



The Lighthouse Medical Practice Patient Participation Group (PPG)

College Road Surgery 6 College Road, Eastbourne BN21 4HY. 01323 735044

Ian Gow Memorial Health Centre Milfoil Drive, Eastbourne BN23 8BR. 01323 766358

Chair: Liz Walke

www.lighthousepractice.co.uk

Issue No. 32

In This Edition...

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Front | Cold and flu Vaccinations 2023/24 |
| Page 2 | Cold and flu Vaccinations 2023/24 <i>Continued</i> Help with Childcare Costs |
| Page 3 | Creating a garden for Wellbeing |
| Page 4 | Dr. Nathan Dixon - PROFILE |
| Page 5 | Who's Who in Mental Health Care |
| Page 6 | Free mental health services / Top Tips |
| Page 7 | Your Questions Answered... |
| Page 8 | Help to pay NHS costs Information and Contacting the Surgery |

Covid and Flu Vaccinations 2023/2024 by Dr Andy Baldwin

We at The Lighthouse Medical Practice are excited to announce that South Downs Health & Care (SDHC) will be giving our eligible patients both the flu vaccine and Covid-19 autumn booster vaccine this year. NHS England have advised that the vaccines should be given together and one appointment for both vaccinations makes this much simpler for you.

SDHC have been responsible for giving the Covid-19 vaccine to our patients since it was first available and we are grateful for their ongoing commitment, which allows us to focus on providing day-to-day medical care for patients. Please do not contact the surgery about your flu or Covid vaccines.

Eligible patients will receive an invitation to book a vaccine appointment via SMS. Clinics are now open. Those unable to book an appointment via SMS will be able to phone SDHC to book their appointment on **01323 402530** (please do not call the surgery). Please note that these combined appointments are exclusively available to patients at Lighthouse Medical Practice and will therefore be on specific days when other patients are not invited to the centre.

SDHC will be holding Flu/Covid clinics at:

Hampden Park Health Centre, 12 Brodrick Close,
Hampden Park, Eastbourne BN22 9NQ.

Eligible children and young people under the age of 18 will be vaccinated at The Lighthouse GP surgery and will receive a separate invite from the surgery.

Liz Walke – PPG Chair

Welcome to our Autumn newsletter!

As the nights draw in, we are thinking ahead to keeping healthy this Autumn. We have a detailed Q&A section on flu and Covid Vaccinations. The Government changed the goal posts for flu and Covid at the last minute and it may feel things are a bit behind this year but we are really fortunate to be the only Practice in the area to be offered one appointment for both Vaccinations if you are eligible eg. over 65. This Newsletter also has a focus on Mental Health and a couple of articles from Practice staff which we hope you will find interesting. We are always looking for new members on our virtual group and face to face PPG meetings. Your feedback is really important to us. **Happy reading!**



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Q: I only want either the Covid-19 vaccine or the flu vaccine will this be possible?

A: Yes. Please inform your vaccinator when you arrive for your appointment. Please note we strongly encourage eligible patients to accept both vaccines, as per NHS England recommendations.

Q: Will I be able to get a Covid vaccination at the surgery?

A: No. The Lighthouse is not running flu clinics this year. Please book your appointment with SDHC.

Q: Will I be able to get a flu vaccination at the surgery?

A: No. The Lighthouse is not running flu clinics this year. Please book your appointment with SDHC.

Q: I do not want the flu or Covid-19 vaccine, do I need to let you know?

A: It would help if you could let us know our online communications platform (Engage Consult). Otherwise you may receive further Texts or Letters inviting you.

Continued on the next page...

Covid and Flu Vaccinations

...continued from the front page

Q: Will all patients aged between 50 and 64 be offered a flu jab again this year?

A: 50-64s are not covered this year unless they have an underlying eligible health condition. Eligibility information can be found here: flu vaccine - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Q: If I have an appointment at the surgery before the vaccine clinic, will I be given the flu jab at the appointment instead?

A: No. we need to maintain flu vaccination supplies for the planned clinics.

Q: Should I go to a Pharmacy for my flu jab?

A: NHS England have recommended both Covid-19 and the flu vaccine be given together at one appointment. Pharmacies are not yet able to offer Covid-19 vaccines.

Q: I have already had the flu jab this year at a pharmacist or other healthcare provider, do I need to let you know and can I still get the Covid-19 Vaccine?

