those typified by Mediterranean or 'Oriental-style' foods have been shown to reduce the odds of developing AMD. "Such diets consist of a high proportion of fruits and vegetables, healthy fats like olive oil, plus lean meats and fish," explains Anna. "Eating dark green leafy vegetables and yellow-pigmented fruits may help to slow the progression of diseases like AMD," adds Anna. In addition, studies show that lightly frying certain vegetables can increase the availability of their carotenoids.

Our thanks go to Sight Research UK for this information

Medical Insights (2): Alzheimer's and Dementia

The following information is taken from two Help sheets from the Alzheimer's Society – thank you

What is dementia?

Dementia is the name for a group of symptoms: Dementia symptoms are caused by diseases that stop the brain from working properly. It is different to the normal changes that happen as people get older.

Memory loss is just one symptom of dementia: Dementia affects everyone differently. Some of the common changes people notice include:

- * Feeling, speaking or acting differently
- * Confusion and misunderstanding
- * Forgetting things that recently happened.

If you notice any of these symptoms in yourself or someone else, speak to a GP: The sooner a person speaks to their GP; the sooner they can get the support they need.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia: Other types of dementia include:

- vascular dementia
- Lewy body dementia
- frontotemporal dementia.

There are other rarer types of dementia too. Some people can have mixed dementia with more than one type. The type of dementia affects the symptoms a person will experience.

Is it dementia or something else? There isn't one test to find out if you have dementia. Instead, doctors will ask you about your symptoms and test your memory. They may check your sight, hearing and movement. You may also need blood tests and brain scans. The results of these tests can also show if your symptoms are being caused by something else.

Can anyone get dementia? Dementia is most common in older people. However, sometimes younger people can get it too. This is called young-onset dementia.

Reducing your risk of dementia: There are things you can do to reduce your risk of developing dementia. These include staying physically and mentally active, not smoking or drinking too much alcohol, and keeping to a healthy weight. We have more information about how you can reduce your risk of dementia on our website and in print. Call us on 0300 303 5933 to get a copy.

Changes that happen with dementia: Dementia causes changes that you or others may notice. These are different for everyone and they depend on the type of dementia you have. Some changes may look similar to normal ageing, but they are more serious. They include:

- **Memory loss:** You might find it hard to remember things that happened recently. But you can remember things from a long time ago. You might repeat things out loud. You might ask the same question over and over. You might put objects in unusual places (for example, your front door keys in the bathroom cupboard). You might struggle to learn new tasks.
- **Difficulty planning and making decisions:** You might get confused when planning or thinking things through. You might struggle to stay focused on a task. You might find daily tasks difficult, like making a familiar meal or paying bills.
- **Problems with language (speech and conversation):** You might often have difficulty thinking of the right word for what you're trying to say. You might not be able to follow a conversation.
- **Being confused about time or place:** You might lose track of the time or date, or which day it is. You might not know where you are, even in a place you know well.
- **Seeing things differently:** You might have problems judging distances (for example, on the stairs). You might see patterns or reflections in mirrors that look like something else.

- **Mood and behaviour changes:** You might become more anxious, sad, frightened, irritable or easily upset. You might lose interest in things and lose confidence. Your personality may change. If you notice any changes and are worried about yourself or someone else, speak to your doctor.

For help talking to your GP about dementia, see our Symptoms checklist – alzheimers.org.uk/symptoms-checklist. We are here for you. Call us on 0333 150 3456 to talk about dementia. We can speak with you in any language. There are lots of ways you can get involved and help people affected by dementia – alzheimers.org.uk/get-involved

Code HS1 | Last reviewed July 2025 | Next review July 2028 | ©Alzheimer's Society, 2025. Registered charity No. 296645. Our thanks to Alzheimer's Society for this information.

Meet the forum member

Meet the Forum Member: Nick Tegerdine

Top quality healthcare is a right, not a privilege.

For Nick, having worked in healthcare for most of his life in Britain, as well as Europe, Japan and America with colleagues in countries across the world; this founding principle of the NHS is as true today as it was in 1948 when the NHS began.

It's because he has experience of not for profit and private sector healthcare over all those settings and years that he saw the importance of patient participation groups and patient voice in helping make the necessary changes that need to happen in the NHS.

We have a lot to be proud of but we also have a lot to learn.

Having worked mostly in Addictions (Nick's is mainly chocolate biscuits and Nottingham Forest!), he has a lot to offer in relation to health, care and addictions and the way we frame the questions around health. For example, is alcohol abuse a health problem with social consequences, or a social problem with health consequences?

For Nick finding the person/people/system that is best placed to do that job is the problem the NHS faces: simply who is best placed to do the job? (Rather than who holds the budget).

Nick has deep experience as a carer and with health issues (thyroid and a very painful footballing injury). His experiences inform and sharpen his resolve to work to make things better not just for himself but for everyone.

The PPG is one way to make a difference.

In the couple of years that he's been a member he has seen positive changes in awareness and trust: that is the process that's at the heart of delivering more and better things to more people, more of the time.

