



# St. George's Patient Forum Newsletter

Connecting Patients, Empowering Lives

October 2025

## Health awareness days/weeks/month: Key dates for October

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## Rushcliffe Social Prescribing Hub

### Rushcliffe Social Prescribing Community Hub is now open for its next incredible year!

The Rushcliffe Social Prescribing Community Hub reopened on **Monday 15th September** at West Bridgford Young People's Centre, ready to build on an incredible first year of success.

Each Monday begins with a **Drop-in (10am–12pm)**, where Rushcliffe residents can pop in for information, signposting and a friendly chat over tea or coffee. Later in the day, the Hub offers a wide mix of creative, physical and wellbeing sessions — from art and cooking to Qi Gong, yoga, mindfulness and lifestyle workshops.

A core feature of the Hub is its partnership with local wellbeing practitioners. This approach not only strengthens the local economy but also introduces residents to activities and providers they can access outside the Hub, helping build long-term healthy habits.

One attendee, a working mum in her 40s, shared her story:

"I referred myself to Social Prescribing last year when life became overwhelming. I was signed off work with stress and realised I'd lost sight of looking after myself. Coming to the Hub felt daunting at first, but the support has been invaluable. I joined counselling, mindfulness, Qi Gong and Pilates. These gave me the space to practise simple techniques that now form part of my daily routine. I finally feel like I have time for me again."

In its first year, the Hub gathered **766 feedback forms**, achieved a **9.4/10 experience rating**, and saw **43% of participants report fewer GP visits** — saving the NHS an estimated **£12,500–£37,700**.

👉 Find out more: [www.rushcliffehealth.org/sp-hub](http://www.rushcliffehealth.org/sp-hub)

Facebook: [facebook.com/RushcliffeSP](https://facebook.com/RushcliffeSP)

✉ Email: [nnicb-nn.rushcliffesocialprescribing@nhs.net](mailto:nnicb-nn.rushcliffesocialprescribing@nhs.net)

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

👉 [www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/rushcliffe-social-prescribing-service-108969547441](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/rushcliffe-social-prescribing-service-108969547441)

Or explore the full Friendship Calendar at:

👉 [www.rushcliffehealth.org/friendship-calendars](http://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](mailto:nnicb-nn.rushcliffesocialprescribing@nhs.net)

*Thank you Meg Kozian (Social Prescribing Link Worker)*

## Medical Insights: Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Your breasts can change for many reasons – like the menopause, pregnancy and breastfeeding, puberty or even during your period. So, if you check them regularly, you'll be able to spot any new or unusual changes that should be checked out by a GP.

Signs and symptoms of breast cancer include:

1. A **lump or swelling** in the breast, upper chest or armpit
2. A **change to the skin**, such as puckering or dimpling
3. A **change in the colour of the breast** – the breast may look darker, red or inflamed
4. A **nipple change**, for example it has become pulled in (inverted)
5. **Rash or crusting** around the nipple
6. **Unusual liquid** (discharge) from either nipple
7. **Changes in size or shape** of the breast

On its own, [pain in your breasts](#) is not usually a sign of breast cancer. But look out for pain in your breast or armpit that's there all or almost all the time.

Although rare, men can get breast cancer. The most common symptom of [breast cancer in men](#) is a lump in the chest area.

Most breast changes, including [breast lumps](#), are not cancer. But the sooner breast cancer is found, the more successful treatment is likely to be.

Get any new or unusual changes checked by a GP.

There's no special way to check your breasts and you do not need any training.

Checking your breasts is as easy as **TLC**:

1. **Touch** your breasts: can you feel anything new or unusual?
2. **Look** for changes: does anything look different to you?
3. **Check** any new or unusual changes with a GP

Everyone will have their own way of touching and looking for changes.

Get used to checking regularly and be aware of anything that's new or different for you.

Check your whole breast area, including up to your collarbone (upper chest) and armpits.

*Thanks to Breast CancerNow for the above information*

*More information can be found at <https://breastcancernow.org/>*

## Medical Insights (2): National Cholesterol Month

### What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a type of blood fat which is made in the liver. It's found in some foods too.

We all need some cholesterol in our bodies just to keep us ticking over, but having too much can clog up your arteries and lead to health problems in the future, including heart disease.

By getting a simple cholesterol test and making healthy lifestyle changes, most people can keep their cholesterol levels healthy.

### Why do we need cholesterol?

There is cholesterol in every cell in your body. It plays vital roles in how your body works, and it's especially important in your brain, nerves and skin.

