

The Lighthouse Medical Practice Patient Participation Group (PPG)

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

Chair: Liz Walke

www.lighthousepractice.co.uk

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The Patient Participation Group consists of patients of the surgery who work together with the Practice doctors and staff to help meet and improve the needs of patients.

In this edition...

Here we are in the second half of 2025. Life continues to move faster in a world with so many massive issues continuing. We are shown the tragic images on our screens of so many distressed and vulnerable sick people and emaciated babies and children desperately needing food and medical help in many countries. Many dedicated medical people give their skills and expertise trying to help these

desperate people with so little or inadequate supplies available. We are so fortunate here. The Lighthouse is a beacon for us and continues to provide the patients with an amazing and always safe service of care and stability every day. We may take this for granted, but should realise how hard the team works, learns and trains to achieve this for us. *We are indeed very fortunate.*

Penny Briggs *Editor*

A Leaving Message *from* Dr Nathan Dixon

Firstly, I wanted to take the opportunity to thank so many of you for your best wishes and gratitude prior to my departure to Australia. It was a fairly frenetic last few months but tremendously exciting to get to do something I have always had on my mind.

I have since spent a couple of weeks in Melbourne and meeting people in my new practice in Geelong and also having fun exploring the local surroundings.

Things are a bit different in Australia in terms of the healthcare; most practices are run by large businesses with the doctors being independently contracted and paid per patient seen. I am hoping this will suit me quite well - more clinical work and less paperwork would be ideal.

Despite it being winter the conditions are still quite reasonable for outdoor activities. I have done a few long hikes around, especially by the large river near where I am staying. Needless to say I am looking forward to summer and the cricket season!

Sadly, there have been a few delays in some of the paperwork. I felt best to return to the UK for a couple of months to work as after 5 weeks off I was missing the job and seeing patients and I faced another couple of months of not being able to work as a doctor in Australia. Thankfully, there was some locum work available back here. I am delighted to be working back in England at The Lighthouse Practice for a couple of months before returning to Australia for hopefully a



much longer time.

I have had a bit of time to reflect in recent weeks and just wanted to end by saying some things I rarely mention. I was born in Eastbourne hospital and spent most of my childhood living in Hampden Park.

Wherever I go, Eastbourne is and always will be my hometown and my community. I am hugely grateful to have had the opportunity to be a GP here and serve its population for the last decade and wish everyone here the very best for the future.

The Lighthouse team and PPG thank Dr Dixon for his knowledge, skill and care looking after our patients for over ten years and wish him the very best for his new life working in Australia. We will all miss you.

Practice Team News...

Welcome to some of our new doctors

The practice has welcomed a number of new doctors in the last eighteen months at both surgeries. You may already have had a face to face or telephone appointment with some of these GPs. It is always good to be able to put a face to a name so here are some photos of some of our newer doctors who work across both surgeries. Dr Aman Chauhan joined the practice over a year ago as did Dr Fritha Price. Dr William Furlong joined us in November 2024 and more recently Dr Minil Patel joined us in January 2025. We hope to hear more from them in later newsletters.

Dr Fritha Price



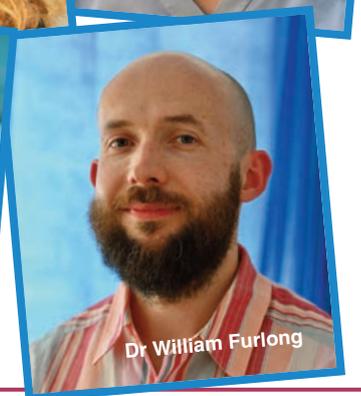
Dr Aman Chauhan



Dr Minil Patel



Dr William Furlong



Tips on how to cope in Hot Weather



www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/heatwave-how-to-cope-in-hot-weather

The main risks posed by a heatwave are:

Dehydration - Ensure you drink enough water. Babies, children and older adults are more at risk. Symptoms include feeling thirsty, dark yellow strong-smelling pee, peeing less often than usual, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, feeling tired or a dry mouth, lips, and tongue.

www.nhs.uk/conditions/dehydration

Overheating – Ensure you try to keep cool or cool yourself down. Overheating can make symptoms worse for people who already have problems with their heart or breathing.

