Shipston Medical Centre
Patient Participation Group (PPG)
Website: https://shipstonmc.warwickshire.nhs.uk/
X: https://x.com/ShipstonGP
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ShipstonMC
Instagram: shipstonmedicalcentrenhs
No 31: January 2026

NEW YEAR EDITION



Sincere thanks from all members of the medical centre team for your kind Christmas messages and gifts. We would like to wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year.

STAFFING UPDATE

We are excited and delighted to announce that our lead nurse, Lauren Hope, will be becoming a partner in the practice. This is the first time we have had a nurse join the partnership and are appreciative of the perspective she brings.

Dr Yang is now staying with us until the end of his training and thus will remain with us for a few more months. Dr Enerji, will be working with us as a locum until the end of the summer and we welcome Dr MacKenzie back in February following her maternity leave. Dr MacKenzie remains with us in a training post until May 2027. Dr Shankar Babu finishes his training placement with us in early February.

Since our last newsletter the practice has said goodbye to Sarah Heath from our clinical administration team, who has moved to a position at another GP surgery closer to where she lives. We are currently recruiting for a GP Assistant to join the same team.

In Memory of Helen West

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Helen, a valued member of our dispensing team, in November 2025. Helen worked with our practice for just over six years, bringing with her a wealth of experience from her many years working at Boots in Shipston.

A highly qualified and knowledgeable dispenser, Helen served the patients of our community with kindness, empathy, and meticulous attention to detail. Her colleagues fondly recall the thoughtful, personalised notes she would leave on prescriptions to ensure every patient's needs were met.

Helen was known for her positivity and resilience – never dwelling on difficulties, but instead focusing on the bright side and sharing her warm, bubbly energy with everyone around her. She welcomed new team members with open arms, offered empathy and support to all colleagues, and always made people feel comfortable.

Her sense of humour and impeccable style (complete with a collection of fabulous hats!) brought joy to the workplace. Organised and principled, Helen stood up for what was right and embodied the values of care and compassion in everything she did.

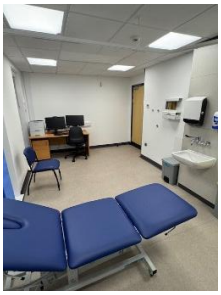
Helen will be deeply missed by all of us at the practice and by the many patients whose lives she touched over the years.

MOVE TO THE ELLEN BADGER CLINICAL ROOMS

We reported last time that we would begin providing care from the Ellen Badger (EB) Clinical Rooms (1st floor of the hospital) from early December.

Unfortunately the lease has taken longer than anticipated to finalise, but we are nearly there. We therefore hope to take posession of the new space in February. The rooms are equipped and ready to go (see below), so from the lease being finalised to us commencing delivery at the site should be a matter of weeks. This will be the first time for a very long

time that we will have been able to increase our clinical space, offering greater access for patients in a modern healthcare environment.



The provision of this new space also enables us the opportunity to invest in the existing Medical Centre building, reconfiguring space to meet service provision needs and improving the specification of clinical rooms.

We therefore expect that once we take possession of the Ellen Badger Rooms (EBR) we will temporarily reduce services at the main Medical Centre site in order to make improvements.

In the longer term, once refurbishment of the main Medical Centre building is complete we will have the same team, and same high quality service provision, working as one practice across both sites.

- Routine GP appointments will generally be at the Ellen Badger.
- Acute GP needs will remain at the Medical Centre
- Nursing appointments will be at both sites:
- Main reception and dispensary services (including blood pressure monitoring, sample collection, and all administrative requests) will remain at the Medical Centre.

Once we have taken possession of the space at the Ellen Badger, patients will need to be aware which site their appointment is booked at. This will be highlighted when you book your appointment and will also show in the NHS App/online services.

***PLEASE NOTE** - patients with an appointment at the Ellen Badger Rooms (EBR) will be able to both check in direct and make appointments there.*



Such patients should make their way to the first floor, register on the SMC check-in screen (see picture) and then wait in the waiting area to be called for their appointment. A receptionist will generally be on site to help patients with any queries about their care.

