



Spring 2021

Bridge Medical Centre

Newsletter

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Staff News

We welcome Lynda, our new Phlebotomist. Lynda grew up in Eastbourne and moved to Crawley in 1988 to embark on her flying career. She trained as a Phlebotomist in 2016 and managed to juggle both jobs. She has now hung up her wings after 32 fantastic years in aviation. She states that she has been made so welcome by everyone at BMC. It is wonderful to be part of a team again and your kindness and support in helping me settle in has been greatly appreciated. She is currently in the process of moving house so a whole new chapter begins for her and her 7 month old kitten, Lumi.



We welcome Shabana as our new Reception Administrator. Shabana has previously worked in the aviation industry for over 30 years. She is enjoying the new role and being part of the NHS.

We welcome Nicola as our Primary Care Network's (PCN) Children & Young Persons Counsellor. Nicola works with us every Tuesday and will see children and young people from 10 –18 years of age.

We welcome Jane as our new PCN Care Co-Ordinator. Jane started her career as a Nurse in South Africa before moving to the UK in 2001. She has previously worked for the Stroke Association and Carers Support. Jane is with us every Tuesday and Thursday. Jane will be able to support patients and assist them through the healthcare system by acting as a patient advocate and navigator, empowering them and educating them to promote and support their independence.





Have you seen our new and improved website?

Our new website not only has a fresh layout, it also has many new features. These features help our patients find what they are looking for more quickly and efficiently.

These are just a few of the things that can be done via the website:

- eConsult
- Order your prescription
- Ask admin a question
- Clinical Online forms
- Self Help & Wellbeing advice
- Access to online services
- Registration forms

Our new website is available at www.bridgemedicalcentre.co.uk





Are you caring for a relative, partner or friend who is unwell or disabled? Are you aged between 18-25 year olds?

Shine is part of Carers Support West Sussex. They are an independent charity supporting carers living in West Sussex.

What Shine do:

- Support Groups and Activities, meeting other young adult carers, sharing experiences and time away from caring.
- Support for accessing employment, education and emotional support from our experienced and dedicated Young Adult Carer Wellbeing Workers.
- Carers Support are working together with West Sussex County Council and their Young Carers Service to run 'My Future' Support Groups for 16- 25 yr olds in West Sussex. The groups aim to support Young Carers as they move into adulthood.
- If you are 16 - 17 years old and want to find out more about the groups - call 01903 270300 or email youngcarers@westsussex.gov.uk
- If you are 18 - 25 years old and want to find out more about the groups and our services call 0300 028 8888 or email shine@carerssupport.org.uk



Want advice from your doctor, self-help information or have an administrative request (such as a sick note or test results)?
Go to our website and click on the eConsult banner on the landing page.
You will get a response before the end of the next working day or sooner



Have you been referred?

Please be advised due to the Covid pandemic, waiting times for appointments have increased. If you do wish to know the status of your referral, here are some useful numbers to call.

You can call the Central Booking Office to find out the up to date status of your referral / appointment on 01737 784000.

If you have a specific UBRN number you can check the status of your referral / appointment via the Electronic Referral Service (ERS) quoting your UBRN number when calling on 01293 300270.

Have you been referred to MSK? t. 01273 242054. Option 1) Physio. Option 2) MSK.

Have you been referred to the Hospital for an Ultrasound or X-ray ? t. 01293 600300 ext. 3039.



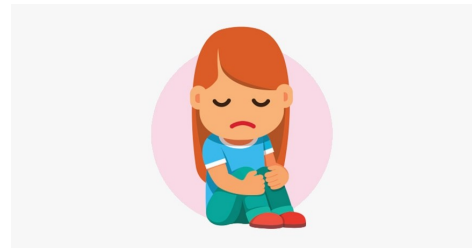
Looking after a child or young person's mental health

There are times when we all feel the strain. As parents and carers, there are ways we can support children and young people to give them the best chance to stay mentally healthy.

Around 1 in 8 children and young people experience behavioural or emotional problems growing up. For some, these will resolve with time, while others will need professional support.