Cholesterol has three main jobs:

- It's part of the outer layer, or membrane, of all your cells.
- It's used to make vitamin D and steroid hormones which keep your bones, teeth and muscles healthy.
- It's used to make bile, which helps to digest the fats you eat.

### What is LDL and HDL cholesterol?

There are different types of cholesterol which have different effects in the body. You might hear your healthcare professional talk about LDL cholesterol and HDL cholesterol, which are the two main types.

LDL cholesterol is often called 'bad cholesterol' because too much of it can clog up your arteries and lead to health problems later on, such as heart disease, heart attacks and strokes. You do need some LDL cholesterol in your blood. It's when there's too much that it's a problem.

HDL cholesterol is often called 'good cholesterol' because it carries cholesterol away from your cells, back to your liver to be broken down. So, it helps prevent disease.

### What raises your cholesterol?

Your cholesterol and triglycerides can become raised for a number of reasons. For example:

- a diet high in [saturated fats](#)
- not being active enough, so the fats you eat aren't used up for energy
- [genetic conditions](#) which mean the fats aren't processed in the usual way
- [other medical conditions](#).

### Learn more about the causes of high cholesterol

Cutting down on [saturated fat](#) and replace some of it with unsaturated fats is great way to lower your cholesterol. Foods which contain [unsaturated fats](#) include:

- vegetable oils such as olive, sunflower, corn, rapeseed, nut and seed oils
  - avocado, nuts and seeds
  - fat spreads made from vegetable oils, such as sunflower and olive oil
  - oily fish
1. Oily fish are a good source of healthy unsaturated fats, specifically a type called [omega-3 fats](#). Aim to eat two portions of fish per week, at least one of which should be oily. A portion is 140g, but you could have two or three smaller portions throughout the week. Tinned, frozen or fresh all count e.g. salmon, sardines, pilchards, trout, herring and mackerel.
  2. Fruits and vegetables can help reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers. They contain vitamins, minerals and plant chemicals which help you to stay healthy, and most contain little or no fat and are low in calories, so they can help you to stay a healthy weight. And, if you are eating more fruit and veg, chances are you're eating less of the other more energy-packed foods.
  3. Fruit and vegetables are also high in fibre, and some types of fibre can help to lower your cholesterol. It blocks some cholesterol from being absorbed from the intestines into the blood stream. Pulses such as beans, peas and lentils are particularly high in this kind of fibre. Sweet potato, aubergine, okra (ladies' fingers), broccoli, apples, strawberries and prunes are also good options.
  4. Sterols and stanols are plant chemicals which are a similar size and shape to cholesterol. They are absorbed from the intestines into the blood stream and block some cholesterol from being

absorbed, lowering the cholesterol in your blood. We get a small amount of sterols from plant-based foods such as vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, whole grains, fruits and vegetables, but it's not enough to lower cholesterol. So, food companies have developed foods with plant sterols or stanols added to them, such as mini yogurt drinks, fat spreads, milk and yogurts. These fortified foods lower your cholesterol gradually, over a few weeks, and how much depends on the amount you eat. Some experts believe they are the most effective single food for lowering cholesterol.

5. Oats and barley are grains which are rich in a type of fibre called beta glucan. Eating 3g of beta glucan a day as part of a healthy diet and lifestyle can help to lower cholesterol. When you eat beta glucan, it forms a gel which binds to cholesterol-rich bile acids in the intestines. This helps limit the amount of cholesterol that is absorbed from the gut into your blood. Your liver then has to take more cholesterol out of your blood to make more bile, which lowers your blood cholesterol.
6. Nuts are a good source of [unsaturated fats](#) and are lower in [saturated fats](#), a mix which can help to keep your cholesterol in check. They contain fibre which can help block some cholesterol being absorbed into the blood stream from the gut, as well as protein, vitamin E, magnesium, potassium, natural plant [sterols](#) and other plant nutrients which help keep your body healthy. They're also filling, so you're less likely to snack on other things.
7. Soya beans and the foods that are made from them are perfect for a heart-healthy diet. They're full of protein, vitamins and minerals, and they're low in saturated fat. Soya products are a good option for replacing foods which are high in saturated fat such as meat, full fat cream and dairy products, and snacks such as crisps.

## Meet the forum member – Roger Johnson

### Meet the Forum Member: Roger Johnson



I became a member of the Patients' Forum nearly 3 years ago. Why? I can't really remember except that as a patient at St. George's for as long as it has existed, I was keen to help where possible.