It is intended that prescriptions generated for patients attending for consultations at the EBR will be transmitted electronically to the dispensary meaning that patients will not have to walk between the two sites to deliver prescriptions by hand. This should be available shortly after we start providing services at the Ellen Badger.

Thank you for your continued support as we take this exciting next step in developing local healthcare for Shipston and the surrounding area.

LOCAL SPECIALIST CARE FOR FRAIL PATIENTS

The SMC Frailty Team - Jan Flynn (Advanced Care Practitioner) and Nikki Futers (Frailty Nurse) are well known in our community for the support they provide to frail patients and their families. Getting to know them, providing a continuing point of contact with the Practice and able to recognise and act appropriately if and when there is a need for a specific intervention.

Sometimes that intervention includes specialist help – perhaps because there is a need for a specific test, assessment or treatment such as intravenous antibiotics, diuretics, an iron infusion or a complex dressing regime.

The good news is that with the launch of a six month pilot service at the Ellen Badger Hospital,

these treatments can now be provided locally for our patients should they be necessary.



The Ellen Badger Medical Unit is designed to bring day-case medical care closer to patients' homes, building on the success of the Medical Day Case Unit at Warwick Hospital

By early February, the service will be available 5 days/week, 8am – 4pm every weekday.
Early feedback from patients who have been referred there is very positive:

'*I was delighted to have my infusion at the Ellen Badger Medical Unit. I saw some familiar faces and some new ones, all providing a consistently high standard of care. I used to have my infusion at Warwick Hospital which required setting aside a significant part of my day. Attending my appointment at the EBMU has shortened my journey, allowing me to feel much more relaxed while being cannulated and enabling me to get back to the rest of my day more quickly*'

'*Most helpful to me was ease of access to services and treatment. Plus the location of the hospital to me*'

'*Wonderful, kind, compassionate and most professional nursing team*'

And from Jan and Nikki's point of view?
They very much welcome the fact that specialist advice and treatments are being made available at the EBMU. Which means of course that patients and their families are not having to travel to Warwick and Stratford unnecessarily.

If the pilot is successful then the service will be continued. It's another step forward in delivering care closer to home and improving patient experience.

WHY WEARING A MASK MATTERS THIS WINTER

The winter has brought an exceptionally high level of illness across our community – and unfortunately, our practice team has not been immune. Many staff members have been affected by seasonal viruses, which has had a significant impact on the services we can provide. When team members are unwell, it often means:

- **Cancelled appointments** due to clinician sickness
- **Reduced support staff** at reception and behind the scenes
- **Longer waiting times** for routine queries and prescriptions

We understand this can be frustrating and we truly appreciate your patience during these challenging months. One simple way you can help protect both our staff and other patients is by **wearing a mask when visiting the practice,** especially if you have symptoms of cough, cold or flu. Masks reduce the spread of respiratory infections, helping us keep more staff healthy and maintain the level of care you expect. Together we can limit contagion and keep our community safer. Thank you for supporting us and each other this winter.

ARE YOU A CARER?

The Practice, PPG and local partners are working together to improve the support provided to our patients who have caring responsibilities.

Please do let the reception team know if this is the case so that we can respond appropriately when needed.

REQUESTING AN APPOINTMENT OR HELP

We would like to remind patients how easy it can be to submit a triage form rather than calling the practice, if you need medical advice or care.

By using the online form available on our website, or via the NHS App, you can:

- Avoid the 8am phone queue
- Submit your request during surgery hours for same-day response.
- Help us direct you to the right clinician first time.

How it works:
Simply fill out the secure online form with details about your symptoms or request. A clinician will review the information and get back to you with the next steps, which may include an appointment, a phone call or advice via text message.

Please note: this service is not for medical emergencies. In an emergency, please dial 999

WHY TIMELINESS MATTERS FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT
At our practice, clinicians' schedules are carefully planned throughout the day to ensure every patient receives the care they need. Each appointment is allocated a specific length of time based on its purpose—whether it's a routine check-up, a medication review, or a more complex consultation. This allows clinicians to focus fully on your needs during your booked slot.