It can be difficult to know if there is something upsetting a child or young person, but there are ways to spot when something's wrong. Look out for:

- significant changes in behaviour
- ongoing difficulty sleeping
- withdrawing from social situations
- not wanting to do things they usually like
- self-harm or neglecting themselves



Remember, everyone feels low, angry or anxious at times. But when these changes last for a long time or are significantly affecting them, it might be time to get professional help.

Top tips to support children and young people

Be there to listen - Regularly ask how they're doing so they get used to talking about their feelings and know there's always someone to listen if they want it. Find out how to create a space where they will open up.

Support them through difficulties - Pay attention to their emotions and behaviour, and try to help them work through difficulties. It's not always easy when faced with challenging behaviour, but try to help them understand what they're feeling and why.

Stay involved in their life - how interest in their life and the things important to them. It not only helps them value who they are but also makes it easier for you to spot problems and support them.

Encourage their interests - Being active or creative, learning new things and being a part of a team help connect us with others and are important ways we can all help our mental health. Support and encourage them to explore their interests, whatever they are.

Take what they say seriously - Listening to and valuing what they say, without judging their feelings, in turn makes them feel valued. Consider how to help them process and work through their emotions in a more constructive way.

Build positive routines - We know it still may not be easy, but try to reintroduce structure around regular routines, healthy eating and exercise. A good night's sleep is also really important – try to get them back into routines that fit with school or college.

Do not hesitate to get urgent support if you think either you or your child needs it. See page 7



Are you feeling anxious?

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, like a worry or fear, that can be mild or severe. Everyone feels anxious from time to time and it usually passes once the situation is over.

It can make our heart race, we might feel sweaty, shaky or short of breath. Anxiety can also cause changes in our behaviour, such as becoming overly careful or avoiding things that trigger anxiety.

When anxiety becomes a problem, our worries can be out of proportion with relatively harmless situations. It can feel more intense or overwhelming, and interfere with our everyday lives and relationships.

Signs of anxiety?

Anxiety can show in a variety of ways. This can be as changes in your body, in being constantly worried or changes in your behaviour, such as becoming overly careful or avoiding things that trigger anxiety.

You may:

- feel tired, on edge, restless or irritable
- feel a sense of dread
- be unable to concentrate or make decisions
- have trouble sleeping
- feel sick, dizzy, sweaty or short of breath
- be shaky or trembly
- get headaches or tummy aches
- avoid situations or put off doing things you are worried about
- have difficulty falling or staying asleep
- experience a noticeably strong, fast or irregular heartbeat
- have pins and needles
- have a dry mouth
- sweat excessively
- repeatedly check things or seek assurance from others



Top tips to cope with anxiety

- **Understand your anxiety** — Try keeping a diary of what you are doing and how you feel at different times to help identify what's affecting you and what you need to take action on.
- **Make time for worries** — If your worry feels overwhelming and takes over your day, setting specific "worry time" to go through your concerns each day can help you to focus on other things.
- **Face the things you want to avoid** — It's easy to avoid situations, or rely on habits that make us feel safer, but these can keep anxiety going. By slowly building up time in worrying situations, anxious feelings will gradually reduce and you will see these situations are OK.
- **Challenge your anxious thoughts** — Tackling unhelpful thoughts is one of the best things we can do to feel less anxious.
- **Shift your focus** — Some people find relaxation, mindfulness or breathing exercises helpful. They reduce tension and focus our awareness on the present moment.
- **Get to grips with the problem** — When you're feeling stressed or anxious, it can help to use a problem-solving technique to identify some solutions. This can make the challenges you're facing feel more manageable.



10 things you can do to help deal with change and look after your mental wellbeing in the face of uncertainty

- **Take stock of how you feel**

Put time aside to examine your current situation and consider how you really feel, perhaps talking it through with someone you trust. Acknowledging that the coronavirus outbreak is having an impact on you, and that this is to be expected, can also help you to manage the uncertainty. Try to be kind to yourself, and get support with how you are feeling if you think you might need it.