A: If you've had the jab at a Pharmacy we will automatically be notified. If you've had the jab at work, please can you let us know via our online communications (Engage Consult). If you have had the flu vaccine and would like your Covid-19 vaccine you will need to book an appointment via your Accurx text with the link to book from SDHC, or via the national booking system: Book, cancel or change a COVID-19 vaccination appointment - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Q: If I've forgotten my flu clinic appointment date and time, how can I find out the details?

A: Patients can check their text messages and appointments will be confirmed to them via text. Patients can also email SDHC at the following address: sdhc.vaccinations@nhs.net

Q: I'm housebound, will I get the flu jab?

A: Patients who are already coded as housebound by their GP will be included in a home-visit vaccination programme. Housebound Patients will be contacted by SDHC via telephone to book an appointment for their home visit.

Q: My spouse, partner, parents, household members have been invited to different clinic dates and / or times. Can we all come along together?

A: If you are booked on the same date but at different times, you can come along together. We cannot see patients who are booked on a different day as this increases waiting time for others.

Q: I have just had Covid-19, when can I have my Covid Vaccine?

A: You can have a Covid Vaccination 28 days after first testing positive with Covid-19 or 28 days after you started with symptoms of Covid -19.

Q: Who do I call if I have any questions about my flu or Covid Vaccination?

A: Patients can call the SDHC helpline number on **01323 402530** with any queries. Please understand that the lines will be extremely busy and you may need to wait some time to have your call answered.

Help with Childcare Costs

Did you know that families can get help with childcare costs? Visit:

- www.childcarechoices.gov.uk
- www.eastsussex.gov.uk/children-families/childcare/costs/childcare-costs

Friends and Family Feedback

If you have had an appointment at the Practice you may be sent a text or email asking for your feedback, this is called "The Friends and Family Test".

Please can you respond to this, as your feedback is important to us.



Creating a garden for Wellbeing



by **Nurse Sharon**

Looking out of the window in the Nurse Room 5 at College Road, it looked soulless, two brick walls and gravel. There was nothing colourful or inspiring to look at and that's what inspired us to make a garden. Both Pauline and I said how nice it would be if there was something green to look at and we both have a passion for gardening and that's where the idea for a garden came from. We wanted somewhere to rest our eyes away from computer screens, somewhere to potter, deadhead and water, but most of all to make something that everyone could enjoy and be involved with, somewhere to take time out. We spoke to Amanda Sayer for permission to use a small area outside the window and she was delighted with the idea.

We set about finding plants and went to garden centres in supermarkets to find reduced-price plants. We took them home re-potted them with good compost, cared for and watered them until they were strong enough to be placed in the garden, where they are now thriving. The pots we used were recycled and we even used the old couch steps, from the clinic rooms, which provided a tiered platform on which to stand plant pots.



We now have a garden full of growing and blooming plants. It's great to have something lovely, colourful and relaxing to

look at from the window and colleagues and patients also enjoy the view. Our colleagues also help with the watering and maintenance of the garden.

We have also made flower beds outside the Ian Gow Health centre.

We don't own the Health Centre and the gardens were neglected. Using ground covering plants that add a splash of colour just outside the surgery, we created a lovely display. We get a lot of positive feedback from patients and colleagues about both the garden sites and we are so proud of what we have achieved.

What are the benefits of the garden?

Pauline: "For me, I just enjoy watching the plants grow and wanted something like that at work. The working day can be quite demanding and at times very stressful, I find it very calming to go out and look/touch the plants, pulling a few weeds. At home my garden can't grow a new leaf without me knowing about it. I find it quite amazing just what nature can do. I love watching the bees dip in and out of flowers, really makes me smile. Being outside especially when the sun is shining just makes me feel better and of course the Vit D is good for us all. Then there is the exercise element of it, you don't have to be out there digging, just getting up and walking round the garden admiring it all counts towards your steps, every little helps."

Sharon: "Rests my eyes away from the computer. Something lovely and peaceful to look at. A talking point for patients who also admire it something to distract children who are having immunisations as parents talk to them about the flowers.

Relaxing and calming keeps me grounded, time passes, and I forget everything,

Nurturing, bringing plants back from the brink, and watching them flourish, gives me a real sense of achievement and satisfaction, which is heightened by appreciation and enjoyment of others."

Taking time out to do a bit of deadheading and watering or just looking at the plants is good for the well-being of everybody and also provides a topic of conversation and interest.

We continue to seek out reduced plants that need some tender, loving care to add to our gardens and encourage colleagues to get involved so our garden project has brought many benefits to us, our colleagues and our patients.



Dr. Nathan Dixon - **PROFILE**

Why did you decide to become a GP?

