



Heart to Heart

Patients' Newsletter for Northway Medical Centre

Our Patients Participation Group (PPG) Newsletters keep you informed about what's going on regarding provision of great health care services at the Northway Medical Centre, and within the Dudley CCG overall.



We are also promoting opportunities for you to join in with local activities, which can provide tremendous benefits to physical and mental health – as well as being good fun!

We hope that you will find these newsletters informative and we welcome any suggestions you may have for future content.

Karen Hindley
Chair – Northway PPG

PPG Patient Survey 2019

In February each year the PPG at Northway Surgery runs a Patient Survey which aims to gauge patients' take-up of (and raise awareness to) the services on offer through the surgery, and to capture patient feedback that can be used to further develop and improve patients' experience. It also helps the PPG to identify areas to strengthen through our communications to patients – via newsletters, noticeboard information, email, topical events and such like.

Responses from patients who completed the 2019 PPG Survey included ideas about additional surgery services and improvements relating to premises; comments reflecting that some patients would like more continuity of access to a single GP; and **a lot of very positive feedback about the Practice and its staff as a whole**. A summary of the Patient Survey analysis has been produced by the PPG and is displayed on the PPG Noticeboard in the surgery reception – this can be sent to patients on request.

A comprehensive overview of the survey results was extensively discussed at the PPG meeting on 18th March 2019, with Dr Pritchard personally engaged in this review. Suggestions that can be addressed will be taken forward by the Practice: little can be done however to address patients requests to be able to see 'their own doctor' or to have continuity of access to a named doctor – there are very few surgeries nowadays that would be able to provide GP services in that way. The Practice does however now have 4 regular GPs and 4 training GPs: there should be no problem for you to get an appointment to see a doctor if you are ill.



- There are **6,085** patients registered to Northway Surgery.
- The GPs at Northway surgery saw around **1,500 patients every month** (April 2018 to March 2019) with around 30 appointments per month being lost to patients who Did Not Attend.
- During the first week of the PPG Survey, **403** patients had appointments with GPs at the surgery.

No Longer Prescribed Medicines

With the Pollen count set to rise for spring and summer, patients who suffer with Hay Fever might be particularly interested to know that Dudley GPs have been instructed to no longer prescribe antihistamine tablets, nasal sprays and eye drops to relieve Hay Fever symptoms as these products can be bought over the counter at a much more cost-effective price than an NHS prescription.



Dudley CCG's Prescribing Policy has recently determined a range of medicines that should no longer be prescribed by GPs. The rationale is predominantly around the cost and effectiveness of the medicines e.g. some medicines such as Paracetamol and Antihistamines can be purchased for a few pence per pack in shops and supermarkets, and some health supplements have no proven medical benefits. GPs do however retain discretion to prescribe a product from this list in exceptional circumstances, should the case be warranted.

A poster which lists many of the medicines no longer to be prescribed by GPs in Dudley is now on the PPG Noticeboard. Should you wish to read more on this subject, Dudley CCG's detailed policy document can be viewed at the following link:

<http://www.dudleyformulary.nhs.uk/download/496/dudley-ccg-prescribing-policy>

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Listen Up! - Audiology Services

Hearing Aids

Patients aged 50+ who need hearing services can ask their GP for a referral to go either to NHS Audiology Services at Ventura Way, Brierley Hill or to be seen at SpecSavers Audiologists (nearest at Dudley or Wolverhampton) or Scrivens Audiology Services (nearest at Wolverhampton or Bilston). If a hearing aid is supplied from that referral, the patient would collect batteries from that provider over the three-year contract period.



There is also "The Outside Clinic" an accredited NHS provider, with a team of qualified hearing specialists working all over the country. If you are unable to get out and about, they can arrange a home visit to check your hearing in your own home and help you to get the right hearing aids. To find out more, visit their website www.outsideclinic.co.uk, or telephone 0800 60 50 40.

Free Ear Wax Removal

Guymark UK of Brierley Hill who manufacture, provide and support medical audiological equipment and services and specialist training to healthcare professionals on micro-suction ear wax removal, have sent posters to local GP surgeries to invite patients to volunteer for free ear wax removal. This would be done by qualified audiologists and nurses undergoing further training of ear wax removal procedures and all clinics will be performed under the supervision of trained professionals. If this is of interest to you – contact Guymark on 01384 890600 or email earwax@guymark.com.