I have spent over 40 years in the computer industry, working in the UK, Europe and America. My last contract was at Boots in Beeston redesigning some of the manufacturing systems. I have also been in church leadership for at least 40 years and well understand the need for living a balanced life, ensuring the health of body, mind and spirit. So many of the ills of society are caused by the pressures placed upon us and the competitive nature of society. Having managed the IT department of an international company, I placed a great emphasis on helping people to develop their skills and reaching their full potential. Likewise, in the church, my focus is on helping people discover their true selves and to be free from the unhelpful pressures of life.

As a member of the Patients' Forum in the early days, I was overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the NHS, the many groups and organisations which are in existence and the immense pressure on the staff at St. George's and NHS generally. Our daughter lives in Gotham with her husband who has a brain injury and so she balances a full-time job with her caring for her husband. Her husband uses the excellent services of Headway, the brain injury people, who, like many charities today, are reliant on our financial support and advocacy. Our son and his family live in France, just over the border from Geneva where he works at the UN. We have been blessed with 2 amazing grandsons. Again, we see the desperate need for a balanced lifestyle as the international pressures of today, along with the whimsical nature of POTUS mean that the UN are struggling to make ends meet in order to fulfil their vital role in international diplomacy.

I helped in a small way redesigning the St. George's web site and more recently, along with other team members, in designing the paperwork advertising the Digital Front Door. But now, at first hand, I fully appreciate the pressures on our GPs. You can choose your friends - but they can't choose their patients. We come in all shapes and sizes and some of us are not the ideal patient. But all credit to St. George's for their amazing service to our community for keeping us healthy and positive.

*Thanks to Roger Johnson for this Forum Member article)*



## HealthWatch – An event to discuss the findings of the GP Access Desktop Study

At the recent Forum meeting, Helen Miller gave a comprehensive explanation about the HealthWatch GP Access Desktop Study, what it set out to do and what it achieved. She emphasized that patient feedback is vital at the current stage of changes to the NHS and as the new GP contracts are due to start. Some of the findings Nottswide are startling. Please would you consider attending the event below if you possibly can. Your input will be allowed during it. The link is below for ease of access.

### GP ACCESS

Healthwatch is excited to share that it will be hosting an online stakeholder event to discuss the findings of our GP Access Desktop Study!

Date: Wednesday 8 October 2025

Time: 11:00 – 12:30

Location: Online

Book your free spot via Eventbrite : [https://GP\\_Access\\_Desktop\\_Study\\_Stakeholder\\_Event.eventbrite.com](https://GP_Access_Desktop_Study_Stakeholder_Event.eventbrite.com)

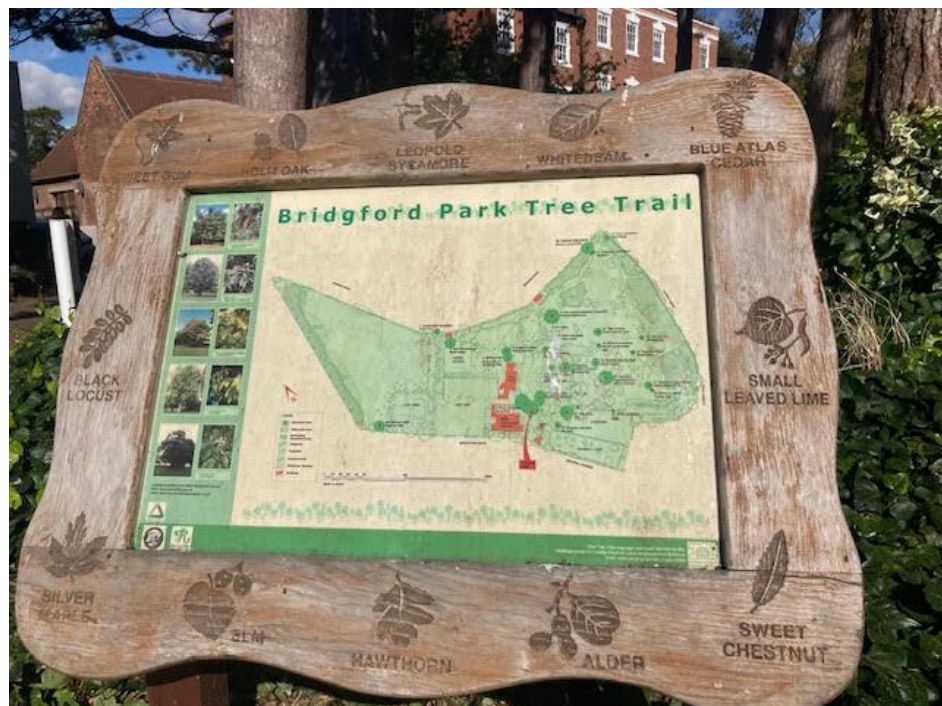
This session will share key findings from the report, celebrate local progress and explore where improvements are still needed. Everyone is encouraged to attend, it's a great opportunity to be part of the conversation and engage with some key partners!

