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 26: November 2024

WINTER EDITION

FLU/COVID AUTUMN 2024 – UPDATE

We are now nearing the end of our vaccination clinics. The team have vaccinated 2779 patients with flu vaccinations and 2299 patients with COVID vaccinations.

This year we have seen a significant increase in patients who have requested a home visit to be immunised. It takes around 30 minutes to vaccinate each patient on a home visit where as in clinic the nurse can vaccinate 6 patients in the equivalent time. Whilst we appreciate it can be difficult for some patients to attend the surgery due to transport and other factors, next year we will be looking at ways to enable patients to attend so we can maximise the nurse's time as the vaccination clinics/home visits are in addition to the usual workload.

RSV VACCINATIONS (RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS)

In September's edition we explained that national guidance is to leave 4 weeks between flu/covid and RSV vaccines. Eligible patients may now wish to make an appointment if the 4 week window has passed. Please call reception to book an appointment. Reminder - you are eligible if you are aged between 75 and 79.



This month the focus for this series turns to…
Jim Fleming – Medication Delivery Driver

For those in the villages who can't easily get into Shipston Medical Centre (SMC) to collect their medication, I'm sure that Jim and the other two drivers, Adrian and Alison, are a very welcome sight.

SMC patients who live more than one mile from a pharmacy are eligible under government regulations to receive their medication direct from SMC so do check in the table below if you are able to benefit in this way and let the dispensary team know. Such patients can either pick up their medication direct from the Practice dispensary, or the medication delivery team will home deliver to those that can't easily travel to and from Shipston. In fact, **all** patients benefit, because the funding the Practice receives for providing these dispensing services allows investment in additional services such as the Frailty Team.

Dispensing Patients – Are you eligible?

You must live more than 1 mile from a pharmacy. Eligible locations include:

- Admington
- Alderminster
- Armscote
- Barcheston
- Blackwell
- Blockley
- Burmington
- Cherington
- Darlingscott
- Ebrington
- Little Wolford
- Long Compton
- Lower Brailes
- Lower Quinton
- Mickleton
- Newbold on Stour
- Oxhill
- Pillerton Priors
- Stourton
- Stretton-on-Fosse

- Ettington
- Great Wolford
- Halford
- Honington
- Idlicote
- Ilmington
- Little Compton
- Tidmington
- Todenham
- Tredington
- Upper Brailes
- Whatcote
- Whichford
- Willington

This list is not exhaustive – if in doubt ask the dispensing team!

Jim told me that he took early retirement from his career as a financial adviser but soon found himself looking for new ways of structuring his week and meeting more people! Like a few of the people I have interviewed for this series, he first worked for Boots, as a driver, and then moved to SMC nearly 10 years ago, drawn by the opportunity to become part of the dispensary team.

Jim's working day starts by plotting his route across the villages covered by SMC; from Ettington in the north to Long Compton in the south and from Mickleton to Tysoe west to east. With an average of 50 deliveries to make in a day, planning is essential. Each of those deliveries has to be handed to the relevant person, and a signature is required for any controlled drugs. Jim mentioned that fortunately most people on his list are generally in, but if not, a call slip is left, and a re-delivery is attempted if the individual is unable to pick up the medication from the medical centre themselves. Although the 50 or so deliveries can generally be accomplished by 5pm, Jim will also make a special trip if a late delivery is requested by one of the clinicians.

Having experienced being one of a team of volunteers involved in delivering medication to housebound patients during the pandemic, I was very impressed to hear just how many deliveries Jim and his colleagues are able to make in a given day. If you have ever tried to deliver leaflets to village houses (which often don't have a number) you will know just how difficult a task that is! It's apparent then that Jim's knowledge of the area is invaluable – as is the relationship built with patients over the years. He is not only providing a vital service to those that aren't easily able to travel to the medical centre but is also a trusted point of contact should any queries or problems arise.

Not surprisingly Jim mentioned that as he and his colleagues have been bitten by dogs on a number of occasions, they are very grateful if dogs are kept under control. He also said that it helps a great deal if those who need to pay for their medication do so according to dispensary instructions prior to delivery.

All in all though, it's clear Jim thoroughly enjoys his job – the contact with people, making sure that people have the medication they need, being part of the dispensary team. Oh, and driving through beautiful countryside too!

Carole Nossiter, Chair, Shipston PPG

WAITING.....

We often hear grumbles from patients about waiting. These fall into two distinct categories:

The clinician the patient is booked in with is running late:

As a practice we are funded less than £180 per patient per year to help you when you need us. Of course we don't see some patients very often, but others we see regularly. In real terms funding in general practice has dropped by 20% in the last 7 years. This means we need to use the resources we have as efficiently as possible, and have introduced the appointment triage system, increased use of text and other measures to help with this.

This need for efficiency also means that our clinician's time is used to the maximum, having

patients booked back to back throughout the day enabling us to see as many patients as possible. This can mean that if a patient is particularly unwell and needs longer than the booked appointment length the clinician runs late. We obviously try to prevent this happening and thus ask patients to not bring a list of problems to an appointment as we cannot deal with multiple issues in 12 minutes. We also ask for patients to be understanding - clinicians could be dealing with a huge number of things that are awful for the patient involved, suicidal feelings, informing a patient of a terminal diagnosis, counselling someone who has broken down due to abuse or bereavement, or really unwell people who are experiencing a stroke, heart event or other major physical episode which requires hospitalisation. All of these things happen more often than you might think. We do appreciate it can be frustrating, but ask for your understanding. Clinicians are very aware of the patients waiting for them, but have to provide the care needed for the patient in front of them, which is something we would all expect for ourselves.

