Shipston Medical Centre
Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Website: https://shipstonmc.warwickshire.nhs.uk/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/ShipstonGP
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ShipstonMC
Instagram: shipstonmedicalcentrenhs

No 27: January 2025

EARLY SPRING EDITION



STAFFING UPDATE

At the end of December we said thank you to Julia Thornton and Alison Butler, two nurses who have worked with us for the past year whilst our Nurse Manager Lauren Hope was on maternity leave. As Lauren has now returned (welcome back Lauren!) we will be seeing less of Julia and Alison but they have kindly agreed to stay on and support us with our extended access appointments.

In January Dr Eilidh Mackenzie, GP registrar leaves to go and have her second baby. We wish her the very best at this exciting time for her family!

In February we say goodbye to Dr Shubhi Kishwan, a GP registrar who has been on placement with us for the past 6 months.

We will be welcoming two new registrars in February (names tbc), they are both second year foundation doctors who will be spending half their working week with us and the other half on an obstetrics and gynaecology placement.

WORKING TOGETHER……

We are very fortunate here to have such a caring and compassionate team. Each day I watch my team strive to deliver the best patient care they can in the face of the pressures of the NHS. We have worked very hard in the past year to design a new appointment system which means all our patients can access a fair, safe and equitable service.

It is understandable that our patients are often very poorly or experiencing high levels of stress which often results in frustration, anxiety and occasionally a short temper! Unfortunately we are finding that more patient encounters are resulting in anger and frustration at our staff for factors outside of our control.

Some recurrent themes are frustration around wait times at hospitals, unrealistic expectations for the completing of medical forms/reports and misunderstanding on the time it takes to process medication requests.

Today I wanted to offer some helpful tips that may help patients to work with us to get the very best from the service therefore reducing some of the frustrations which in turn will help maintain positive relationships with the surgery.

First of all please be aware that we are providing services to a lot of people each day, and will always prioritise the work according to clinical urgency. We appreciate your need is important to you, but please be considered of the needs of others as sometimes other people need more immediate attention. Similarly, we will signpost to other services where appropriate, in line with government policy and in order to enable us to help as many people who need it as possible. For minor ailments a pharmacy may be able to help you quicker than we can due to the demand on our services. Visit https://www.happyhealthylives.uk/services-programmes/think-which-service/ to learn more about the different services available to you.

When asking for our help, either via reception or using the online form, the more clear information you can give us the easier it is for the GP who will look at the information to identify how urgent your need is and whether there is another service that may help you.

Did you know that you can submit a form via our website for other requests, not just appointments? You will be responded to within one working day by the person most appropriate to help with your query. Go to https://shipstonmc.warwickshire.nhs.uk/ and contact us online. This can improve communication as both the patient and the surgery can be more explicit and explain more clearly timeframes for completion of work.

The NHS app makes ordering medications the easiest. You can do it at any time of day, see when it was last issued, and if a GP has approved the request (so you know that the pharmacy have received the prescription). This results in less phone calls to check on the status of the request or wasted trips to pharmacies as it is not ready yet. The app can be used for other things, for example contacting 111 who can be helpful when we are closed, for advice or if you have gone away and forgotten to take your medication with you.

We frequently find that patients forget to order prescriptions and then need it quickly, causing anxiety for the patient as they don't want their medication to run out, and it also puts additional pressure on our staff. We would encourage patients to find a way to remind yourself to order medications in time. Most medications are prescribed in quantities that last 28 days (4 weeks). It is important that we issue medication safely therefore many checks occur before the medication is handed over the counter.

The NHS is completely overwhelmed as I am sure you are aware which presents so many challenges for you the patient and us the service but I am confident that with some kindness and compassion we can come together as a community and fight these challenges together.

Rachel Vial, Practice Manager

AUTOMATED PRESCRIPTION COLLECTION MACHINE

Towards the end of January 2025 we are having a Medpoint automated prescription collection machine embedded into the front of the building to the right of the front door. This will enable collection of medications dispensed by us 24 hours a day via the machine for people who wish to use this service. It is an 'opt in' service so we will only put your medications in the automated prescription collection machine if you have asked us to, we will still offer desk collection. To use this service you will need to be a registered patient and collect your medications from our dispensary (to be eligible to use our dispensary you will need to live over 1 mile from a pharmacy).

Whilst the automated prescription collection machine is being installed there may be a small amount of disruption, for which we apologise.





This month the focus for this series turns to…
Rachel Ryan – Active Monitoring Practitioner

Rachel's job title is probably one of the least familiar so far in this series, certainly to me, so I welcomed the opportunity to find out exactly what support she offers to patients.

