



Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas



Whether you are celebrating with family or friends, or avoiding the celebrations altogether, the odds are that your health will be a low priority throughout December.

So, without meaning to lower your mood, I thought this would be a good time to talk about one of the major changes we are going to notice in our NHS. Namely, the switch to a **Preventive Model of Health**.

Not much about this in the news - I think it deserves a major awareness campaign - but you will surely be aware that funding is tight and the NHS is struggling to cope with the demands of an ageing population and the deterioration in our diet and wellbeing. Too many ultra processed foods, too much sugar, too much alcohol, not enough exercise, busy lives and the struggle financially to maintain and afford a healthy lifestyle.

Plus, given the UK finances, the reluctance to spend as much on healthcare as our European neighbours.

% of GDP spend on healthcare 2022:

Germany - 12.7%

France - 12.1%

UK - 11.3%

Our new Government has just announced a very significant increase in the NHS budget which is great news and should reduce hospital waiting lists. But none of

that money is going to GP surgeries so we won't gain any financial benefits in the Witterings Medical Centre.

We are very lucky that the surgery is responding to tight budget constraints and adapting to serve us better. No longer the old fashioned GP surgery. Now, increasingly, a wellness centre with a wide range of health and information services which we can use.

To be sure, the PPG Committee sometimes give Tim and the team a hard time but I know we need them and I hope we can all support them.

If I haven't depressed you already, please read on to hear about the changes in our Medical Centre, all positive and will make a real difference if we work together as a community.

A important note at Christmas - please remember you submit your repeat Prescriptions in good time before the holiday. The Surgery will be closed 24th and 25th December and 1st January as the team there get a well earned break.

I wish you a very Happy and healthy Holiday and all good things for 2025.

Best regards,

Lesley Mair
Chair, Witterings PPG

So why can't I get an appointment???

The biggest complaint voiced to the PPG and the staff at the Medical Centre. Well, in truth you can and you do!

Phone calls and appointments – week of 4th November 2024

0830-1030 hours 295 answered calls

1100-1300 hours 389 answered calls

1400-1600 hours 254 answered calls

NB these numbers do not include outbound calls made

Resulting in: 1178 appointments

Of which 29 people did not bother to cancel or attend (!!!)

Plus all the admin time – updating notes, discussing any concerns, issues, patients care, mentoring trainees, attending NHS meetings etc etc

But it's true, you can't always get an appointment at the very minute you want one - generally because the need is not urgent.

Between 8.30am and 10am, a Duty Doctor sits with the Receptionists and every call is referred to them.

If your need is urgent, you will be seen by the appropriate member of staff. If it is judged not urgent you will likely have to wait.

Some people say they are switching to Private GP's because they can get an appointment immediately. All well and good if you can afford it - our Surgery receives around **£130 funding a year per patient. The price of an apple a day! The average Private GP costs **£500** a year, plus initial registration fee of **£195**, plus private prescription costs. Not exactly a level playing field - and these Private GP's have largely been trained by the NHS!**

Let's have a look at all the services we get:

THE SERVICES OUR SURGERY PROVIDES

More information can be found on the Surgery website. witteringsmedicalcentre.co.uk

We are very lucky that Witterings Medical Centre is part of CHAMP, Chichester area Medical Practises. The surgeries within CHAMP work together and share resources, so they are able to offer a much wider range than the old fashioned GP surgery was able to provide. Here's a brief overview of the Witterings Medical Centre services:-

GP's	New medical conditions/diagnosis. Hospital referrals, sick notes.
Nurse Practitioners	Coughs, chest, back and all conditions requiring immediate but not ongoing treatment. Administer antibiotics.
Paramedic Practitioner	As Nurse Practitioner plus Prostate care
Nurses	Regular injections, smear tests, asthma reviews, contraception
Nursing Assistants	Blood tests, blood pressure, ECG's, smoking cessation
Phlebotomist	Blood tests
Reception	Booking us in, dealing with abuse and and fending off complaints
Admin	Running the show!

Then there is ongoing monitoring of Patients Health:
CARE COORDINATORS - Annual 1-1 review of Patients with a long term health condition.
MEDICATION REVIEW - Annual 1-1 review of Patiets medication, meds stopped if patients don't attend the review.
ANNUAL HEALTH REVIEW - Re-starting at the surgery in 2025.