The converse side of this are patients who are running late. If your appointment is 12 minutes long and you arrive 10 minutes late we may not be able to see you because your appointment time will have passed and the next patient will be waiting. Obviously if possible the clinician will try to fit you in, but please be aware this may not be possible. We could book less appointments per day to allow some 'wiggle room' for when there are really poorly people or to allow for when patients are running late. However, if we did this, for example, taking out 3 appointments per clinician per day as 'catch up' time, we would be cutting our service provision by around 10%, meaning that we would be helping significantly less people each day and it would be harder to get to see us. Our clinicians would love to spend a bit more time with each patient and have less intensity in their days, but unfortunately the NHS is not resourced to allow that to occur.

The wait for a hospital appointments can be significant:

Hospitals currently have very long waiting lists for some specialists. This is a significant issue for patients who are waiting to be seen and also problematic for the practice, as we know that specialist help is needed for our patients which we cannot supply ourselves. Often patients on long waiting lists sometimes call hospital departments to see if the wait can be reduced and admin colleagues in hospitals advise them to speak to their GP. This provides the false impression that we can influence where you are on the waiting list. We are not able to do this. All of the NHS prioritises work by clinical need, i.e. the most sick get care first. If your condition significantly worsens then we can advise the hospital of the change and they may re-prioritise you. However, if nothing has clinically changed we are unable to influence hospital waiting times.

SELF LIMITING CONDITIONS

Whilst the practice has a lower than average number of patients per GP, the demand for our services is significant, and we need to ensure our resources are used effectively to help all those who need our services. This is why the practice introduced the triage process – when you contact us, whether it is via our website or the NHS app, or if you speak with a receptionist we ask you a series of questions which helps us to know what your needs might be. We can then offer you a way to help that best suits your situation. We really appreciate our patients embracing the triage process and ask for your ongoing help in utilising our service effectively so we may help the whole community according to need.

As we come into the winter months infections, such as colds, coughs and sore throats become

very common. We therefore get a lot of calls about these symptoms. Unfortunately coughs, colds and sore throats are generally not something we can treat as the vast majority are caused by viruses, for which there is no cure. Fortunately, all of these illnesses are what we would call 'self-limiting' in that they only affect us for a relatively short period. It therefore becomes about managing the symptoms. We would advise paracetamol and over the counter remedies to help manage symptoms alongside simple measures such as drinking plenty of fluids.

Usually sore throats last up to 1 week, colds for 1½ weeks, and sinusitis and coughs up to 3 - 4 weeks. If infections last longer than this, or symptoms rapidly get worse then do contact us.

Further self-help advice is available at
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cough/
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/common-cold/

STAFFING UPDATE
This month we have welcomed our new Deputy Practice Manager, Anthea Stewart. Anthea has 20+ years of experience in Primary Care and has been working close by in Worcestershire.

SURGERY CLOSURES
Staff Meetings
The surgery is closed for these between 1 and 1.45pm on:

Tuesday 21st January 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

PARKING AT THE SURGERY
This is a polite reminder to park considerately when attending the surgery. We are repeatedly finding that cars are parked in the ambulance bay outside the front of the building during busy periods. In the event of an emergency this could prevent lifesaving treatment if the ambulance cannot access the surgery quickly. Please also be considerate of residents and not park across their driveways if parking roadside.

CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS
Monday 23rd December 2024: 8am until 6.30pm
Tuesday 24th December 2024: 8am until 12.30pm and 1.30pm until 3.00pm (remote cover from 3-6pm)
Wednesday 25th December and Thursday 26th December 2024**: Closed**
Friday 27th December 2024: 8am until 6.30pm
Monday 30th December 2024: 8am until 6.30pm
Tuesday 31st December 2024: 8am until 3.00pm (remote cover from 3-6pm)
Wednesday 1st January 2025: **Closed**
Usual opening hours thereafter

MEDICATION ORDERING AT CHRISTMAS
In the period leading up to Christmas please make sure you have enough regular medication to see you through when the surgery is closed. Do order your medications a few days earlier than normal if you need to. We often receive requests for two or three months' worth of medications over the Christmas period. Unless there is a particular reason why you need to have more than one month's medication at a time, and do tell us if there is, we will routinely issue just one months' worth, in line with NHS policy.
It is also worth making sure your first aid box is stocked with things you might need over the period, such as plasters, paracetamol, indigestion tablets, antiseptic cream and a thermometer.

HOME BLOOD PRESSURE RECORDINGS

Clinicians often ask appropriate patients to record their blood pressure at home and send the readings into the surgery to be reviewed. This aids clinicians in managing the health and conditions of their patients. Here is a helpful reminder from the team on how to do this if asked to by a clinician -

As per good practice, and so an accurate average can be calculated for you, please record for seven days, twice a day, at approximately 9am and 6pm. A £20 deposit is required to borrow a blood pressure monitor from the medical centre (deposits will be refunded if the monitor is returned promptly within two weeks).

Record the blood pressure readings on the standard home blood pressure form, obtained from Shipston Medical Centre, and return the completed form to us. The document will be scanned into your medical notes and an average for you blood pressure calculated and recorded.

Please only submit home blood pressure readings if we ask you to do so and ensure your name and date of birth are on every page.

FAILED TELEPHONE ENCOUNTERS

If you have a telephone appointment or have requested advice through our online triage form please ensure your phone is on loud and kept on your person. We are regularly unable to reach patients as the phone is out of reach when the team call. The team will make two attempts to reach you but if they fail you will be asked to book another appointment or resubmit another online form. Please help us to be efficient and make sure you are available for your appointment.

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

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 medicines. 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.

For new patients – access to your records change when you move from one practice to another. You will need to reapply at SMC if you would like full historical access to your records.

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.