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Staff News

We welcome Zeena as our new Practice Nurse. Zeena has been working as a nurse for the last 27 years. She previously worked in Crawley hospital Women centre in colposcopy and hysteroscopy clinics and also worked 2 years in East Surrey hospital. Zeena states that she has mostly hospital based experience and so she is looking forward to learn new skills in primary care. She enjoys cooking, gardening and music.



We welcome Gill as our new Practice Nurse. Gill has worked many years as a Practice Nurse and is specialised in Asthma. She will be doing all Asthma reviews. Gill will be working every Wednesdays and Thursdays.

We welcome Lucy as our new Administration Receptionist. Lucy previously worked as a carer. She has also done graphics designing. She enjoys doing marathons and is preparing to do a marathon in April.

We welcome two new PCN dieticians, Sarah and Cleverly. We will publish more about them and what they will be doing in our next newsletter.

New telephone System

Our new telephone system allows you to reserve their position in a virtual queue, you can then hang up the phone, saving time and call costs. We will then ring you back when your call reaches the front of the queue.



Here's what we have been working on during December 2022.

We continue to be here for you. Please make an appointment if you need to speak to a GP, Nurse or other healthcare professional.



1285
Face-to-face appointments with a GP



42
Home Visits



460
Phlebotomy & HCA appointments



369
Face-to-face appointments with a nurse



1237
Telephone appointments with a GP



420
Online consultation forms



7502
Total of incoming calls



3777
Prescriptions issued



Active practice

On Thursday 20th October 2022 during lunchtime some of our staff and PPG members had a lunchtime walk led by our patient and PPG member, Dave Hathaway and his friend John Cooban.

The walk started at the collection point in the staff carpark at Bridge Medical Centre. Dave led everyone and shared some of the key points of interest here in Three Bridges.



Cake sale

On the 19th October 2022 a cake sale was held by the PPG members. All funds were donated in aid of the Ukraine Emergency Disaster Fund. Thank you to all patients who supported us and to the PPG members for their help.

We welcome other fundraising ideas and contributions.



Crawley Open House

Over the Christmas period our Care Coordinators Jenny and Sarah collected donations of food and other essential items which were donated to Crawley Open House.

Thank you to everyone who donated.





Stomach cancer

Stomach cancer is when abnormal cells in the stomach start to grow and divide in an uncontrolled way. It is also called gastric cancer.

Stomach cancer is more common in older people. Around 50 out of 100 cases (around 50%) occur in people aged 75 or over.

It is more common in men than women.

Many stomach cancers are linked to lifestyle or environmental factors, including diet. Stomach cancer is linked with a bacteria that lives in the stomach called *Helicobacter pylori* (H.pylori). But not everyone with H.pylori will develop stomach cancer.

Main symptoms of stomach cancer

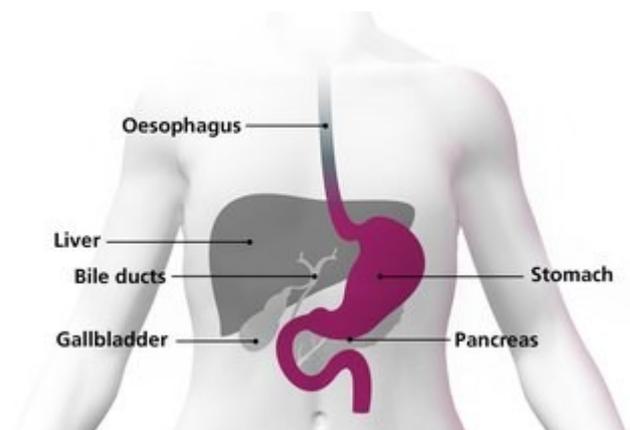
There are many possible symptoms of stomach cancer, but they might be hard to spot.

They can affect your digestion, such as:

- heartburn or acid reflux
- having problems swallowing (dysphagia)
- feeling or being sick
- symptoms of indigestion, such as burping a lot
- feeling full very quickly when eating

Other symptoms include:

- loss of appetite or losing weight without trying to
- a lump at the top of your tummy
- pain at the top of your tummy
- feeling tired or having no energy



If you have another condition, such as gastro-oesophageal reflux disease, you may get symptoms like these regularly. You might find you get used to them. But it's important to be checked by a GP if your symptoms change, get worse, or do not feel normal for you.

