

# Cuckfield Medical Practice



## The Vale Surgery Spring Newsletter

**Welcome to Cuckfield Medical Practice & The Vale Surgery News Letter.**

**News letters will be produced quarterly to keep patients update to date with our latest services and any important Practice information.**

**We hope you find it both insightful and informative.**



### **Staffing Update**

2023 has welcomed the addition of many new team members to Cuckfield medical practice, both clinical and administrative.

We have created a new staffing model for the administrative team to ensure adequate cover at both sites, so we have been busy recruiting lots of new receptionists and prescription clerks. We would like to welcome to the team: Vicky, Sue, Catherine, Zena, Natalie , Charlotte. & Fiona.

There has been some changes to our clinical team too. We are delighted to announce Jemima returned to the practice in January and resumed her role as paramedic practitioner, Dr Whitehouse returned from maternity leave in March and we welcomed a new practice nurse, Sush at the end of April.

Sadly we have also said farewell to a few staff members. Philippa Luckett, our previous lead nurse retired from her role in April 2023 after 30 years in the NHS. Rachel Hills has stepped into her shoes and now leads a team of 2 phlebotomists, 2 HCAs and 2 Practice Nurses.

Dr Cotter will be leaving us at the beginning of May to go on maternity leave, and we are delighted to announce Dr Husain has accepted a maternity contract and will be covering during her absence. We are also very sad to announce that Dr Burns will be stepping down from her role as GP partner and leaving the practice in July 2023. We are currently recruiting for a new doctor to join our evolving team.

### **PPG - Patient Participation Group**

The PPG is a group of patients, carers and GP Practice staff who meet (once every quarter) to discuss Practice issues and patient experiences to help improve the service. Anyone registered at the practice is invited to become a member, and we would love to welcome some new faces to our group.

In our last PPG meeting we asked for support to help the practice fund-raise £4000 for two new defibrillator machines. If you would like to get involved with the PPG or would like more information about anything we do please contact: Hannah at [cuckfield.reception@nhs.net](mailto:cuckfield.reception@nhs.net)





## MSK—first contact practitioners

Increasing numbers of people now have the opportunity to see a musculoskeletal (MSK) practitioner as their first point of contact.

Practitioners can come from a range of allied health profession (AHP) disciplines including physiotherapy, osteopathy and podiatry. FCPs offer

a musculoskeletal assessment clinic where patients conditions are assessed and diagnosed. They offer guidance on how to manage conditions, and can suggest treatment plans, including exercises and OTC medications. If appropriate FCPs can refer onwards for more specialist treatment, and have the ability to arrange blood tests and x-rays. They are the first step in helping patients move forward with any MSK problems. If you think it would be benefit from a consultation with a FCP – please contact reception to arrange an appointment (we offer a FCP clinic at cuckfield medical practice every Friday). Alternatively complete an online self referral form for the MSK service via the link below:

<https://sussexmskpartnershipcentral.co.uk/self-referral/>

## The Pressures we are facing

GP practices across the country are experiencing significant and growing strain with declining GP numbers, rising demand, struggles to recruit and retain staff resulting in knock-on effects for patients.

Cuckfield Medical Practice is no exception to this.

Pressures on general practice are intensified by the fact that the work is becoming more complex and more intense. This is mainly because of the ageing population, increasing numbers of people with complex conditions, initiatives to move care from hospitals to the community, and rising public expectations.

In March 2023 the practice carried out 4865 appointments, received 6395 telephone calls, and attended 36 home visits. 147 patients did not attend their appointment and failed to inform the practice.

Alongside offering consultations to patients, clinicians at our practice are also responsible for: Attending important MDT, PCN, clinical care meetings, completing paperwork—including authorising prescriptions, arranging referrals, corresponding with hospitals, reviewing results and completing dictations. Offering a home visit service for those who are clinically vulnerable and unable to attend the practice, provide minor op, family planning and micro suction clinics. Offer supervision and tutorials to trainee's as well have a contractual duty to provide care to a local care home and secondary school.

In order to cope with the increased demand and workload, we have had to adapt the way in which we operate and offer appointments on a day-to-day basis. To help improve patients access to the clinical team, Our practice coordinator, Georgia has put together a helpful guide about the appointments we offer here at the practice.