How do you become an Active Monitoring Practitioner? Well in Rachel's case her career route began with studying for an Open University degree in psychology and criminal psychology whilst working as a police custody officer. She then deciding to retrain for a mental health role on her return to work having had children. Now employed by Coventry and Warwickshire MIND, the mental health charity, Rachel has provided support to Shipston Medical Centre (SMC) patients for just over 2 years now.

So – Rachel explained that she is trained to provide level 1 Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) which can help patients who want to cope better with problems such as depression, anxiety, grief, loss, stress, anger, menopause related mental health symptoms, loneliness, low self-esteem.

I wondered how CBT compares to counselling. Apparently counselling focusses on help to understand past events (such as a bereavement) in order to move forward, whereas CBT is primarily about changing behaviour and the way we think about things to build positive coping techniques.

Rachel described how, using a variety of tools and techniques, she works with patients over six sessions to understand and break down their problems in a positive way, helping them deal practically, step by step, with what might initially seem to be an overwhelming challenge.

An example might be a patient wanting to address their social anxiety, a disorder which causes fear or anxiety in social situations, including school or work. During the first session, Rachel seeks to understand the triggers for that fear, and any associated unhelpful thoughts and behaviours. She then works out with the patient what they can change. Each subsequent session provides an opportunity to review how they are getting on in putting those changes, a step at a time, into practice to help make sure that progress towards being comfortable in a social setting is maintained. Apparently one of the biggest benefits of CBT is that even after all sessions are completed you can continue to apply the principles learned to your daily life which makes it less likely that your symptoms will return.

How do you get an appointment with Rachel? The SMC GPs, nurses, and Jacqui Close (social prescriber) can all refer patients to her and she is qualified to work with adults and children from the age of 11 who can be accompanied by a parent or trusted adult during the sessions. Self-help resources are also available through NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Talking Therapies www.talkingtherapies.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/self-referral and Wellbeing for Warwickshire www.wellbeingforwarwickshire.org.uk
For patients who do seek help from Rachel, any who prove at the first assessment session to have more complex mental health issues can then be signposted to a more appropriate service.

My impression having spent time with Rachel was that she gains a good deal of satisfaction from her job. This she confirmed saying that she really enjoys providing her patients with a safe space and support for them to explore and work through their problems. As you would expect, this is a confidential and judgement free service, helping people to progress towards a more positive frame of mind and more able to manage the challenges in their daily lives.

Carole Nossiter, Chair, Shipston PPG

DEFIBRILLATOR

We are very proud to announce that we are now a host of a community access defibrillator which has been installed and will be maintained by Shipston First Responders.



A defibrillator or an AED (automated external defibrillator) is a portable life saving device that can give a casualty's heart an electric shock, when it has stopped beating normally in a sudden cardiac arrest.

Using a defibrillator before an ambulance arrives can significantly increase someone's chance of survival. If it should be needed the 999 operator will direct the caller to the nearest defibrillator whilst someone performs CPR.

We are very proud to host this machine for our community!

MEN'S MATTER EVENT

On 17th October 2024, our PCN (primary care network) hosted an event on behalf of SMC and 2 other surgeries, inviting men to drop in to learn more about the ways in which the NHS supports their health.

It was a great success but has raised a number of questions in regards to PSA (prostate specific antigen) testing that we would like to clarify.

There is currently no national screening program for prostate cancer because of the risk of false positives and indeed some false negatives. However PSA tests are used by our clinicians to aid them in diagnosing prostate conditions including cancer.

If a patient requests a PSA test we will book an appointment with a GP first to counsel the patient on the risks and benefits and how to reduce the potential for inaccuracies. We can also then discuss any symptoms that may be troubling the patient. More information on PSA testing can be found at https://www.mysurgerywebsite.co.uk/website/C82056/files/PSA%20Info%20Leaflet.pdf

We do not offer health checks routinely to men based on their gender but do invite patients who are aged between 40 and 74 for a NHS health check every 5 years if the patient has no pre-existing condition. This check includes BP, weight, cholesterol checks, lifestyle questions which help derive a cardiovascular risk score.

However as is the case with any patient regardless of gender or age, we encourage patients to submit a form via our website for an appointment for any concerning symptoms or family history that is troubling them.

SHIPSTON KNITTING COMMUNITY PROJECT 2024





Jacqui Close, Social Prescriber from Shipston Medical Centre, recently came up with the idea of running a very special project in support of the Stratford upon Avon based Little Bird Baby Bank.

