



YOUR VOICE, YOUR NEWS

Patients' Participation Group for the Sid Valley Practice

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A note from the Chair



Hello, I am Cathy Gunnell and I am thrilled to introduce our new look newsletter for all the patients of the Sid Valley Practice (SVP). We are the Patients' Participation Group (PPG): a group of volunteers registered as patients with the Beacon. Our aim is to represent your voice to the practice and to let you know what the practice is doing.

Our plan is to produce 4 newsletters a year. In each edition we will highlight a topical patient experience and share what the Practice response is. In this first edition, we find out how **Chris** found using the new eConsult system and bring you useful tips from Practice Manager **Andy Hosking** on how to use this online system to make life easier for you to access GP services and for our Practice staff to respond effectively.

In each newsletter we will bring you topical information, driven by patient experiences or by the Practice team, to highlight things that we think you will find useful. In this edition we are looking at the different ways you can access GP services.



"I'm delighted to be working with our re-vamped PPG and see this newsletter as the start of a valuable dialogue between our patients and the team here at the Practice."

Andy Hosking, Practice Manager

Where you see a [blue](#) word, you can click for more information. All articles are the personal view of the author not the CCG.

You can have a free NHS flu jab if you:

- ⇒ Are 50 and over (including people who are 50 by 31 March 2022)
- ⇒ Are 18-49 with a serious medical condition
- ⇒ Are pregnant
- ⇒ Are in long term residential care
- ⇒ Receive a carer's allowance or are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you are sick
- ⇒ Live with someone who is more likely to get infections
- ⇒ Are a frontline health and social care worker

To book call 01395 512601

We are encouraging everyone to maintain their Covid-19 immunity and have their third dose or booster, as appropriate. Please check the Practice [website](#) for the latest information.

Please don't call the Practice to book a booster—wait for your NHS invitation.



FLU JABS

You can book your flu jab now if you are eligible.

If you are eligible for a Covid 19 booster, you may be able to have this at the same time as your flu jab.

The Greendale Covid-19 vaccination centre is still running. You can book your vaccination centre booster online [here](#), once the NHS gets to your age group. The website will only let you book once you are eligible and will offer you a date based on your second primary vaccine date. If you haven't had your first and second primary doses you can also book these through the [link](#).



YOUR PPG

A Patient Participation Group is a group of patients, carers and GP practice staff who meet to discuss practice issues and patient experience to improve the service.

Since 2015 it has been a contractual requirement for all GP practices to have a PPG and for this group to be representative of the patient population.

There is a national association that supports PPGs and you can find out more information [here](#). If you are interested in being part of this PPG, email the Practice on sidvalleyenquiries@nhs.net and your email will be forwarded to the PPG chair.

These are the current PPG members, and in future newsletters we will introduce you to them in a bit more detail.



Cathy Gunnell
Chair



Chris Gill
Vice Chair



Michael Brittain



Sharon Drew



Andy Hosking
Practice Manager



Paul Jeffries



Ann Liverton



Gillian Mitchell



Rebecca Selby



Joe Stych
Practice Partner



Ann Worthington

A note from our MP

Simon Jupp MP for East Devon



As your MP and a patient at the Sid Valley Practice, I am delighted to be writing for the first edition of this newsletter which aims to keep everyone updated on developments at the Practice.

This superb initiative between the PPG and the Practice shows how vital communication is in these challenging times as we adapt our lives to deal with the ongoing pandemic and it has my full backing.

The last 18 months have seen some significant changes to how healthcare is delivered, and the reliance placed on the NHS. I am proud that the government rolled out a world-beating vaccination programme and I urge anyone reading this who is yet to have their full quota of jabs to do so. I am double jabbed and only have admiration for all those involved in administering the scheme. I recently paid a visit to the Exeter Vaccination Centre at Greendale Business Park and was in awe of the logistics involved in delivering well over a quarter of a million jabs.