Date	Number of Appointments	DNA
01 Mar 2023	228	3
02 Mar 2023	182	9
03 Mar 2023	229	6
06 Mar 2023	278	9
07 Mar 2023	278	20
08 Mar 2023	229	1
09 Mar 2023	184	4
10 Mar 2023	204	11
13 Mar 2023	230	6
14 Mar 2023	196	8
15 Mar 2023	135	1
16 Mar 2023	204	6
17 Mar 2023	204	9
20 Mar 2023	229	9
21 Mar 2023	205	6
22 Mar 2023	236	9
23 Mar 2023	179	4
24 Mar 2023	189	5
27 Mar 2023	231	4
28 Mar 2023	222	8
29 Mar 2023	164	1
30 Mar 2023	206	4
31 Mar 2023	206	3
Totals:	4865	147

The reception staff are members of the practice team and it has been agreed they should ask patients 'why they need to be seen'. Reception staff are trained to ask certain questions in order to ensure that you receive: the most appropriate medical care, from the most appropriate health professional, at the most appropriate time.

Reception staff, like all members of the team, are bound by confidentiality rules and any information given by you is treated strictly confidentially.



#### **Appointments Available:**

**Emergency on the day:** These are available daily for medical emergencies. If you feel you need to see a GP for a medically urgent issue you must phone the surgery either at 8.30am for a morning appointment, or at 1.30pm for an afternoon appointment. These appointments are limited and reach capacity quickly, so it is important to ring as close to these times as possible. Urgent appointments are initially done by telephone, and if required the GP will book you in for a face-to-face appointment that same day. Once these appointments are fully booked, you might be asked to ring back the next day, or be directed to the NHS 111 service.



**Routine:** Any appointment that is non-urgent, such as for general health enquires, monitoring of conditions, reviews etc are categorised as routine. Routine appointments can be booked any time, and we offer both face to face and telephone appointments. Currently our waiting time is 6-8 weeks in advance for GP appointments, which the practice is working hard to bring down. If suitable, you may be offered an appointment with another type of clinician much sooner.



**On the day appointments:** similar to urgent appointments, these are released daily at 08:30 and 13:30 and are allocated on a first come, first serve basis. On the Day appointments can be either face to face or telephone consultations and are reserved for requests that can not wait for a routine appointment, but equally need to be treated within a relative time frame. The demand for these requests are understandably high, and are often gone within an hour of them being released so we recommend that you call as close those times as possible. These appointments will either be with a GP, paramedic practitioner or paediatric ANP.



**E-consult:** This is a quick online form that can be found on our practice website which allows patients to submit any concerns or requests to a GP electronically. Once submitted, the econsult is passed to a GP at the local HUB service. This is then reviewed and actioned appropriately – this will sometimes be in the form of a telephone call, onwards referral or arrangement for a routine follow up. E-consults are usually actioned within 48 hours.

*Please do not use the Econsult form to request prescriptions, nurse appointments or referrals as this will delay your request. Please call the surgery if you require these.*



**HUB:** This is a service where local practices work together to offer extra appointments or additional clinics for patients. Sometimes if we are at capacity, we might be able to book you in for a HUB appointment at another local practice. This service offers routine and pre bookable appointments with a doctor or nurse, as well as evening and weekend appointments.

You could be offered an appointment at any of the practices within our Primary Care Network (PCN) these are: Cuckfield Medical Practice, the Vale surgery, Ouse Valley, Lindfield Surgery or Northlands Wood Surgery depending on availability. This will be confirmed by the receptionist at the time of booking.



**Private appointments:** some services at the practice are not routinely offered as part of the NHS contract, this means they are chargeable to patients. They include private medicals needed for HGV or Hackney licenses, insurance company requests, firearms paperwork etc. Appointments for private work are offered on Wednesday mornings at the practice. Please contact reception by telephone to arrange an appointment for private work, currently there is a 6-8 week wait for these slots.

## PCN staff

Cuckfield Medical Practice is part of the Haywards Heath Villages PCN (Primary Care Network). PCNs are groups of GP Practices working closely together, along with other healthcare staff and organisations, providing integrated services to the local population. The PCN employs lots of clinical and non-clinical healthcare professionals who work collaboratively with the individual Practices to provide the best possible service to the patients. Following on from our previous news letter, we have asked Marie our PCN social prescriber to explain a little more about her role:

*Hello,*

*I am the Social Prescribing Linkworker at the practice. I work on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at both The Vale and Cuckfield. Patients are mostly referred to me by the GPs, but I also receive referrals from the rest of the practice team (who I work very closely with), for example, the Occupational Therapist, Pharmacist, Care co-ordinator and the reception team.*