Heat exhaustion and heatstroke – You can also get help from the environmental health office at your local council, if you think a hot house is affecting your health or someone else's. They can inspect a rented home for hazards to health, including excess heat.

www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke

Heat Wave Tips

Keep out of the sun between 11am and 3pm: If you have to go out in the heat, try to walk in the shade. Apply sunscreen, wear a hat, and light clothes. Avoid exercise or any activity that makes you feel hotter.

Cool Yourself Down: Have plenty of cold drinks and avoid excess alcohol, caffeine, and hot drinks. Eat cold foods, particularly salads and fruit with a high-water content. Have a cool shower or put cool water on your skin or clothes.

Keep Your living space cool:

Keep windows and curtains that are exposed to the sun closed during the day and open windows at night when the temperature has dropped. Electric fans can help if the temperature is below 35°. It is especially important to keep the living space cool for infants, the elderly or those with chronic health conditions or who cannot look after themselves. Place a thermometer in your main living room and bedroom to keep a check on the temperature. For more information: www.gov.uk

Beat the heat Staying safe in hot weather

If You Have a Health Problem: Keep your medicines below 25°C or in the refrigerator (read the storage instructions on the packaging). Seek medical advice if you are suffering from a chronic medical condition or taking multiple medications.

If You or Others Feel Unwell: Try to get help if you feel dizzy, weak, anxious or have intense thirst and headache. Call the Practice, 111 or 999. Move to a cool place as soon as possible and rest. Drink some water or fruit juice to rehydrate. Check your body temperature if you can.

Medical attention is needed if heat cramps last for more than one hour. Consult your doctor if you feel unusual symptoms or if symptoms persist.

Sunscreen and Sun Safety: Sunburn increases your risk of skin cancer. You can burn in the UK, even when it is cloudy. For more information: www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/sunscreen-and-sun-safety

HOW TO GET HELP from The Lighthouse Medical Practice

MONDAY TO FRIDAY – 8AM to 6PM

6pm-6.30pm – call 0300 555 5252

Other times, Weekends and Bank Holidays – visit <https://111.nhs.uk> or call 111

I WOULD LIKE HELP FROM:

A DOCTOR

THE ADMIN TEAM

‘Contact us online’ at
lighthousepractice.co.uk
If you can’t, call 01323 735 044 and select
OPTION 7, or visit our reception desk

A NURSE

GO TO:

lighthousepractice.co.uk

Click ‘Contact us online’

If you can’t, call 01323 735044 Option 1
or visit our reception desk

CALL: 01323 735044

**FOR NURSE APPOINTMENTS SELECT
OPTION 1**

OR visit our reception desk

NURSING OR CARE HOME - SAME DAY HELP NEEDED?

Use the **DIRECT ACCESS** telephone number on the Care Homes ‘How to Get Help’ sheet

CLINICAL HUB

Right help – Right service – Right time

Our team of experienced Hub GPs will:

- Review your request for help
- Contact you – preferably by text, email or online – to ask questions if needed
- Agree a plan with you on the same or the following working day

WAYS WE CAN HELP

Text, email or online •
Telephone • Face to Face
• Video Call • Home visit

PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP

GP • Pharmacist •
Paramedic • Social care •
Self-help • Mental Health
worker & many more

WHEN WE CAN HELP

We like to help on the
same day, but
sometimes it may be
the next working day



South Downs Health & Care (SDHC) will be running the Flu and Covid-19 booster vaccination clinics this year.