Jacqui, whose role includes connecting people to community based activities, organisations and services in the local area, encouraged knitters and crocheters across the Shipston community to apply their skills to making jackets, blankets and tiny hats for the baby bank during Autumn 2024.

'Little Bird', which holds regular sessions in Shipston, gratefully accepts donations of clothes, quality toys, furniture and accessories which are then made available for local families in need.

Not only did the Shipston crafting community come together with a new sense of purpose to create 240 items of baby clothing and accessories, the project also served to help build new friendships and a support network for those involved to benefit from into the future.

Jacqui said '*this project really took off – people thoroughly enjoyed having a project to work to, the opportunity to mix with others and share skills – it produced a real feel-good factor*'

Photo: Jacqui displays some of the items created by the Shipston knitting community.
Jacqui holds drop in sessions 10 – 12 MD each Thursday morning at the Shipston Community Warm Hub, Scout Hut, New Road Shipston.

The Little Bird Baby Bank can be contacted via their website: https://suababybank.co.uk/

THE NHS APP – WHAT CAN YOU ACTUALLY DO WITH IT…..

The NHS App was launched in 2019 as an online tool to help patients find health information and access NHS services. Since then the NHS app functionality has grown and there are a number of uses that we think our patients may not be aware of.

Most users know that you can order your repeat prescriptions through the app. The request is sent electronically for your doctor to approve and then sent to dispensary or a pharmacy of your choice. Did you know that the app tells you when we have approved it though? Once approved your medication should be ready to collect from your nominated dispensary/pharmacy in 2-3 days. Saving you a wasted trip to the pharmacy if it is

not read yet. Don't forget we need 1-2 days to approve your request.

Leading on from this did you know you can change your nominated pharmacy in the app too? Say your chosen pharmacy closes, you can instruct us where to send your prescriptions every time through this option. Saving you a lengthy phone call to the practice or having to pop in when we are open which may be inconvenient. You can even change it to an out of area pharmacy if you find yourself temporarily living elsewhere for a few weeks.

Once enabled you are able to view your GP record directly through the app in real time. Every time a clinician writes in your record, or files a letter from a hospital, or reviews your test results, these will show in the NHS app allowing you to be more in control of your healthcare. Ever wondered when the last time your blood glucose was checked? Check your test results! Can't remember the name of the doctor you last saw in hospital was? Check your documents. If you haven't done so already you will need to request full medical access via our contact us online form on our website. At this point we will remind you that if there is any information that is not clear or concerns you to get in touch.

Appointment reminders can also appear in the NHS app giving patients peace of mind that they won't forget their appointments. This is in the messages section of the app and depending on your phone notifications will pop up a banner whenever you are nearing an appointment. Perhaps the biggest development recently has been the introduction of hospital information in the app. For some users depending on the hospital they are being treated in, they are able to get messages, appointment reminders and documents too.

Lastly and not leastly, did you know you can submit a form for an appointment or an administrative query through the NHS app too? This works in exactly the same way as our website but is conveniently stored in the NHS app making it easily accessible. Click services in the bottom tab and contact your GP about a health problem.

We hope this has highlighted the many uses of the app. There are many helpful videos on YouTube if you get stuck or would like some tutorials on how to do certain actions. Haven't downloaded the NHS app yet? View this video to learn how to download and register for the NHS App https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0SCcLtw8JA

TRAINING PRACTICE

Did you know Shipston Medical Centre is a training practice? We regularly have trainees from the Oxford Education Deanery and Warwick Medical School with Dr Richard Levison, Dr Emily McHale and Dr Carolyn Barcoe taking responsibility for allocated doctor's training and mentorship.
Why do we do this? With a shortage of GPs nationally the Practice feels it is our duty to participate in the future training of doctors. We want to entice medical students and qualified doctors into a career in general practice and show what a rewarding career it can offer. Through participating in the mentorship of doctors we are building relationships for future recruitment, something every GP practice is struggling with in an overwhelmed NHS.

All the doctors that train with us are an important part of team. We have ST1, ST2 and ST3 doctors regularly. These are qualified doctors who have decided to pursue a career as a GP. Some will be with us for a few months, some for a few years depending on their working/training schedule. Some of these doctors will also be completing a dual placement in a speciality in a hospital setting such as gynaecology or psychiatry, bringing this experience into primary care. These doctors are able to diagnose, prescribe medications, refer for tests such as x-rays and refer to hospital if needed just like our regular employed GPs. They have longer appointments to allow them to discuss their patients with their supervising GP if needed.