- **Focus on the short term**

The further we look into the future, the easier it is to get overwhelmed by long-term uncertainty. Instead, try to focus on the day-to-day, and think about what's in your power to do right now. Decide what's important to you, and concentrate on your short-term needs and those of the people close to you. Try breaking down each day or each week into manageable, achievable tasks, and focus on each goal in turn.

- **Acknowledge what's working**

Even when it might feel like everything is up in the air or going wrong, there will be some things, however small, that do not change. It could be a close relationship, our favourite meal or a song that means something to us. Noticing, acknowledging and being grateful for these constants in our life, as well as any small positive changes we have already made or are working on, can really help us deflect and recover from life's knocks – and helps us see positive possibilities for the future. Each day, consider what went well and try to list 3 things you're thankful for.

- **Recognise your achievements**

It's been a really difficult time, and many of us have been tested in ways we never expected. We have all had to find new ways to cope and adapt. Take 10 minutes and list some of your accomplishments or successes from the past 12 months – no matter how big or small. Whatever they are, take time to reflect on and be proud of your accomplishments this year, and keep a note of them from now on.

- **Find a new rhythm**

Routine and structure can be a powerful way to regain consistency and reduce uncertainty. A typical day has probably changed quite a lot for us all, so think about what is within your control and how you can create a new routine that works for you now. Make time to de-stress and wind down each day – build in positive activities like exercise, relaxation, hobbies, speaking to friends or spending time with those close to you, and think about a positive sleep routine.

- **Try to stay in the moment**

Restrictions, regulations and the general situation are changing frequently, so it's important not to dwell on the past, fixate on the future, or get bogged down by things you do not or cannot know. You can only do your best with what you have today. Relaxation, mindfulness or getting outside and enjoying nature are all good ways to help you focus on the present.





- **Reframe your thoughts**

In difficult times like this, it can be easy to get caught up in negative thoughts, feelings and actions. For most people, at this time, feeling uneasy is an understandable response to the uncertainty present in everyday life. Maybe you're disappointed about what was "supposed" to happen this year or scared of what the future may hold. You might find yourself in a negative spiral where you fixate on issues and convince yourself of the worst. It can be helpful to step back, examine the evidence for your thoughts and explore other ways of looking at the situation. This will not resolve the problems you face but can help break a negative spiral and give you a new perspective – things are often not as bad as we thought.

- **Decide what strategies work for you**

The uncertainty that changing restrictions bring for work, home or others' expectations can put a strain on our mental health and wellbeing. Although it might feel overwhelming, remember this is not the first challenge you have faced in life. You probably already have a lot of the strengths and skills to get through the current situation. Think about what strategies have worked best for you when you have faced problems before and work out how you can use these approaches now. It could be in the past, or what's worked recently. Whatever it is, commit to making it part of your daily routine – and remember that recognising when you need professional help with your mental health is an important coping strategy for many people.

- **Only do what's comfortable**

As the situation evolves, it's important to make sure we are going at our own pace. We should not let others pressure us into things that make us feel uncomfortable, anxious or unsafe – but we also have to try to not let that be an excuse that stops us from doing positive and beneficial things, like safely staying in touch with friends. It's natural to have concerns, so discuss them with those close to you and try to build in small positive changes. It can be difficult to see others doing things without you. Perhaps your partner or child has gone back to work, for example, but you cannot. Honest and open communication is vital but so is giving others the space to move at their own speed.

- **Get practical advice**

Talk to people you trust and get support if you need it. There is lots of help out there. If you're worried about your employment, housing or debt and money, then find out about your rights. It can be hard, but try to face your fears and get help. Citizens Advice is a good place to start - www.citizensadvice.org.uk
For advice on how to look after your mental health in the workplace, or support others Mental Health At Work has a range of resources and information - www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk

Urgent help in a crisis

If you or a loved one are experiencing a mental health crisis, you can call a local NHS mental health helpline for 24-hour advice and support:

Find a local NHS urgent mental health helpline - <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline>



Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine

The coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine is safe and effective. It gives you the best protection against coronavirus.

Who can get the COVID-19 vaccine

The NHS is currently offering the COVID-19 vaccine to people most at risk from coronavirus.