Flu/Covid clinics will be held on:

- **Saturday 4th October**
and **Saturday 11th October**
at **Ian Gow Memorial Health Centre**,
Milfoil Drive, Eastbourne BN23 8BR
- **Sunday 5th October**
and **Sunday 12th October**
at **Hillbrow Health & Wellbeing**,
1 Denton Road, Eastbourne BN20 7SS

(Please note: **Not** at College Road)

Patients eligible for the flu vaccination may receive an invite via text, email, or letter. Supplies are limited this year so invites will be randomised. If you are unable to attend on the date and time invited, then you can book via the national booking site if you are also eligible for the Covid-19 vaccination, as you may also be offered a flu vaccination at your appointment.

Please do not contact the surgery about flu vaccinations as we are not able to book these.

Patients eligible for the Covid-19 vaccination – please book your Covid appointment with SDHC via the national booking site:

www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/vaccination-and-booking-services/book-covid-19-vaccination

If you are eligible for both vaccinations and have booked your Covid appointment via the national booking system, you may also be offered a flu vaccination at your appointment. You may also be offered the Covid vaccination when attending for your flu vaccination.

Drop-in dates for further clinics at Hillbrow and Eastbourne Library will be posted at a later date on the practice website.

Eligibility for vaccinations:

Flu information can be found at:
www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/flu-vaccine

- are aged 65 or over
- have certain long-term health conditions
- are pregnant
- live in a care home
- are the main carer for an older or disabled person, or receive a carer's allowance
- live with someone who has a weakened immune system

- Frontline health and social care workers can also get a flu vaccine through their employer.

Eligibility for COVID vaccination:

Covid-19 information can be found at:
www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine

- are aged 75 or over
- are aged 6 months to 74 years and have a weakened immune system because of a health condition or treatment
- live in a care home for older adults

Eligibility for both vaccinations:

If you are aged 75 or over or alternatively are aged 65 to 74 and have a weakened immune system because of a health condition or treatment or else live in a care home for older adults. NHS England have advised that the vaccines should be given together at one appointment which makes it easier for you.

Eligibility for flu vaccination only:

If you are aged 65-74 and do not have a weakened immune system you will only receive the flu vaccine.

If you are aged under 65 you will not get vaccinated this year unless you have an underlying eligible health condition.

SHDC 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 our patients.

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

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: I only want either the Covid-19 vaccine or the flu vaccine although eligible for both, 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: I have just had Covid-19, when can I have my Covid Vaccine?

A: You can get your Covid vaccination as soon as you are feeling better after having Covid-19, even if you have recently recovered. There is no need to delay vaccination after recovering from the illness.

Cervical Screening

What to expect and why it is so important

by **Dr Roz Clift**, *Lead Doctor for Contraception*

Cervical screening (previously called a smear test) is a vital part of protecting your health. We know that every year in the UK around 3,000 women will be diagnosed with cervical cancer and that almost 900 women will die of cervical cancer.

Why cervical screening matters

Cervical cancer is 99.8% preventable if we can detect changes in the cervix before they become cancerous. Cervical screening detects cell changes in the cervix that could develop into cancer over time if left untreated, but it is not a test for cancer. Not going for your regular smear tests is one of the biggest risks for women getting cervical cancer. It is just as important to attend your smear test when you are older as it is for younger women, with a study demonstrating that if women aged 50-64 were not part of the cervical screening programme, five times more women would die of cervical cancer than at present.

Current guidelines recommend that women and people with a cervix aged 25 to 64 attend regular cervical screening appointments when they are invited. The frequency of screening depends on your age and previous results, but keeping up to date with your screens is one of the most effective ways to reduce your risk of cervical cancer.

What to expect during the procedure

- Before the test – A nurse will explain the procedure and answer any questions you have.
- During the test – You will need to undress from the waist down and lie on an examination couch, usually with a paper sheet to cover you. The nurse will gently insert a speculum into your vagina to get a clear view of your cervix, and then use a small, soft brush to collect a sample of cells. The whole procedure usually takes only a few minutes.
- After the test – Your cell sample is sent to a laboratory. You will receive your results by post, usually within a few weeks and 95% of results are normal.