If a patient arrives late, it can be challenging to accommodate them because the time reserved for their care may already have been used. Clinicians often have back-to-back appointments, so delays can impact other patients and the overall flow of the day. In some cases, this means we may not be able to see you if you arrive after your scheduled time.

We also want to acknowledge that sometimes clinicians run behind schedule. This happens because they are committed to ensuring each patient gets the attention and care they require—even if it takes a little longer than planned. We appreciate your understanding and patience when this occurs.

By arriving on time, you help us maintain smooth operations and ensure everyone receives the best possible care. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

AMBULANCE BAY – PLEASE KEEP FREE
We respectfully request that the designated ambulance bay in front of the existing premises is kept free at all times. Valuable minutes can be lost in an emergency situation if the ambulance is unable to park directly outside the medical centre.

We know that it can be challenging to find a parking space during busy periods but we trust this situation will improve once the EB Rooms are in operation.

LOOKING AFTER OUR STAFF
We also ask that our staff are always treated with respect. The vast majority of our patients do that as a matter of course, understanding that they do their very best to ensure that we provide a safe and efficient service. We understand that anxiety and frustration can influence how people behave, but please be aware of the impact this can have on staff well-being.

UPDATED PAYMENTS PROCESS FOR NON-NHS WORK
Examples of this type of work include Firearms Applications, 'To Whom it May Concern' letters, Travel Cancellation forms and HGV/taxi reports with or without a medical and many more.

We are simplifying and speeding up our payments process for this type of work to avoid any delay for patients in receiving their requested documentation.

With immediate effect, we will no longer be accepting the following payment types/methods for non-NHS work:

- Cash
- Cheques
- Payment by card in person at the surgery

Patients will be sent a link by text or email to make the payment enabling them to pay on-line. This is the preferred method.

Or, you can ring us on 01608 665500 Monday to Friday between the hours of 2.30pm and 4.00pm (only) and we will take your card details over the phone and process it this way.

Once we receive your payment through this link, we can see immediately that you have paid. This will speed matters up, as we only pass through your request for a form etc to be completed by the GP once we have received cleared payment. Should you have any issues with this change, please contact us to discuss and we will help wherever we can.

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU!
Many people set health goals in their New Year's resolutions in January and here at SMC we want to support and help all patients making steps towards a healthy and happy new year!

This month we are focusing on **Blood Pressure**



High blood pressure (also called hypertension) can lead to serious problems like heart attacks or strokes. Lifestyle changes can help you stay healthy. It's important to know what your blood pressure is as many people don't have symptoms of high blood pressure.

You don't have to visit a doctor or nurse in order to check your blood pressure. You can take your readings in the comfort of your own home or visit the practice where we have a machine available in the waiting area at the practice; all patients are welcome to use this machine to monitor their blood pressure and weight and there is no need to book an appointment.

If you have a machine at home, please ask the practice for a 7-day blood pressure form which can be printed or sent via text or email to you. If you do have high blood pressure, focusing on lifestyle changes like reducing salt and alcohol intake, exercising regularly, and eating a healthy, balanced diet may help. If you are overweight, losing weight can be very effective.

Here is some more information and top tips!

Stop smoking
After 24 hours: lungs begin clearing out smoke, debris and mucus.
After 48 hours: nicotine leaves the body, sense of taste and smell improve.

After 1 year: risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smokers.
After 5 years: risk of cancers (mouth, throat, oesophagus and bladder), and stroke, significantly decrease.

After 10 years: risk of death from lung cancer drops to about half that of a continuing smoker.
After 15 years: risk of heart attack falls to the same level as someone who has never smoked.