In England, the vaccine is being offered in some hospitals and pharmacies, at local centres run by GPs and at larger vaccination centres. More centres are opening all the time.

It's being given to:

- people aged 50 and over
- people at high risk from coronavirus (clinically extremely vulnerable)
- people who live or work in care homes
- health and social care workers
- people with a condition that puts them at higher risk (clinically vulnerable)
- people with a learning disability
- people who are a main carer for someone at high risk from coronavirus



If you belong to one of the above groups and have any concerns regarding having the Covid-19 vaccine, please go to www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination for further information. To book your vaccine go to www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination, call 119 or call us.

How safe is the COVID-19 vaccine?

The vaccines approved for use in the UK have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Any coronavirus vaccine that is approved must go through all the clinical trials and safety checks all other licensed medicines go through. The MHRA follows international standards of safety. Other vaccines are being developed. They will only be available on the NHS once they have been thoroughly tested to make sure they are safe and effective.

So far, millions of people have been given a COVID-19 vaccine and reports of serious side effects, such as allergic reactions, have been very rare. No long-term complications have been reported.

How effective is the COVID-19 vaccine?

The 1st dose of the COVID-19 vaccine should give you good protection from coronavirus. But you need to have the 2 doses of the vaccine to give you longer lasting protection. There is a chance you might still get or spread coronavirus even if you have the vaccine.

This means it is important to continue to follow social distancing guidance and if you can, wear something that covers your nose and mouth in places where it's hard to stay away from other people.



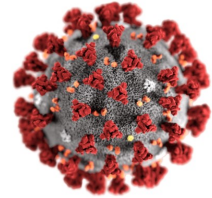
How the COVID-19 vaccine is given?

The COVID-19 vaccine is given as an injection into your upper arm. It's given as 2 doses. You will have the 2nd within 12 weeks of having the 1st dose.

COVID-19 vaccine side effects

Most side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine are mild and should not last longer than a week, such as:

- a sore arm where the needle went in
- feeling tired
- a headache
- feeling achy
- feeling or being sick



You can take painkillers, such as paracetamol, if you need to. If you have a high temperature you may have coronavirus or another infection. If your symptoms get worse or you are worried, call 111.

Allergic reactions

Tell healthcare staff before you are vaccinated if you've ever had a serious allergic reaction.

You should not have the COVID-19 vaccine if you have ever had a serious allergic reaction (including anaphylaxis) to:

- a previous dose of the same vaccine
- any of the ingredients in the vaccine

Serious allergic reactions are rare. If you do have a reaction to the vaccine, it usually happens in minutes. Staff giving the vaccine are trained to deal with allergic reactions and treat them immediately.

COVID-19 vaccine ingredients

The approved COVID-19 vaccines do not contain any animal products or egg.

Covid 19 vaccines approved by MHRA

- Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine
- Oxford/AstraZeneca
- Moderna

If you are not eligible yet— Wait to be contacted. The NHS will let you know when it's your turn to have the vaccine. It's important not to contact the NHS for a vaccination before then.



Did you know that your inhalers can be recycled through the post?*

Recycling inhalers is a simple way to help the environment. The Leicestershire **Take AIR** (Take Action for Inhaler Recycling) scheme, will enable you to safely and effectively recycle your empty, unwanted or expired inhalers through the post.

The **Take AIR** scheme will accept all inhalers, of any brand, such as:

- Pressurised metered dose inhalers or 'puffer' inhalers
- Dry powder Inhalers
- Soft mist inhalers



Talk to your pharmacist about the **Take AIR** scheme. Each free postage envelope can fit up to four inhalers – of any brand and any type.



PHARMACY

All inhalers – of any brand and type – can also still be returned to ANY community pharmacy for safe disposal.

This is a Chiesi Limited scheme supported by University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust and Leicestershire and Rutland Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC).



* Only available in the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland area.
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OPENING HOURS

Normal opening hours are 08:30 to 18:30 Monday to Friday.

Closed during the lunch period 13:00 to 14:00.

We offer pre-bookable evening appointments on most Tuesdays between 18:30 and 19:30, and pre-bookable telephone appointments on other evenings.