If you are worried about pain or discomfort

It is understandable to feel nervous, especially if you have had uncomfortable experiences in the past or are worried about any pain. The procedure can be uncomfortable or painful for some people but there are ways to make the experience easier.

The team at Jo's cervical cancer trust has an excellent article offering practical advice on ways to feel more in control during your appointment, what adjustments you can ask for, and managing any pain: www.jostrust.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blog/blog/sometimes-smear-tests-are-painful

Our nursing team is here to support you

If you have any concerns, want to talk through the procedure or get reassurance before booking your appointment, our nursing team is happy to answer your questions over the telephone.

It is important to remember that smear tests are a screening test for pre-cancerous changes in women without any symptoms. If you are experiencing abnormal vaginal bleeding, pain, or a change in vaginal discharge, then you need to see a GP or nurse about these symptoms.

Here is a link to more information about cervical cancer and smear tests, which you may find useful: www.jostrust.org.uk/about-cervical-cancer/cervical-screening-smear-test-and-abnormal-cells

Please contact us online on Engage Consult, via telephone or ask at Reception to arrange your smear test if you have received an invitation from the cervical screening service or believe you are overdue for your smear test. It could save your life. As well as our usual surgery times, we also have appointments between 6pm-8pm on Mondays when you can have your smear test done.



Have YOU Been Referred to Hospital?

Take a look at this helpful NHS leaflet which describes what you can expect to happen when your GP refers you to see a specialist or consultant at a hospital or community centre. It includes a checklist for you when seeing a specialist.

www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/what-to-ask-your-doctor

Your Feedback

Your feedback is important to the practice, so we would appreciate it if you could complete a **Friends and Family** feedback text after your appointment at the Practice.

What is the difference between the **NHS App**, **Patient Knows Best** and **Engage Consult** and which do I need to use?

Below we have summarised what these each offer. There are some things, such as test results and ordering prescriptions, that are available on more than one app.

Of course if you do not use the internet or have email access, please continue to telephone the practice for your test results, making appointments and ordering prescriptions. *We are always here for you.*

	NHS App	Engage Consult	Patient Knows Best
What is it?	A simple and secure way to access a range of NHS services.	Ask medical questions online directly to the Lighthouse Practice for yourself or someone that you care for. You have to complete a questionnaire (takes about 10 minutes) on the problem. The practice will get back to you with the most appropriate help usually on the same day if you contact us by 1pm.	A single digital place storing your medical information.
How do I access it?	Use the NHS website or NHS app on your mobile telephone.	If you have an NHS account, you can access Engage Consult. You can also log in via the Lighthouse website.	If you have an NHS account, you can access Patient Knows Best (PKB) website or PKB app on your mobile phone.
How do I set it up	https://help.login.nhs.uk/setupnhslogin Set up an NHS account by setting up an NHS login. Read about how to set up NHS login (www.nhs.uk).	Set up an Engage Consult account.	Set up a PKB account
What does it offer me?	See parts of your health record - your allergies, medicines, and vaccinations. Order repeat prescriptions + nominate a pharmacy where you want to collect them View your test results (if your GP has given you access to your detailed medical record) Check or cancel hospital appointments Use NHS 111 online to answer questions and get instant advice	Request help about a non-emergency medical problem. Emergency medical problems - you need to call 999 Order repeat prescriptions Ask about your test results Contact us about an administration request Request a sick note NHS self-care advice	See parts of your hospital records View your test results See your hospital appointments

Self-Referral Services

These are accessible via the practice website.

www.lighthousepractice.co.uk/care-support/referrals-self-referrals

Did you know that there are some free NHS health services you can access without needing an appointment with your GP?

This is called **self-referral** and could help you find the care you need quicker and more easily than going through the surgery.