*My role is to support patients with a wide range of social, emotional or practical needs to focus on what matters to them, to try to improve their health and wellbeing. Social Prescribing is designed to support in 'non-medical' ways, providing practical support that can make a real impact on your health and wellbeing. This could include support with loneliness and isolation by finding befriending services or local groups and activities or linking you with other services in the community. It could include learning new skills, or getting involved in a physical activity. If you need information on employment, benefits and housing I am able to signpost the appropriate service. I also link people with the local Foodbank and Community Larders (at Benstwood hub and Ascension Church) which are essential, especially with the current cost of living crisis.*

*I meet with patients wherever is best for them, this may be at their home, in the practice, in the community or just having a chat on the telephone. I spend as long with patients as is needed, often up to an hour. Support is offered where needed, this may include my help making phone calls to the local services when this is challenging. It may also include accompanying patients to local Citizens Advice meetings, a Universal Credit meeting or first time at a local group. I often jointly visit patients at home, with our Occupational Therapist who works in our practice 1 day per week.*

*Making strong links with the local voluntary services is really important as they provide so many really valuable services in the community. To ensure I know all of the help and support available I meet with many of these services at local meetings (mostly arranged by 'Mid Sussex Voluntary Action – MSVA) to find out what is being offered so I can pass this information on to our patients.*

*If you think that a chatting to me would be of benefit and you would like support and advice. Please contact the practice to let us know.*

*Many thanks  
Marie Dowell*



## Hay fever season

Hay fever is a common allergic condition. It affects up to 1 in 5 people at some point in their life. You'll experience hay fever symptoms if you have an allergic reaction to pollen.

Pollen is a fine powder released by plants as part of their reproductive cycle. It contains proteins that can cause the nose, eyes, throat and sinuses to become swollen, irritated and inflamed.

### You can have an allergy to:

- ♦ tree pollen, released during spring
- ♦ grass pollen, released during the end of spring and beginning of summer
- ♦ weed pollen, released late autumn

Many people find their symptoms improve as they get older.

**The symptoms of hay fever include:** frequent sneezing, runny or blocked nose, itchy, red or watery eyes (allergic conjunctivitis) an itchy throat, mouth, nose and ears, cough, caused by postnasal drip (mucus dripping down the throat from the back of the nose). Less commonly, you may also experience: the loss of your sense of smell (anosmia), facial pain (caused by blocked sinuses), Headaches, earache, tiredness and fatigue. If you have asthma, your asthma symptoms may get worse when you have hay fever.

## Treatment

There's currently no cure for hay fever. But most people can relieve symptoms with treatment, at least to a certain extent.

Speak to your pharmacist if you have hay fever. They can give advice and suggest the best treatments, like antihistamine drops, tablets or nasal sprays to help with: itchy and watery eyes, sneezing and blocked nose.

If your symptoms are getting worse or do not improve after taking medicines from the pharmacy, book in for an appointment with the GP.

**For further guidance visit: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/hay-fever](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hay-fever)**



### Online Access— *taking responsibility for your health care*

We encourage all of our patients to register for online access at the practice. This is a quick and easy way to contact the practice, and allows you to remotely:

- Book and cancel appointments with a doctor or nurse at a time that is good for you.
- Order repeat prescriptions.
- Look at your GP record online.

If you wish to register for our online services— please fill in the short form available to download from our practice website or collect a hard copy from either surgery. The practice will ask to check a form of photographic ID before registering you.

### Planned Practice Closures – PLT Days

The Practice will be closed for staff training on the following dates in 2023:

- ◆ Thursday 27th April – closed from 12.30pm
- ◆ Tuesday 11th July – Closed from 12.30pm
- ◆ Tuesday 19th September – Closed from 12.30pm
- ◆ Wednesday 18th October – Closed from 12.30pm

This is to allow all practice staff to take part in protected learning time training sessions. All participating surgeries in the area will be closed these afternoons.

The NHS West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group actively supports developing general practice, to improve the care of our patients. Protected Learning Time (PLT) is an opportunity for practice staff to address their own learning and professional development needs.

Emergency cover will be available

If you require emergency medical treatment whilst the surgery is closed you can contact NHS 111 alternatively or the out of hours service. We publish the out of hours contact number on our website a few days before each planned date, this is because the number changes each time.

 <b>Self Care</b>	 <b>Pharmacy</b>	 <b>NHS 111</b>	 <b>GP Practice</b>	 <b>A&amp;E or 999</b>	 <b>Mental health</b>
Minor ailments should be treated at home	Local expert advice	Non-emergency help	A skilled team of medical professionals	For emergencies only	<div>SCAN ME</div> 