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Foot Care – “Stepping Out” Service from Age UK

Useful to know - people aged 60+ who may be struggling to look after their feet but are not eligible for NHS Podiatry services can get foot care (nail-cutting, hard skin removal) for a small fee, via Age UK Dudley.

More information can be found via the Age UK website <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/dudley/our-services/footcare/> or by calling the Stepping Out Team on 01384 267009.

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Extended Hours: late evenings and weekend appointments

The recent Patient Survey provided further positive feedback about the extended hours rota that has operated over the past couple of years. Through this scheme **routine appointments** can be made for times outside of the normal practice hours, including later evenings as well as Saturday and Sunday mornings. (This is not an emergency walk-in service).

The appointment is made via your own surgery and if you are offered an extended hours slot, you will be informed which surgery you should attend for that appointment. Your patient records will be released to the GP for your appointment so that they have access to your recent medical history and prescriptions.

Lower Gornal Medical Practice has now joined into our rota and the five surgeries providing extended hours appointments for the Sedgley/Coseley Primary Care Network area are now:

- Northway Medical Centre, Alderwood Precinct, Sedgley DY3 3QY
- Woodsetton Medical Centre, 40 Bourne Street, Dudley DY3 1AF
- Coseley Medical Centre, 32-34 Avenue Road, Bilston WV14 9DJ
- Ridgeway Medical Centre, 175 The Ridgeway, Dudley DY3 3UH
- Lower Gornal Medical Practice, Bull Street, Dudley DY3 2NQ

The rota for additional extended hours appointments for the coming weeks is provided below:-

Mondays to Fridays from 6:30pm to 8:00pm

Saturday mornings from 9:00am to 12:00 noon | **Sunday mornings** from 9:00am to 11:00am

From Monday:	To Sunday:	Medical Centre	From Monday:	To Sunday:	Medical Centre
08/04/2019	14/04/2019	Northway	17/06/2019	23/06/2019	Northway
15/04/2019	21/04/2019	Woodsetton	24/06/2019	30/06/2019	Woodsetton
22/04/2019	28/04/2019	Coseley	01/07/2019	07/07/2019	Coseley
29/04/2019	05/05/2019	Ridgeway	08/07/2019	14/07/2019	Ridgeway
06/05/2019	12/05/2019	Lower Gornal	15/07/2019	21/07/2019	Lower Gornal
13/05/2019	19/05/2019	Northway	22/07/2019	28/07/2019	Northway
20/05/2019	26/05/2019	Woodsetton	29/07/2019	04/08/2019	Woodsetton
27/05/2019	02/06/2019	Coseley	05/08/2019	11/08/2019	Coseley
03/06/2019	09/06/2019	Ridgeway	12/08/2019	18/08/2019	Ridgeway
10/06/2019	16/06/2019	Lower Gornal	19/08/2019	25/08/2019	Lower Gornal

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Blood Tests

More choice is now available for blood tests in Dudley - you can now book a blood test appointment at a time and location convenient to you ...

Blood test appointments can now be booked at both Russells Hall and Corbett Hospitals - phone **01384 244330** to book an appointment time at either hospital. NB: The drop-in blood test clinics with no appointments necessary are *still available* at Russells Hall, Corbett and Guest Hospitals.

You can still make appointments for a blood test at Ladies Walk, Sedgley – telephone **01902 575957** to book, and there are also a number of other surgeries across the borough where appointments can be made if required – see the poster in reception.

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Fraud, Scams & Illegal Trading

We recently held an awareness raising event to learn from Dudley Trading Standards Scams Unit and the National Illegal Money Lending Team about fraud, scams, rogue trading and illegal money lending – all of which impact on people’s well-being with serious affect to both physical and mental health. We heard how rogue traders and scammers take advantage of loneliness and vulnerability, and we were presented with some shocking anecdotal evidence of 88 cases currently being investigated locally here in Dudley: 82 of these victims own their own property and 72% of these were aged 65+.



Dudley’s *Friends Against Scams* initiative aims to inspire action, highlight the scale of the problem, change the perceptions of why people fall victim to scams and make scams a local, regional and national topic - a short conversation can be all that is needed to make a real difference to the lives of those who are being targeted by the criminals carrying out these scams.

Dudley Scams Unit is looking to get information out through PPGs and to have a SCAMS Champion identified at each surgery who will be offered training and networking opportunities to promote awareness in the local community. One of our PPG members has volunteered to be our Scams Champion and you will see more information posted on this in future newsletters and on the PPG noticeboard within the surgery.