*Our thanks for this article go to Helen Miller – HealthWatch*

## Self-Care Walk. Walking in West Bridgford Park

### Walking in West Bridgford Park

West Bridgford Park is one of the most welcoming and accessible green spaces in our area, and it makes a wonderful choice for a gentle local walk. Situated just off Bridgford Road in the heart of the town, it is easy to reach on foot, by bus, or by car. The paths are wide and level, making them suitable for most walking abilities, including those who use wheelchairs, walking aids, or pushchairs, and benches are dotted throughout the park to provide resting points whenever a pause is needed.



The park has something to enjoy in every season. Brightly planted flowerbeds bring colour in spring and summer, while the mature trees create a leafy canopy that is especially peaceful in autumn.

Open green lawns offer space to relax or simply take in the fresh air, and along the edges you will spot the historic West Bridgford Hall, a Grade II listed building that adds a sense of character and history to the surroundings.



A simple walk begins at the main entrance on Bridgford Road. From here, you can take a gentle circuit around the park, starting along the main pathway that leads past the play area. Continue towards the open green space at the far side, where there are views across to the tennis courts and bowls green, before looping back along the tree-lined paths towards your starting point.



This route is not long – around 15 to 20 minutes at an easy pace – but it can be extended by adding extra laps or exploring some of the side paths if you feel up to it.

For many people, a walk feels even more enjoyable when combined with a social stop, and West Bridgford offers plenty of options. After leaving the park, you will find a wide selection of local coffee shops and cafés along Central Avenue and Bridgford Road, perfect for a light refreshment or a chance to catch up with friends. Even a short walk has proven benefits for health and wellbeing. Spending time outdoors can help lift mood, ease stress, and improve energy levels. For anyone looking to build more movement into daily life, West Bridgford Park is a friendly, accessible place to start — whether you're on your own, walking with a friend, or joining family for some time outside together.

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 'Walking in West Bridgford Park' article*



## Ask the Doctor – your questions answered.

Q:- who is eligible for a COVID vaccination this October?

A:- This Autumn, those eligible are the same as were in our Spring booster campaign. It is different from last Autumn.

For Autumn 2025, COVID-19 vaccination will be offered to:

- adults aged 75 years and over
- residents in care homes for older adults
- individuals who are immunosuppressed aged 6 months and over

This represents a change from the Autumn 2024 programme, which also included adults aged 65 to 74 and all those aged 6 months and over in a clinical risk group.

*Thank you to Dr Matthew Jelpke for this Q & A*

## No Destination?

**No destination!**



Something my yoga teacher says very often, and which made me think recently is just that. You have no destination. Usually this is in the context of a pose that requires a bit of a stretch, and the vision pops into your head of a young incredibly bendy yoga devotee achieving an acrobatic posture that makes the normal person's eyes water.

That is not the purpose of yoga however, it is to work with your own body and learn to listen to it.

But when you apply that to your own life, isn't it always the case that everything we do has an aim, an element of achievement, and, yes, a destination.

We put incredible pressure on ourselves to hit deadlines, put on amazing meals for family and friends, be the best sportsperson we can be, and it is no accident that we call it a "career path" when we seek fulfilling, well paid jobs with the option of advancement. All through life we accept these demands which put varying amounts of pressure on us. With Christmas approaching this is even more evident.

Think about the things we have chosen to do or been coaxed into doing since childhood, - dance classes, violin lessons, concerts, language lessons, gymnastics martial arts....

Therefore, can we not sometimes give ourselves the gift of some physical spaces or times which do not involve actually getting somewhere, either physically or mentally, some time when we can enjoy just "being", or doing an activity which does not involve challenge or competitiveness? Sometimes I just sit and think, sometimes I just sit!

Perhaps it is time to learn how to be happy doing what we enjoy, and just being present in ourselves without a goal?

It's not about being directionless or abandoning goals and destinations, it's about pulling into a layby for rest and refreshment!



*Thanks to Chrissie Wells for this article*

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

**Doctor, Doctor, I can't stop singing "The Green, Green Grass of Home."  
That sounds like Tom Jones syndrome.  
Is it common?  
It's not unusual!**

**Coming up in November:**

- 1-30<sup>th</sup> Movember;
- 1-30<sup>th</sup> Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month;
- 1-30<sup>th</sup> National Diabetes Month, including 12<sup>th</sup> - World Diabetes day;
- 1<sup>st</sup> National Stress Awareness Day;
- 17-23<sup>rd</sup> Self-Awareness Week

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*