The main reasons were liking the variety of conditions and cases you get in general practice as opposed to a speciality where you end up seeing a rather narrow range of issues. Being a GP gives you more control over your work environment than hospital medicine. You also have the chance to develop a longer-term relationship with patients and get a better opportunity to help their longer-term health

What are your main responsibilities at work?

Apart from the obvious clinical ones of seeing and assessing patients, my main areas of responsibility are in Cardiology, Learning disabilities and Prescribing. Supervising our training doctors, pharmacists and paramedics is also a growing part of my role. Clearly as a Partner, I'm also responsible for the ongoing needs of the business.

What are the biggest challenges you face on a daily basis and how do you overcome these?

Huge simultaneous demands on time and insufficient time to give everything the time you would like to. You try to prioritise as best you can, but it is very difficult to juggle all the competing work streams from seeing patients, doing phone calls, answering online consult queries, supervising colleagues, reviewing results, sorting out prescriptions to name a few.

What are your biggest achievements as a GP?

Surviving working 8 sessions a week for 8 years despite the current major challenges in the NHS! I had a large role in our pandemic response and getting through that, with no large staff outbreaks so we could continue to offer a service, was a big achievement at a difficult time.

How do you prioritise tasks?

This is quite complex to explain! I have some general rules but as with most things in life there are exceptions. I try and deal with things as I look at them as much as possible rather than look and come back to it. Usually, clinical work takes precedence over non-clinical.

How do you manage to switch off from work when you leave the surgery?

This is crucial, otherwise it would be impossible to carry on doing the job. Exercise helps, like running, swimming, going to the gym or playing cricket in the summer, Also, seeing friends and family and having weekends away.



What is the hardest task you undertake on a daily basis at the practice?

Triage, especially when we have much more demand than we have capacity to see.

How do you motivate staff?

This isn't something I primarily get involved with. I'd like to think by example: I work hard and reliably and don't ask anyone to do something I wouldn't do myself. I also try and be as honest as I can be with them.

If you could improve one thing in the practice what would it be?

Recruitment and retention of staff.

What is the key success to keeping patients happy?

Listening to them.

How have you improved the lives of your patients?

I wouldn't take credit for this, if patients' lives have improved, I'd always think they would have done most of the work and deserve the credit. Hopefully at times I'd have at least helped with that process though.

Who's Who in Mental Health Care

by *Gladeana McMahon
and Amanda Sayer*

People often wonder about the difference between coaching, counselling, psychotherapy and psychiatry. For the average person it can all seem like a bit of a minefield – coaching, counselling, cognitive-behaviour therapy, psychology, psychotherapy and psychiatry – how are you supposed to know?

So what's in a name?

Psychiatrist – you can become a psychiatrist only if you are a medical doctor who has undertaken further specialist training in psychiatry. Psychiatry is concerned with the diagnosis and drug-treatment of mental illness. What often surprises people is the fact that a psychiatrist is not a therapist and does not have to undertake training in psychological therapies (talking therapies). A psychiatrist diagnoses which type of mental illness a person is experiencing and its severity and, after an initial assessment, often refers the person on to a therapeutic practitioner such as a clinical psychologist or counsellor.

A number of psychiatrists do undertake therapeutic training in one of the psychological therapies but do so as a matter of personal choice. You cannot assume all psychiatrists have such training. The Royal College of Psychiatrists is the professional body for psychiatrists in the UK.

Psychologist – is normally used to describe an individual who has obtained an academic degree in Psychology. A Psychology degree does not equip an individual with the practical skills to be a therapist. Once an individual has obtained such a degree the next step is to choose a vocationally based qualification such as counselling. This is why you will hear terms such as clinical psychologist, educational psychologist and counselling psychologist. Each term acknowledges that the person concerned has undertaken further specialist training in a given area. The specialist body for psychologists is the British Psychological Society.

Counsellor – The name given to a person who practises one or more of a variety of therapeutic approaches. Counselling training varies from a basic two-year part-time diploma up to higher level degrees. Many counsellors build on basic diploma qualifications with advanced qualifications such as an MA, MSc or PhD. The British Association for



Counselling and Psychotherapy is the main professional body for counselling in the UK.

Psychotherapist – is a term used to describe a person whose training has equipped the individual to work with difficulties that are deep-seated emotional and psychological in nature. In many instances you will find a psychotherapist is also a counsellor, as it is not uncommon to train in counselling first moving on to more advanced forms of psychotherapy training. There are a number of bodies that represent psychotherapy in the UK, the two lead bodies being the BACP and the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP).