Additionally, we have short term placements for 6-8 weeks for medical students from Warwick University. These placements are very different and will be under the direct supervision of trained GPs in the practice. They will get the opportunity to undertake some examinations, obtain some

patient histories and observe patient consultations. This is our opportunity to spark their interest in primary care and allow them to see what a career as a GP looks like. We are very fortunate to have a welcoming group of patients who allow these students the opportunity to learn. We will always check with patients before their consultation if they are happy for medical students to observe and patients can change their mind at any point.

With new ST2 doctors rotating into our practice next month we wanted to take the opportunity to explain more about the training completed at SMC and its importance in shaping the future of the NHS.

SURGERY CLOSURES

Staff Meetings

The surgery is closed for staff meetings between 1 and 1.45pm on:

Wednesday 19th February 2025
Thursday 27th March 2025

Staff Training

Each month all Warwickshire GP surgeries are closed for one afternoon from 12.30pm for staff training. The next dates are:

Wednesday 29th January 2025
Thursday 27th February 2025
Wednesday 19th March 2025

THE DR SUE PRITCHARD MEMORIAL CHALLENGE

Following community feedback the FREE memorial challenge activities which are successfully delivered by the Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership (SHWP) are being expanded from 11 November to include Pickleball at the Townsend Hall, Shipston on Stour each Monday 1:30-3:30pm. No need to book, please pop in and have a go.

LET'S TALK BOXERCISE

Let's talk Boxercise has had a face lift and listening to the community, we have adapted the model. Boxercise is a fun, non-combative form of exercise great for fitness, coordination and combatting stress. It's based on the principles of boxing training, but you won't come home with a black eye! It really is suitable for all, and no prior training or level of fitness is required. We have adapted the sessions to also include Pickleball, which is the fastest growing sport in the USA. There are 2 courts available so plenty of opportunities to play this fun sport. Pickleball is from 5 - 6pm and Boxercise 6 - 7pm, every Thursday.

We have also lowered the age limit so anyone from 12 - 18 can come along.
All sessions and classes are free of charge and can be booked via https://bookwhen.com/shwp88 [bookwhen.com] [bookwhen.com] or via the QR code below.

First come, first served.

NEW TOY LIBRARY OPENING

The Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership are delighted to announce the opening of The Stour Toy Library. Located at St Edmunds Church on a Monday afternoon, 2 - 3pm, members will be able to collect and return toys. There will be an online booking system in place to pre-order your

toys in advance. There is an initial administration cost for becoming a member but borrowing is then free of charge. Initially the toys available will be for babies and preschool children. If you would like more information, please email thestourtoylibrary@gmail.com and we hope to see you there.

www.shwp.org.uk [shwp.org.uk]



To find out more, take a look at the website (https://www.shwp.org.uk/) or call 01608 663320 or email admin@shwp.org

COMMUNITY WARM HUBS

The Shipston Community Warm Hub continues to be open each Thursday 10am to 12 noon at the Scout Hut on New Street. You're assured a warm welcome, a good cuppa with cake and biscuits and the chance to make new friends. Keep an eye out for updates in future newsletters on regular events that will be hosted there on a monthly basis. Also why not check out the news page on Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership's website: https://www.shwp.org.uk/news/

Every Thursday Jacqui Close, Social Prescriber from Shipston Medical Centre and a counsellor from Mind are on hand to assist with any health and wellbeing needs.

1st Thursday of each month there are tools and resources to help people get online. Staff will be able to run through basic digital questions.

1st and 2nd Thursday of each month there will be cooking sessions with Wendy. Ideally, please book a place the week before.

3rd Thursday of each month the Frailty Nurse from Shipston Medical Centre will be there.

4th Thursday of each month Shipston Home Nursing staff will come to offer **bereavement support.**

HAVE YOU HEARD OF HEALTHWATCH WARWICKSHIRE?

Healthwatch Warwickshire is an independent service for everyone who uses health and social care services. Together with their volunteers they help make your voice heard and improve services including GP surgeries, Hospital Services, Social Care Services, Dental Practices and others. Tell them about your experience of local NHS and social care services. This is their webpage https://www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk/ but they can also be contacted on phone - 01926 422 823 and on email - info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk; Instagram - healthwatch_warwickshire and Twitter. - @healthwatchwarw

SHARING THE INFORMATION

If you know of patients who aren't on Facebook do let them know that the newsletter is available for collection from Reception, Dispensary and in the Waiting Room. If they have their medication

delivered, they can also ask the delivery driver for a copy.

The newsletter is also published on our website under Patient News, and we alert on Facebook and Twitter when it's published. We are also trialling emailing out to patients so if you'd like to be added to the email list then please contact reception.