PIC - The Patient Information Centre -



Fabulous facility. The envy of all surgeries in the Chichester area. Full of info on medical conditions, local Support Services, Social groups, Wellness classes and much more more. First port of call - pop in to PIC!!

Open every day if you just want to browse and staffed Monday to Friday 9.30am-11.30am if you need some help.

West Sussex talking therapies - for mild to moderate anxiety and somebody to talk to privately. Self refer on the surgery website.

MIDWIFE
Tuesdays, pregnant Mum's can self-refer on the Surgery Website

Physiotherapist
Book direct by scanning the QR code on the Reception screen

RETINOPATHY CLINIC
Eye tests are offered two days a month to people with Diabetes 2

Podiatrist
Available on Thursdays, book thru Bognor Hospital

CHILD HEALTH AND BABY MILESTONES
Up until 5 years of age

CHICHESTER SOCIAL PRESCRIBING:
Non- Medical issues in your life having a negative effect on your health and wellbeing? Housing, finances, job or training, lifestyle changes, emotional support, feeling lonely or isolated? Check out Social Prescribing. Book direct on the Medical Centre Website. Available at the surgery on Thursdays.



Technology is coming! No point ducking it, the world is moving to Apps and AI. If you haven't already downloaded the NHS App and you can, please do. The App lets you book some appointments, sends you appointment and vaccination reminders, holds your GP health record, stores Hospital and GP letters, allows you to request repeat prescriptions and reminds you of appointments. And will, undoubtedly, do, more in the future. So please use it - and check it! If you've had a blood test etc then the results will be there for you to check for yourself. The PPG has received many queries from patients who are struggling to access the NHS App. In response, Lesley Handford from the PPG and Emma Szepesi from the Medical Centre have worked hard and produced a very easy to use guide which you can pick up from the Patient Information Centre. If you go there **when PIC is staffed (9.30am -11.30am Monday - Friday)** the lovely volunteers there will help you to access and use the NHS app.



Dear All

As we approach the end of another year, we naturally reflect on what 2024 brought us – for the medical centre it's been a mixed bag....

Our new staff have continued to develop their roles and responsibilities to enhance your care and we have continued to evolve our practice to make the most of the staff we have. It has also been a challenging year for some staff on a personal level and I suspect not one they would want to repeat! I hope everyone really appreciates the time they can spend with family and friends over the festive period and recognise the importance of making the most of time

together.

Next year will present new challenges for the medical centre – there will be some staff changes and we will have to work out how to survive with funding cuts as outlined in the recent budget – it's sadly a reflection of how little General Practice is valued by the new government.

The practice will continue to work as hard as possible to provide you with the best service we can with the funding we receive – please continue to provide us with feedback and suggestions if you think we can do things differently and better.

May I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Healthy 2025!

Tim



We are very lucky to have three excellent pharmacies in East Wittering and they are able to supply prescription-only medicines, including antibiotics and antivirals where appropriate, to treat 7 common health conditions without the need to visit a GP.

The 7 common conditions are:

- Sinusitis
- Sore throat
- Earache
- Infected insect bite
- Impetigo (a bacterial skin infection)
- Shingles
- Uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women

Coughs, colds, sinus and earache in particular don't respect Christmas so first port of call is Link pharmacy, Boots or the Witterings Pharmacy if you need speedy treatment and antibiotics.

Quite a lot to digest !

But if you kindly read through this newsletter, we hope you will have a little more understanding of the challenges the Medical Centre is facing.

It really is a very difficult time for Primary Care and GP surgeries as they struggle to cope with the medical, social and emotional needs of an ageing Baby Boomer generation.

Not to mention severe financial constraints.

We in the PPG think that Tim and the team do a pretty amazing job in the circumstances and we are very grateful.

In the last National GP survey, our medical team scored 90% for care. That's not half bad!

So we would like to thank all the staff in Witterings Medical Centre and wish them and you a very Happy Christmas and all good things for 2025.

Very Best Wishes,
The PPG Team



Oh, and if you would like to join the PPG committee and keep abreast of changes within the NHS and Primary Care, please do get in touch. It's your chance to influence the services our Surgery provides.

The current PPG Committee members are amazing but we are rather desperate for some under 70's !!!



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