Coach – a coach is a person who seeks to assist an individual set and achieve their own personal goals. A coach may use one of a number of names to denote the type of coaching offered such as Life, Personal or Executive Coach. There are currently three major general bodies for coaching: The Association for Coaching, the International Coaching Federation and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council.

A GP will decide if you need to see a Mental Health specialist and not all services listed above are free for example Counselling and Coaching are not free NHS services.

A list of services in East Sussex is available here:

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/social-care/health-advice/mental-health/east-sussex-mental-health-directory/services



*Continues
on the
next page...*



Below are a few free mental health services that patients can access without needing to see a GP...

Sussex Mental Healthline

You can call this helpline for care and advice (24 hours, 7 days a week, for all ages) to discuss concerns you have for the mental health of yourself or someone else.

For callers whose first language is not English, a telephone interpreter can be arranged for other community languages, by phoning the helpline and letting them know the language needed.

- Phone: **0800 0309 500** (*freephone*)
- Website: www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/your-mental-health/getting-help/sussex-mental-healthline

Community Connectors

When everyday life is affecting your mental health and wellbeing, we work in partnership with GPs to help you access local services and activities that can help. Community Navigators support people to improve their own health and wellbeing by developing personalised and practical solutions to everyday issues, using a Social Prescribing pathway.

- Phone: 01323 340151
- Email: Social.prescribing@nhs.net
- Website: www.southdown.org/services/community-connectors-east-sussex

Shout Sussex text service

By texting the word SUSSEX to **85258**, people of any age can access a free, confidential, 24/7 service and have a text conversation with a trained volunteer. The volunteers offer real-time support to people who are anxious, stressed, depressed, suicidal or overwhelmed. Some people may prefer this to speaking on the phone. If appropriate, users will be signposted to other local services.

Health in Mind

A free NHS service for East Sussex residents who are experiencing stress, anxiety or low mood. You can self-refer through the website, and also find videos, top tips and free online therapy programmes. The service is offered via the phone or online via a secure video platform, with limited face-to-face treatment.

Once a referral has been received, the team will talk to you about what can be offered based on your needs.

- Phone: **0300 003 0130**
- Email: spnt.healthinmind@nhs.net
- Website: www.healthinmind.org.uk
- www.healthinmind.org.uk/refugees

Top tips to improve your mental wellbeing



There are little things we can all do to take care of our mental wellbeing...

Just like our physical health, it is important to look after our mental health. This can help us to learn new ways to cope with life's challenges and lead happier, healthier lives.

Simple changes can make a big difference – here are six areas that can help you look after your mental wellbeing:



1. Being aware of unhelpful thoughts

Learn to ask yourself whether your thoughts are helpful or not? Is there a different way to see the situation? What would you say to a friend?

2. Focus on now

Spend time focusing on the present instead of getting stuck on the past or worrying too much about the future. You could try relaxation techniques and mindfulness.

3. Getting enough rest

Make sure you have enough down time before bed and a good sleep routine with a regular bedtime and wake up time.

4. Connecting with others

Make time for socialising with friends and family or online communities where you are able to talk about the way you feel.

5. Living a healthy lifestyle

Eating well and getting enough exercise for your physical health can help to boost your mental wellbeing too.

6. Do something for yourself

Have some 'me time' by spending regular time on the things that make you happy, whether that's a hobby, trying something new or relaxing.

If you or someone you trust has a smart phone or computer and can access the internet, do visit www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/ for more tips and information on caring for your mental health, and find what works for you. You can also get access to the internet at most local libraries.

Better Health

every mind matters

Your Questions Answered...

We have a virtual PPG. Each month we ask them for feedback on services. The key themes are then collated, and in each Newsletter we will answer questions on these key themes.



Q: Why do I have to move GP Practice if I move outside of your catchment area?

A: Everything we do is about safety for patients, clinicians and staff, working within safe and workable limitations and being fair and equitable with all our patients.

All GP Practices have a boundary area. Boundary areas were set when Practices were set up. The boundary or Practice area is the area in which we can register patients. Each of our sites has a separate boundary area and we have a policy on changing address so if you move house we will check your new postcode and:

- If your new address falls within the boundary of the site you are registered at we will keep you at the site you are registered
- If your new address is in the boundary of our other site we will change your GP to a GP at our other site
- If your new address is outside of our boundary we will write to you to tell you have to move to a new GP Practice. The letter will state, in accordance with the Health Authority instructions, that the patient has one month to find a new GP, after which time, the practice will contact the Health Authority to ask for the patient to be removed from our list

We cannot make exceptions to this policy. Patients will ring, write and talk to us and beg us to stay. Please don't do this as it is upsetting for you and for staff and it will not change the outcome. We have to treat everyone equally and fairly and the GP Partners decided many years ago that it was not fair to keep one patient and not another and we created a policy and process for our staff to follow. If you really want to stay with your GP and are looking to move house check the postcodes first.