Exercise more often
Suggested actions



- Go on a 10-minute walk after meals
- Pick one day to attend a fitness class, online or in-person
- Park further away from entrances to stores

Eat more healthily
Suggested actions
- Eat the protein on your plate first
- Increase your fibre intake with vegetables and berries

- Cut back on high-sodium foods, like fast food and cured meats

Lose weight
Suggested actions
- Drink plenty of water throughout the day
- Pick one day a week to exercise, then add more days over time
- Replace one meal out with a meal at home

Cut back on alcohol
Suggested actions
- Replace one beverage with sparkling water or a low-sugar, non-alcoholic drink
- Identify when you want to drink (like after work) and fill that time with another activity, like a new hobby or fitness class

The NHS offers a **free 12-week Digital Weight Management Programme** for those with obesity, diabetes, or high pressure, accessible via smart phone or computer, focusing on activity and healthy habits. If you think you are eligible, and would like to be referred for this programme, please contact the practice.

Good luck!!! You can do this!
For more information visit
https://www.nhs.uk/better-health

NHS APP
Have you downloaded the NHS App yet? It is a quick, easy and safe way of accessing information about your health, including viewing your health record to see information such as your allergies and medications. You can also use it to request your repeat prescriptions and nominate a pharmacy where you'd like to collect them; book and manage appointments and view test results. You can download it for free on the App Store or on Google Play.

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

Thursday 22nd January 2026
Wednesday 25th February 2026
Thursday 12th March 2026

GOT QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR PRACTICE?
Do you have ideas, feedback, or suggestions about how our services run? Or maybe you'd just like to share something positive with the team but aren't sure who to tell? Our Patient Participation Group (PPG) is here to help! They can:

- Find answers to your questions
- Pass on your ideas to the right person
- Represent patient views to improve our services

To contact them, email the Chair, Carole Nossiter, on shipstonppg@gmail.com including your contact details and she or one of the team will respond to you.

Interested in getting involved? Visit https://shipstonmc.warwickshire.nhs.uk/patientgroup to learn more about what the PPG does and fill in the registration form. A member of the team will again follow up with you.

STOUR HEALTH and WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP

COMMUNITY WARM HUBS
The Warm Hubs, in the Community Wellbeing Hub at the Ellen Badger Hospital on the ground floor continue to be a great community initiative, with over 60 people attending each week.

The Thursday sessions which have been running for over 3 years continue to grow, and there are many opportunities to make friends, learn new skills and generally get together. The Monday sessions are growing in popularity, and they are running at the same time as the Seated Exercise classes so you can combine the two. Monday and Thursday, from 10am to 12 noon.
Why not come along.

Also, why not check out the news page on Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership's website https://www.shwp.org.uk/news/ [shwp.org.uk]

Bereavement Café:
The bereavement cafe continues to grow. This is a peer support group for people who have experienced the loss of a loved one and is open to all on the first Tuesday of each month from 11am to 1pm, also at the Community Wellbeing Hub.

THE DR SUE PRITCHARD MEMORIAL CHALLENGE
The Seated Exercise class has been so popular with members of the community who may be experiencing mobility issues or want to maintain their mobility that we have had to increase from one class to two. These are now held on the ground floor in the Ellen Badger Community Wellbeing Hub at either10:30am or 11:30am on Mondays. There is the opportunity afterwards to have a cuppa and a chat at the Monday Community Warm Hubs. If you would like further information, please visit our website http://www.shwp.org.uk

TOY LIBRARY
The Stour Toy Library continues to run at the Ellen Badger Community Hub on Thursday from 11am – 12 noon, as is the Monday session 11am – 12 noon. If you would like to sign up or borrow toys, please go to the website https://borrow.shwp.org.uk/ where you can view all the toys on offer and reserve these for collection from the Hub. Annual membership is just £5, and this entitles you to borrow up to 2 toys a week.

NEXT STOUR SCAN MEETING

Our next meeting will be on March 10 when the topic will be Solihull and Warwickshire Blood Bikes - with a real, live bike in the Townsend Hall.

As usual, the meeting will be at 10 for refreshments with the talk at 10.30. We aim to finish around noon. There is no charge to attend or for refreshments.

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 PPG distributes hard copies to various locations around Shipston including the library, post office and town council offices.

The newsletter is also published on our website under Patient News, and we alert on Facebook and X when it's published. If you would like an electronic copy of the newsletter emailed to you each time there is a new edition, please contact reception.