We all know how supportive the Sid Valley Practice has been throughout the pandemic and how it has had to adapt to these changing times. Technology is increasingly playing a part in how healthcare services are delivered. Whilst I personally believe everybody should have the right to a face-to-face appointment with their GP if they need one, there is a place for online consultations which will free up doctors' time and ensure those who genuinely need a face-to-face appointment get one.

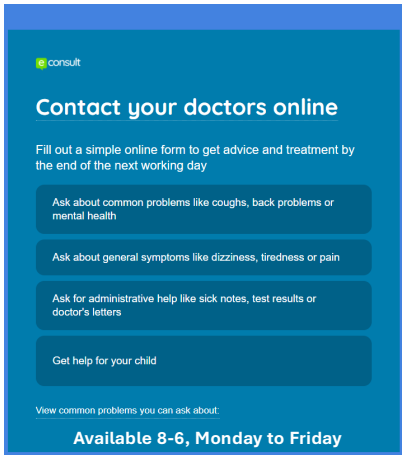
We are seeing record investment in the NHS and rightly so. Funds are being generated to help clear the backlog of operations created by the pandemic as well as addressing the ongoing issue of social care funding. This is the right thing to do. I also remain committed to protecting and supporting Sidmouth Hospital which is a valuable asset to our community.

Recently in the Budget, it was announced that East Devon will be getting one of the 100 new Community Diagnostic Treatment Centres, with services available at the Nightingale Hospital in Sowton which will help tackle NHS waiting lists locally.

I'd like to end by thanking everyone at the Practice for their hard work and commitment to delivering healthcare to our local area. Times continue to be challenging and I remain ready to support the Practice team and all associated with it however I can.

USING eConsult

A new way to access your GP services



Chris tells us what it was like when he tried [eConsult](#).

I wanted to test out this new, online way of contacting a doctor for advice, instead of ringing the surgery and asking for a telephone call back. There is a very useful [video](#) that explains how to use eConsult.

It was easy to use, if a bit repetitive, and I got a response the next day. In my case, I was offered a face to face appointment.

It was much faster than calling the surgery.

Importantly, it left the surgery phone line open for people who can't use the computer or who have a more urgent enquiry. I also had time to think about how to describe my problem and remember all the important points, without being rushed in a short GP appointment. When I went for my face to face appointment, my doctor was already briefed on what the problem was and was geared up to dealing with it fully. It also meant that she had been able to assess my symptoms and ensure that my appointment was within a safe and appropriate timescale.

If you have an issue but you don't think it warrants an emergency appointment, I recommend trying eConsult.



Andy shares a few tips on how the Practice staff use eConsult and how you can use it effectively to get the response you are looking for.

This is a relatively new system and we are all getting used to it. There are a few things you can do when you use the system to get a better response.

1. Don't use this system for emergencies. The system will tell you if your symptoms warrant a more speedy response and stop the eConsult process, directing you to a more appropriate place.
2. Please don't use eConsult to make a complaint. If you have feedback, use the option on our website.
3. Don't use eConsult for someone else—just use it for your own issue—unless you are asking for a child. By all means help a friend or relative to use it, but the surgery will only contact the person with the problem, not you.
4. Try and give a full description of what's wrong. You can upload a photograph as well if this helps.
5. Our Practice staff check eConsult for submissions and refer them to the duty doctor. Right now, you can only make a submission Monday to Friday between 8am and 6pm. We commit to responding by 6pm the next working day, but in many cases we will respond much sooner. If you need help after 6pm or at weekends, please use the 111 service, or for something more routine wait until the next working day.
6. As Chris says, by using eConsult, you free up our phone lines for urgent calls and people less able to use the technology.
7. Please remember, though, that Practice staff still have to examine every submission. If you are looking for general advice, the system offers a wealth of information on common issues, without needing to submit a form to Practice staff.

Improving through experience

Introducing the Patient Experience Programme

We are kicking off a new initiative to use patients' experiences to help the Practice build on what they do well and what can be done better. During 2022, we will be asking you, as patients, to share your experiences with us, both good and not so good. We will share your experiences with the Practice, working with them to analyse the information, address any issues raised and identify solutions.