Q: Why is it important to let us know in plenty of time if you can't make your appointment?

A: We all know that there is a huge stress on GP and Nurse Appointments. Due to the national recruitment crisis and the aftermath of COVID, we have greater patient demand for fewer appointments. We asked our Nursing team for the reasons why missed appointments are causing them issues.

"It is incredibly frustrating not to get advance cancellations, when we are so short on appointments. I have had DNA (*Did Not Attend*) today for an Asthma review, a 30 minute appointment. We are being asked by GPs on a daily basis to try and fit urgent appointments in and sometimes we even have to cancel routine appointments to do so. In a 30 minute appointment we could be doing three blood tests, or two dementia reviews, two simple dressings, someone else's respiratory review and a diabetic check.

"In regards to patients missing appointments, I would say this is actually impacting heavily on other patients care at present. The nursing team are currently having to ask that routine appointments be cancelled to fit in more urgent tasks. For example, I had to cancel two general appointments to fit a 30min dressing in, then that patient never attended. If people cancelled their appointments rather than not attending we would have to cancel fewer appointments and it would have less impact on other patients and cause less stress to an understaffed nursing team."

Your PPG Needs **YOU!**

If you would like to participate in contributing to the excellent care we receive at the Practice, why not join the Patient Participation Group to help shape the ongoing development.

For more information, please email:
Liz.walke@aol.com

Be Septicaemia AWARE

Call the Practice immediately, or 111, if you have possible early signs of sepsis, as this requires quick treatment and without this it can lead to multiple organ failure or even death. Sepsis symptoms may include a high fever or low body temperature, chills or shivering, fast heartbeat or fast breathing. **Call 999 promptly and ask for an ambulance if more severe symptoms of septic shock develop.** These symptoms include severe breathlessness, severe muscle pain, feeling dizzy or faint, vomiting, a change in mental state such as disorientation, not urinating or a loss of consciousness.

Help to pay NHS costs Check if you're eligible for help

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check-if-youre-eligible-help

You could get help to pay for:

- NHS prescriptions
- NHS dental treatment
- sight tests, glasses and contact lenses
- travel to receive NHS treatment
- NHS wigs and fabric supports

Find out what help you could get and what to do next using our eligibility checker at the website above. It usually takes three minutes to check.

Who gets help

The help you're entitled to depends on where you live and if you:

- get certain benefits
- are pregnant or recently had a baby
- are aged 60 and over
- are aged 19 and under
- get a War Pension
- have a certain medical condition

Check before you tick

If you're unsure or waiting to find out if you're eligible for help, pay your NHS charge. Checks are made on claims for free NHS prescriptions and free and reduced cost dental treatment. If you claim incorrectly you could have to pay a penalty charge.

If you find out you're eligible, you can apply for a refund. For refund details, read the HC11 booklet (*PDF available from the website above*).

Apply for help to pay NHS costs

If you do not qualify for the help that you need, you can apply for help. You could be eligible depending on your household income and outgoings.

Repeat Prescriptions

for patients who are not on Electronic Repeat Dispensing

Our service is three working days from the time that you request your prescription to the time it is sent to the Pharmacy or printed for you to collect from the Practice.

The Practice is not contracted to run an emergency prescription service. If you need your prescription urgently, please ask at your Pharmacy who can issue emergency medications in many instances if there is no health risk.

Information and Contacting the Surgery

Surgery Information

Opening Hours

Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm

To contact us you can use **Engage Consult**, the online medical symptom taking tool that allows you to get a message to the Practice, or telephone us.

Please note that our phone lines are extremely busy especially from 8am-11am, so if your query is non urgent please call at other times.

Times for Contacting a Doctor

Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm

Out of Hours

If you need assistance between 6pm-6.30pm on weekdays, please call the out-of-hours service on: **0300 555 5252**

At all other times, please call the **NHS on 111** (all calls are free).

Practice Website – take a look!

www.lighthousepractice.co.uk

Practice Facebook 



Disclaimer notice: Any opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily of the Partners of the Lighthouse, but we have tried to ensure the information contained is correct. They cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies.