

PATIENT NEWSLETTER



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WELCOME To your patient newsletter!

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Our Patient Participation Group (PPG) is made up of patients who meet with us 3–4 times a year to help improve services through honest, constructive feedback.

Since the merger last year, both former PPGs have come together as one unified group, now working in harmony. We'd like to congratulate the Chair and all members for embracing this transition so positively.

Sub-groups have also been created to focus on specific areas – bringing together skilled and experienced members to benefit both the practice and its patients. For example, our Vaccine Clinics Sub-Group supports the smooth running of seasonal vaccination clinics by welcoming, directing, and assisting patients on the day.

Staying up to date with Vaccinations

Vaccinations are a safe and effective way to protect you and those around you from serious illnesses.

By staying up to date with the NHS vaccination schedule, you reduce your risk of becoming seriously unwell and help protect vulnerable people in our community.

At Reach Healthcare, we follow NHS guidance to make sure our patients get the right vaccinations at the right time. If you're unsure whether you're due a vaccine, please get in touch – we're here to help. It's never too late to catch up.

QOF (Quality and Outcomes Framework)

This year, we're proud to share that we've achieved 97.4% of our overall Quality of Care (QOF) target. QOF targets are set for all GP practices across the UK to help improve patient care, especially for those living with long-term conditions.

We've met key goals in areas like:

- ◆ Blood pressure checks
- ◆ Cholesterol control
- ◆ Pre-diabetes support
- ◆ Mental health reviews
- ◆ Respiratory and diabetes care
- ◆ Vaccinations across all age groups

Here's a quick look at what we've done over the past year:

- 1,806 Diabetes Reviews
- 1,416 Asthma Reviews
- 407 COPD Reviews
- 110 Reviews each for Cancer, Dementia & Learning Disabilities
- 301 Heart Failure Reviews
- 234 Depression Reviews
- 778 Baby Immunisations
- 306 Home Visits

These figures reflect just a part of the ongoing care we provide every day. A huge thank you to our staff, patients and partners for helping us deliver such high-quality care.

Are your contact details up to date?

Please contact the surgery to update your details if you or a member of your household move address or change your phone number or email address.

Upcoming Surgery Afternoon Closures

Practices across Kent and Medway close one afternoon a month for Protected Learning Time (PLT). On these afternoons, cover is put in place by MedOCC and NHS 111 so that our patients can still access medical care if required.

Afternoon Closure Dates will be posted on our Facebook page and displayed on posters in reception at each surgery

Summer Skincare – Stay Safe in the Sun

The warmer weather is a welcome change, but it's also a reminder to protect your skin from sun damage. Sunburn isn't just uncomfortable – it increases your risk of skin cancer over time. Taking simple steps now can help keep your skin healthy for years to come.

✓ **Use sunscreen** – Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30 to all exposed skin. Don't forget easy-to-miss areas like ears, feet, and the back of the neck. Reapply every two hours, and straight after swimming or sweating.

🕶️ **Seek shade** – The sun is strongest between 11am and 3pm. Try to stay in the shade during these hours, especially if you're outdoors for a long time.

👕 **Cover up** – Lightweight clothing, sunglasses, and a wide-brimmed hat offer extra protection.

👶 **Protect children's skin** – Young skin is especially sensitive, so make sure children are well covered and wearing sun cream when outside. Checking your skin regularly can also help spot any changes early. If you notice any new moles, changes in shape or colour, or anything unusual, please speak to your GP.

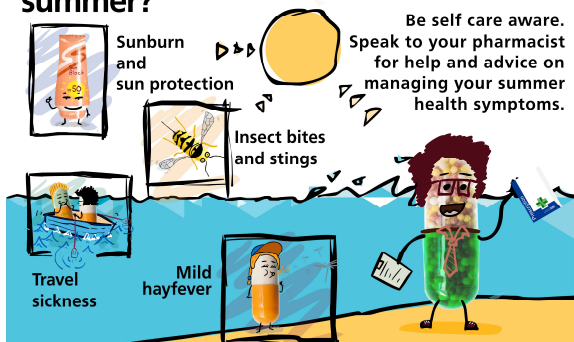
📎 For NHS advice on sun safety:
www.nhs.uk/sunsafety

📎 For information on skin cancer:
www.nhs.uk/skincancer

Hay-Fever

In 2024, NHS Kent and Medway spent over £700,000 on medications for hay-fever. Antihistamines and hay-fever relief products are available to purchase without a prescription at supermarkets, convenience stores and local pharmacies. For more information on hay-fever, speak to your local pharmacist or visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hay-fever/>

Are you ready for summer?



Demand vs Capacity

We know it can sometimes be frustrating when appointments aren't immediately available. Like many GP surgeries, we're working hard to balance high patient demand with the capacity of our team.

Every day, we receive more appointment requests than we have capacity to safely manage. To keep patients safe, we prioritise based on clinical need.

This is why services like **NHS 111** and **Pharmacy First** exist – to offer quick, safe care for minor illnesses and free up appointments for those who need them most.

We're always reviewing our systems to improve access, and we thank you for your patience and understanding.

Please continue to use tools like the NHS App and Anima to help us direct your care safely and efficiently.

Missed Appointments

When a patient misses an appointment it is marked as a "did not attend" (DNA). Each GP appointment costs around £30 meaning that did not attends (DNA's) cost the NHS approximately £216 million a year.

Reach Healthcare DNA Data

February 2025: 278 missed appointments

March 2025: 331 missed appointments

April 2025: 338 missed appointments

We understand sometimes unavoidable situations or emergencies come up but if you are unable to attend an appointment it is vital that you contact us to cancel the appointment as soon as possible to make it available for another patient. You can cancel in the following ways:

- Via the NHS App
- Responding to your appointment reminder message (the message will usually ask you to respond "cancel" if you can no longer attend your appointment)
- Call us on 01634 687200 to cancel and/or rearrange your appointment.
- Come in to the practice to speak to reception.

Don't have the NHS App?

📱 Download the NHS App

Manage appointments, order repeat prescriptions, and view your medical records – all in one place.

Download for free:

📲 [App Store \(iPhone/iPad\)](#)

📲 [Google Play \(Android\)](#)

Or search "NHS App" in your app store.