Below is a list of a few of these services. If you are reading this newsletter digitally, please click on the links for more information and contact details.

To self-refer for many of these you can telephone the service. Alternatively you can email them, or they may have an online form to be initially completed by you.

Adult Mental Health

There is a lot of help and support available for those that are struggling with mental health issues. Your GP is not always the best point of contact to provide help and support. The mental health support team have all the necessary experience to be able to provide the appropriate support.

Please see the link below for more information: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/social-care/health-advice/mental-health/east-sussex-mental-health-direct-ory/services

You can self-refer to 'Health in Mind'. They offer support to adults experiencing mild to moderate anxiety or low mood. There is an Online self-referral at www.healthinmind.org.uk and you can follow up this by telephoning **0300 0030 130** or email: spnt.healthinmind@nhs.net

If you have particularly severe difficulties, or if your difficulties have been going on for some time, you should contact a GP so he or she can ensure you get the help you need.

Youth Mental Health

www.irocksussex.com

If you are a young person 14-25 years old requiring help and support for mental health issues, you can contact irocksussex.

Would YOU like to join the PPG or Virtual Group (VPG)?

If you would like to contribute to the PPG and wish to attend our monthly PPG meetings then please contact Liz Walke on: liz.walke@aol.com. We also offer a Virtual Group for patients who would like to provide feedback online on their NHS experiences recently at the Practice, the Eastbourne hospitals or elsewhere.

Supporting the Lighthouse Reception Team and PPG Volunteers (Patient Participation Group)

As patients, we may arrive at reception to find a delay with other people ahead of us as several people may arrive at once. Some patients may be coming out from their appointment and have to book another test. Delays can be frustrating, especially when we are feeling unwell or vulnerable. Please remember the receptionists are assisting each and every patient with their queries efficiently, speedily, helpfully, and politely and are aware you and others are waiting for your turn. Please try to be patient and understanding on these occasions as only one patient can be helped at a time. All practice staff and PPG volunteers are doing their very best to help and care for patients and should always be treated with respect as they endeavour in their work to keep the practice running smoothly.

Patients' Praise for the Lighthouse Medical Practice

"I had to use Engage Consult several times over the past couple of months for my wife and I. On each occasion we have had the same day response and the GP's patience and understanding are so comforting and reassuring."

My Local Surgery

www.mylocalsurgery.co.uk

'My Local Surgery' is a convenient, fast, and free online private consultation with a local pharmacist or chemist offered via NHS Pharmacy First.

You can get an expert diagnosis and, if needed, a prescription, for six minor common illnesses (sore throat, sinusitis, impetigo, an infected insect bite, shingles and uncomplicated UTIs in women) as well as your free NHS contraception – all without needing to see a GP. Next day delivery of prescriptions is free. Prescriptions are charged at their usual price (if you normally pay for your prescription) minus the NHS subsidy. You can also access 'My Local Surgery' via Engage Consult, our online consultation tool.

Information and Contacting the Surgery

– See page 3 –

Managing your pre-booked appointments

If the practice has your mobile telephone number, we will text you an appointment reminder of your appointment 24 hours before. If you know earlier that you cannot make your appointment you can click the link in the reminder to cancel your appointment or telephone the practice.

Dear [Patient],
This is a reminder of your appointment which is booked for Wed 19th Feb at 11:00.
Manage your appointment [here](#).

Thanks,
The Lighthouse Medical Practice

Communication to patients on our practice changes

Please keep the practice up to date with your email address as well as your mobile and landline telephone numbers to enable them to contact you and send updates on the practice services.



Be SEPSIS 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.

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 your nominated pharmacy provided it is straightforward; if there are queries it may take longer. We no longer print prescriptions unless absolutely necessary.

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.

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Call now: 01323 638078

We always help our customers to enjoy life independently, whatever their age.

Visit us:

**13 Grand Hotel Buildings,
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