What happens at the GP appointment

The GP may feel your tummy. They may ask you to give a poo or pee sample, or have a blood test. The GP may refer you to see a specialist in hospital for more tests if they think you have a condition that needs to be investigated.

This may be an urgent referral, usually within 2 weeks, if you have certain symptoms. This does not definitely mean you have cancer.

For more information visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/stomach-cancer/



How to stay well in winter

Cold weather can make some health problems worse and even lead to serious complications, especially if you're 65 or older, or if you have a long-term health condition.

Who's most at risk from cold weather?

Some people are more vulnerable to the effects of cold weather. This includes:

- people aged 65 and older
- babies and children under the age of 5
- people on a low income (so cannot afford heating)
- people who have a long-term health condition
- people with a disability
- pregnant women
- people who have a mental health condition

Keeping warm over the winter months can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression.

Heat your home to a temperature that's comfortable for you. If you can, this should be at least 18°C in the rooms that you regularly use, such as your living room and bedroom. This is particularly important if you have a health condition. It's best to keep your bedroom windows closed at night.

Check your heating and cooking appliances are safe. Contact a Gas Safe registered engineer to make sure they're working properly.

Make sure you're getting all the help that you're entitled to. There are grants, benefits and advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills.

Find out more about ways to save energy in your home from GOV.UK, or call the government helpline on 0800 444 202.

Winter Warmers—Help with staying warm is being provided seven days a week by Crawley Borough Council (CBC), West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) this winter.



Can't afford to heat your home or want to reduce your bills?

Head to our **Winter Warmers!**

Warm and comfortable spaces

Free hot and cold drinks

Mobile device charging

Cost of living and wellbeing information

For venues and times visit crawley.gov.uk/moneyworries





The impact of being a carer

Did you know that there are approximately 6.5 million people across the UK who are carers? That means 1 in 8 adults are caring for family members or friends.

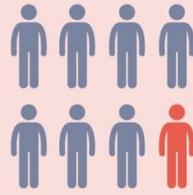
In a survey from the Carers Trust, half the carers (51%) said they had given up on hobbies or personal interests; similar numbers (49%) had needed to use their personal savings because of their caring role.

Carers often take on extra responsibilities they know little about. These responsibilities can have an effect on the carer's mental and physical health. In one study, researchers interviewed family members who were caring for people with dementia.

Most (2 in 3) said they felt lonely. Not only is loneliness distressing, it can also impact physical health.

Caring does not only affect health, caring can have a serious financial impact. With the rising cost of living, the financial impact of caring is growing. Many carers need to give up or reduce their employment, rely on charities for basic necessities, and pay for expensive services or equipment to support their loved one.

If you need any help or support please contact one of our PCN care coordinators on 01293 526025.



1 in 8 adults in the UK cares for a family member or friend



51% of carers said they'd had to give up on hobbies or personal interests



49% said they'd had to use their personal savings because of their caring role

Advice to patients preparing for a blood test

Get a good nights sleep.

Drink plenty of water prior to testing. Please do not consume any tea or coffee as every cup of caffeine removes 4 glasses of water from your body.

Water peaks around 20 minutes after consuming it, so drinking plenty is important to ensure the veins are plump and at the surface.

Lack of fluids reduces the chance of obtaining a blood sample, and the veins may collapse on needle insertion, causing a bruise, which you may have after the test anyway.

Bruises can be painful, but are normally harmless and fade over the next few days.

This may take longer if you bruise easily or take blood thinning medication.

It is important to apply pressure to the cotton wool ball after the needle has been withdrawn. Your health care provider will tell you when to do this.

This is to ensure bleeding has stopped, reduce the chance of bruising and surface clotting.





Shingles

Shingles isn't like other infectious diseases because you don't catch it from someone else. Most of us had chickenpox when we were young, although some of us will not be aware that we've had it. If you did have it, then the virus that caused it can stay in your body for the rest of your life without you knowing it is there. If the virus reactivates it causes a disease called shingles.

Shingles can be very painful and tends to affect people more commonly as they get older. And the older you are, the worse it can be. For some, the pain caused by shingles can last for many years. Shingles can really affect your life, stopping you from doing all the things you usually enjoy.

Shingles (also known as herpes zoster) is caused by the reactivation of an infection of a nerve and the area of skin that it serves, resulting in clusters of painful, itchy, fluid-filled blisters. These blisters can burst and turn into sores that eventually crust over and heal. These blisters usually affect an area on one side of the body, most commonly the chest but sometimes also the head, face and eye.