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If you would like to have our PPG newsletters sent directly to you, please send your email address to northwayppg@outlook.com and we will add your name to our mailing list.

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Why Don't You Join In?

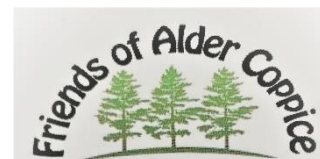
(1): Local Healthy Walks



Our GPs are keen to encourage this type of activity – it's good for both physical and mental wellbeing, but more importantly it's enjoyable: whether you join in a group walk or whether you prefer to walk by yourself and meditate along the way, there's a great choice here on your doorstep.

Monday walks with the PPG - our members continue to meet up on Mondays (except Bank Holidays) – just before 1:00pm, at the surgery - to walk for about an hour, chat and enjoy the local parkland. *Anyone can join in* – often there are two groups – one walking at a slower pace and following a shorter trail than the other group, so you can choose your own pace. We'd love to see you!

Friends of Alder Coppice Signposted Walks - some fabulous signposted walks through the nearby ancient Alder Coppice woodland, marked as yellow (short walks), red (medium walks) and blue (longest walks). There are clearings and seating along the way and the Friends Group are currently creating a 'conversation crescent' made up of benches in a clearing where you can sit and meditate or have a chat with fellow walkers who may be there. *Maps, posters and information about the Friends of Alder Coppice Walks can now be found next to our PPG Noticeboard in the surgery reception.*

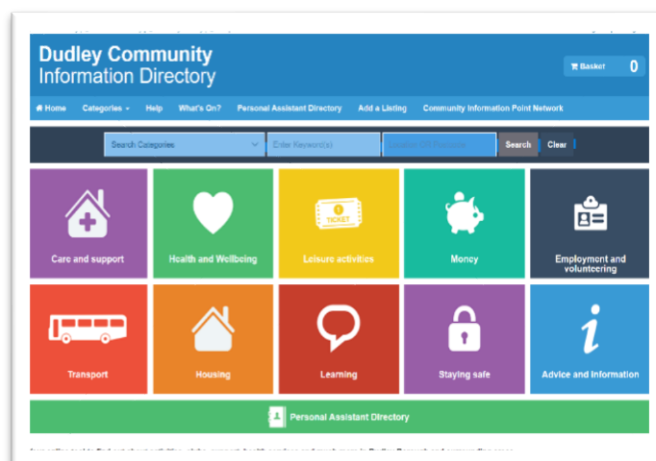


(2): Friends of Alder Coppice Volunteers

Meet new people, learn new skills, keep fit and protect your local environment – help to care for the ancient woodland located between Northway, Swallowfields Road and the agricultural belt (top end of Penn Common). It's not all digging, cutting, pruning - volunteers are needed to help with plant and animal surveys, help with publicity, web page design, or even make nesting boxes for bats and birds. Whatever takes your fancy you would be made very welcome by the Group, who meet on the first Saturday of every month from around 9:30am to 11:30am – at the woodland entrance in Swallowfields Road (DY3 3TR).

(3): Find an activity that's of interest to you...

A great resource to find out what's going on locally is the **Dudley Community Information Directory**, hosted by Dudley Libraries. It has a plethora of information including leisure activities, health information, finance, caring support, keeping safe etc available through its website. The link to access the database is: <https://www.dudleyci.co.uk>. Just look at the type of information that is available through the Leisure Activities screen... (see next page).



You can for example search for any type of activity by entering it as a keyword – e.g. dancing, choir, dominoes ... and enter an area or postcode – e.g. Sedgley or DY3, then press Search to find out where to join in (see the screenshot overleaf):

The results will be displayed showing the nearest activities first - and if you find something you might be interested in doing, select [Read More ...](#) to see details.

(4): Northway’s Patient Participation Group – you’re always welcome

Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) are established at most GP practices. Any patient registered at Northway Medical Centre is welcome to join the PPG and attend our meetings, which are held roughly every two months in the conference room at the practice, usually from 2:00pm to 4:00pm.

More information about Northway’s PPG can be found on the noticeboard in the reception area of the surgery. If you wish to speak to a member of the PPG, please either leave your telephone number at reception and ask for a PPG member to call you, or you can send an email to northwayppg@outlook.com.

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