Hints and tips arising from these experiences will feature in future editions of this newsletter. Watch this space for details on how you can participate. The programme will be publicised here, at the surgery and on the Practice [website](#).

This doesn't replace the existing feedback mechanism—look on page 4 for how to give your feedback to the Practice.

How to access your GP services



Dr Joe's "at a glance" guide to the options

Did you know you don't have to ring the Practice to make contact with your doctor? We are making the most of online options to make life easier for you and for us. Of course, you can still call us, or drop in during our opening hours. But you might find the following a useful reminder of what you can do and when.



Beacon: 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday

Blackmore: 8am to 1pm and 2pm to 5.15pm, Monday to Friday (closed Tuesday afternoon)

You can ask reception for an out of hours GP appointment, but this will be with a different surgery. Check [here](#) for the latest timetable of evening and weekend appointments



01395 512 601 Beacon Medical Centre (during opening hours)

999 Emergencies and life threatening conditions any time of the day or night, 7 days a week

18000 Use 18000 to contact 999 using text relay if you are deaf

111 If you need quick access to advice or treatment and can't wait for an appointment to see your doctor

111 6pm to 8am Monday to Friday and all weekend / bank holidays to contact Devon Doctors out of hours service

119 NHS covid-19 testing and vaccine booking

01392 402 399 Eye Casualty at RD&E offers [emergency eye treatment](#) from 9.15am to 5pm, Monday to Friday and 9.15am to 6pm weekends and bank holidays. You call Eye Casualty yourself rather than turn up at A&E. Outside these hours, you should attend A&E

01395 519 915 The Community Nurse team, based at Sidmouth Hospital, provides nursing care to patients confined to their own homes—this service is not managed by the surgery but you may need a GP referral

0845 2419 130 Out of hours contact to the Community Nurse team, 5pm to 8am, Monday to Friday and all day weekends and bank holidays

01392 269 475 If you have a clinical need for assistance with travel to an NHS You may be able to book [non emergency patient transport](#), run by Devon County Council. You can contact the advice service on this number to see if you are eligible for assistance

0345 155 1009



e consult

You can contact us [online](#) as well. Our online appointment booking is temporarily suspended, but you can consult one of our doctors or look up advice on a variety of conditions using [eConsult](#). You can submit a request on eConsult between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday. Do not use eConsult for life-threatening emergencies—dial 999

NHS 111 online

You can check symptoms, find a dentist, get a prescription or find out information about Covid-19 using [NHS 111 online](#)



If you have [registered](#) with the surgery for online services you can order prescriptions using [systmonline](#)



You can also email the surgery on sidvalleyprescriptions@nhs.net to order prescriptions—please don't ring the surgery—if you don't want to email you can drop a prescription request slip into a surgery letter box



If you have a smartphone, there are several apps that you can download to access NHS and doctor services



The [NHS app](#) enables you to access your GP records, request prescriptions and book appointments—but you need to ask the surgery to link your record after you have downloaded the app. It also stores your Covid-19 vaccination and test history and generates your Covid-19 travel pass. This is your proof of vaccination status. It is not part of the track and trace system

airmid

The app that goes with systmonline is [Airmid](#). You can log in to this App with your systmonline login or your NHS login



[NHS quicker](#) is a very useful app that uses GPS to tell you where your nearest emergency department or Minor Injuries Unit is, how many people are waiting and how long the current wait time is. This covers all of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, with partial coverage in Somerset and Dorset



If you need an emergency appointment that day, please try and call as early as possible. Our receptionist will ask you for brief details of your problem to help the duty doctor prioritise their calls. For all doctor appointments you can choose to have a phone, video or face to face appointment. If you are housebound, home visits can be arranged where clinically appropriate.



We welcome all feedback, so please tell us if we have done something well, or if you are not happy with our service. You can find our complaints policy [here](#) and our online complaints and compliments form [here](#)