Are you due you shingles vaccination ?

Individuals become eligible for vaccination against shingles when they turn 70 years of age, and all those aged up to and including 79 years are now eligible to receive the vaccine until they turn 80 years of age. Is there anyone who should not have the shingles vaccination?

There are 2 shingles vaccines available in the UK:

- Zostavax, a live vaccine given as 1 dose
- Shingrix, a non-live vaccine given as 2 doses

If Zostavax is not suitable for you, a GP or practice nurse will decide whether to offer you Shingrix instead.

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Shingles

More than **50,000** cases of shingles occur in the over 70s every year in England and Wales 

In this age group, around **1 in 1000** cases results in death 

Symptoms include: **rashes** or blisters on **one side** of the body, burning or **shooting pain**, itching, fever, **fatigue** or headache 

On average, cases last **3 to 5 weeks**. Most people only get shingles once, but you can get it more than once 

Almost **30%** of individuals develop a painful complication called **Post Herpetic Neuralgia (PHN)**. Generally, this pain continues for **3 to 6 months**, but it can last even longer

The risk of shingles is higher in those with conditions such as **diabetes** or **rheumatoid arthritis** 

Shingles Vaccination Toolkit SW v1.0 2021/22 2



We are an Armed Forces veteran friendly accredited GP Practice

This means that, as part of the health commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant, at Bridge Medical Centre we:

- Have a clinical lead for veteran health
- Ask patients "Have you served?" to identify veteran patients
- Support veteran patients to access dedicated health services
- Undertake specialist training to meet the health commitment of the Armed Forces Covenant

This is important in helping ex-forces to get the best care and treatment.

If you are a veteran patient, please let us know that you have served so that we can make sure that we understand your health needs.



**Armed Forces veteran
friendly accredited
GP practice**

Greener Practice and PenCycle

PenCycle aims to recycle/repurpose any Novo Nordisk disposable devices to avoid them potentially being sent to landfill. It has previously been piloted in 3 areas across the UK and we are now rolling this out nationwide.



The initiative covers any Novo Nordisk Flextouch or Flexpen disposable pens used in medications to treat diabetes, obesity or growth hormone treatments. 23 million of these pens are used annually each year in the UK and across the 3 areas during the pilot phase, 14,500 pens were returned to be recycled. This equated to:

- 246kg of plastic diverted from landfill or incineration – and being repurposed to new products instead
- 60kg of glass diverted from landfill or incineration – and being repurposed to new products instead
- 19kg of metal diverted from landfill or incineration – and being repurposed to new products instead

For further information, you can visit <https://www.pen-cycle.co.uk/>



GP Patient Survey

Every year a random sample of patients from each GP practice in England get the opportunity to share their views and experiences in the national confidential GP Patient Survey run by Ipsos MORI on behalf of NHS England.

The survey covers all aspect of the patient experience including making appointments, the quality of care received from the GPs and practice nurses, satisfaction with opening hours and out of hours NHS services.

The survey is an opportunity for patients to have their say about how well they feel their practice is doing at providing services to its patients. The findings provide important insight into patients' experiences and helps practices to understand where they can improve. The information is also important to organisations that make decisions about local health services; and for patients, the findings can help them make choices about which services they use.

If you receive a copy of the survey in the post, please do complete it so that your feedback can be captured and help improve NHS services in the future.



The poster features the NHS logo in the top right corner and a 'GP PATIENT SURVEY' label in the top left. The main headline reads 'Your views can help improve local GP and health services'. Below this, it states: 'Some patients registered at this GP practice will soon be invited to take part in a national survey about their experiences of local NHS services.' It also includes the website 'www.gp-patient.co.uk to find out more'. A smaller text block says: 'It covers issues that concern patients, such as access to care and satisfaction with treatment.' Another block reads: 'If you receive a questionnaire, please help NHS England by filling it in as soon as possible.' The bottom of the poster shows a close-up of a questionnaire with a pen, highlighting the options 'Excellent' and 'Very Good'.

OUR OPENING HOURS

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

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

Evening and weekend access to GP appointments

We access face to face and remote appointments on weekday evenings and on Saturdays. This service is provided by Bridge Medical Centre working together with Langley Corner Surgery, Southgate Medical Group and Leacroft Medical Practice. The service was developed to meet our patient needs - addressing feedback from recent patient surveys and ensuring that our provision supports local demand.

Appointments can be requested in the normal way by eConsult or by calling the surgery during normal opening hours.