Much needs to be done at a national level so it doesn't always feel like more money thrown at a problem is the answer but rather the little things done locally that everyone feels.

As a keen gardener he says – '**Plant seeds and we all benefit**'.



Thanks to Nick Tegerdine (and Paula Sharratt for organising the Forum Member articles)

Digital Front Door (appointments) – Feedback from the Practice

Initial practice feedback following the changes to the system for requesting Doctors' appointments.

On the whole the change is going well.

The change has understandably caused anxiety for some patients, particularly those that struggle with technology. However, for most of those patients that have been in contact with us, when reception staff have helped to guide them through the process, they have felt more at ease with it.

Members of our Patients' Forum were kindly on hand in the waiting room during the first week and offered to show patients how to access and navigate the new system. They have volunteered to do more sessions like that, if there is a need.

Our reception and admin staff have also been assisting patients. For patients that are unable to use the system to send in a request, they have been calling the surgery and the reception staff have been completing the forms on their behalf.

We have made some alterations to the clinic templates, to give the triaging doctor enough time to be able to review the requests and pull out those that need an appointment that day, so that patients receive enough notice to be able to get to the surgery for their appointment. We may also need to alter the balance between the numbers of pre-bookable and on-the-day appointments that we have available, but we need to give it a bit longer to get a better feel for the demand.

Also, following feedback from a couple of patients, we have made alterations to two of the questionnaires, as they were missing some necessary options. We will continue to monitor how things are going and will tweak things as required.

We fully appreciate that change can be difficult and sometimes frightening, and we really appreciate the support that the Patients' Forum members have given us and to the patients as a whole, who have been working with us to enter into this brave new world of technology. Our overall aim as a practice continues to be to provide the best and most appropriate care possible for our patients and we are confident that this new process will allow us to better manage the increasing demand on the service to be able to continue to do this. In the next month or two, with the help of our Patients' Forum, we will be doing a survey of patient experience with the system and hope that we will receive some constructive feedback from this, that we can use to further improve the process.

Our thanks for this article go to Carol Wilson – Practice Manager

Self-Care Walk. The Hook, Lady Bay Holme Grove

The Hook, Lady Bay Holme Grove, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2

Walking is one of the easiest and most effective ways to improve our health. It helps maintain a healthy weight, strengthens bones and muscles, supports heart health, and boosts mood. With that in mind, here is a suggested walk you can enjoy right on our doorstep.

About The Hook

The Hook is a Local Nature Reserve on the banks of the River Trent in Lady Bay, Rushcliffe. Managed by Rushcliffe Borough Council with support from local volunteers, it is a rich patchwork of riverside meadow, woodland, ponds, and grassland. It offers a variety of circular paths, most of which are flat and suitable for different levels of ability.

Why It's Good for You

- Gentle exercise: The level paths make it accessible whether you want a short stroll or a longer circuit.
- Fresh air: The wide-open meadows and riverbank provide a refreshing change from indoor spaces.
- Mental wellbeing: Time in green spaces is proven to reduce stress and lift mood.
- Wildlife interest: Spot birds, butterflies, and seasonal plants along the way, making the walk more engaging.

A Suggested Route

- Start at the entrance from Mona Road in Lady Bay.
- Follow the main path towards the river, passing through grassland alive with wildflowers in spring and summer.
- Turn right to walk along the riverbank, with wide views across the Trent.
- Loop back through the wooded area before returning to the entrance.

This route takes around 30–40 minutes at an easy pace, though you can extend or shorten it depending on time and energy. Benches are available for resting, and the paths are mostly suitable for pushchairs and mobility aids.

Practical Tips

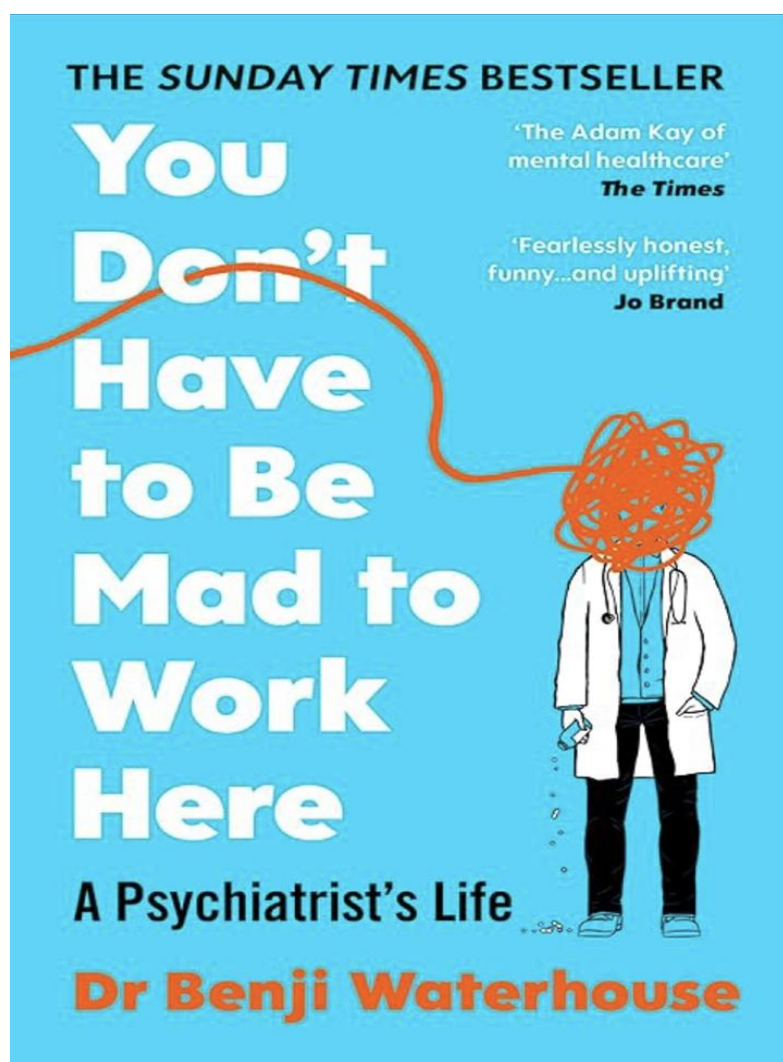
- Wear comfortable shoes suitable for uneven ground.
- Take a bottle of water.
- If the weather has been wet, paths can be muddy in places.
- Cafés in Lady Bay or West Bridgford make a pleasant stop afterwards.

More walks can be found under the Walk Notts link below – see the ‘Walk Everywhere’ feature <https://walknotts.org.uk/>

Thank you to Claire Bicknell for this ‘A Health-Boosting Walk Around Holme Pierrepont’ article

The Doctor recommends...

I would recommend this book for a late summer read. Benji Waterhouse is a consultant psychiatrist who is also a stand-up comedian. Some very funny observations about working in a mental health team, but also a sad reflection on the decimation of mental health services over the last 10 years. It will make you laugh and cry.



Thank you to Dr Matthew Jelpke for this recommendation

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

St. George's Patients' Forum Annual General Meeting 1st July 2025

This event was again well attended - by nearly 80 people plus Doctors Jelpke, Hapgood and Bevan, as well as Carol Wilson, Practice Manager.

The Chair, Malcolm Ginever welcomed everyone and spoke about how the Forum has increased in numbers and diversity, however the Practice has in excess of 14,000 patients so it is a big task to try and ensure that we tackle the issues that are of most concern to people, especially those marginalised for any reason.

He and the Vice Chair Claire Bicknell then outlined the achievements of the Forum during the Year including input into the CQC “Good” report outcome, hosting the “flu queues” and supporting rollout of the new Digital Front Door appointment and query system. Also producing a lively and interesting newsletter and providing a mural in the Children’s area of the waiting room, upon which we hope to build to engage and interest younger patients.

Gwynneth Owen then gave a topical talk on her South Notts Dementia project, which is all about “Building a Dementia Friendly Community”. The message was that people with dementia should be understood, respected and supported and she outlined ways in which this can be demonstrated. Also she provided a list of ways in which the Patients’ Forum can support this initiative. This work will start soon led by the new Dementia sub group. It must be mentioned however that the Practice are already carrying out recommendations previously made by Gwynneth.

The main topic of the evening was the new system for online interaction for patients requesting services via the “Digital Front Door”.

Dr. Jelpke gave a detailed presentation covering why it is necessary to change, how the changes will be integrated into current services and how people can find out more and get support. There was a lively question and answer session, involving all the Practice staff, including: -

- Can patients provide photos/videos of their condition? (yes to photos, no to videos)
- Can 3rd parties e.g. carers complete the online forms? (yes)
- Is confidentiality a problem? (No, online forms will only be accessed by appropriate staff)
- Can you reach the elderly with the system? (Yes, receptionists can help over the phone, in fact the new system means there will be more time for them to help those in need.)

Malcolm emphasized that the Forum will continue to play a role in embedding the new system as a “critical friend”.

Evaluating the event

Many people gave their views on the AGM itself, on the Practice and on communications. Comments about the Practice were overwhelmingly positive, as were those about the speakers. There were some comments that will need investigation. For example, communication like the newsletter and the online podcasts are not accessed as much as we would like. Some helpful comments were provided which will give the Forum scope for thought over the next few months.

Four people expressed interest in Forum membership and two have actively followed this up.

At the most recent Forum meeting the feeling was that the AGM was a success, to be built upon in 2026.

Thanks to Chrissie Wells for this article

And of course Claire’s very own Doctor, Doctor joke:

**Doctor, Doctor I feel like I’m a bridge.
What’s come over you?
Two buses, five cars and a bicycle!**

Coming up in October:

- 1-31 Breast Cancer Awareness Month; 1-31 National Cholesterol Month; 1-31 ADHD Awareness Month; 1-31 Stoptober

All views expressed in the Newsletter are personal and correct to the best of our knowledge. If you are worried or concerned about any of the issues raised, please see a medical professional. Hyperlinks and QR codes provided are linked to professional websites and societies who offer advice and help. It is of course up to you to decide whether to use them.

Editor: Phil Unsworth