

# WELLINGTON ROAD FAMILY PRACTICE

## PATIENT NEWSLETTER AUTUMN / WINTER 2022



### Christmas and New Year Opening Arrangements

Welcome to the autumn and winter 2022 edition of our newsletter. We would like to take this opportunity to wish all our patients and your families a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Over Christmas and the New Year holiday period, there will be some days when the surgery will be closed. If you need a doctor during the Christmas and New Year holiday period, **please telephone 111.**



**Our surgery will be closed on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> December, Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023.**

**Please let us have repeat prescriptions either via the NHS app, Patient Access or on your paper prescription by MIDDAY Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December and make sure that you collect any prescriptions, preferably by 1.30pm on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December.**

### Medication Supply Shortages

The longer wait to collect medication and unavailability of familiar brands of medication have caused frustration for many of our patients.

This is a national problem and not something going wrong at our surgery or with our colleagues at the pharmacy next door. In August the Department for Health and Social Care advised that medication supply problems are being caused by manufacturing difficulties, issues with the supply of raw materials, distribution issues and increases in demand for certain medications worldwide.

The pharmacists spend many hours trying to source the medication that our patients need and often have no choice but to order alternatives which have the same effects as the items usually prescribed.

**We ask, please, for your understanding and patience with all members of our staff and pharmacy staff at this challenging time.**

## Attendance Allowance

Attendance allowance is a tax-free benefit you can be entitled to if you are of pensionable age, are physically or mentally disabled and need help with personal care and/or supervision to remain safe. You do not have to actually be receiving that help. You can be eligible for attendance allowance if you live alone, you do not need to have a family carer or be employing a care worker. Attendance allowance is not means tested and can be a passport to other types of financial help.

To qualify for attendance allowance, you must:

- make a claim for attendance allowance,
- satisfy the disability test,
- have reached pension age,
- meet the qualifying period,
- not be subject to immigration control and
- pass the residence and presence test.

To qualify for attendance allowance, you must have been in need of care for six months before you can receive the allowance however if you have a life limiting illness that qualifying period may not apply. Attendance allowance has two rates, the lower currently £61.85, the higher £92.40.

Attendance allowance can be paid in addition to most other benefits e.g. state pension or pension credit. It is not affected by earnings and is ignored for means tested benefits. To pass the disability test you must meet at least one of four conditions. You must be so severely disabled physically and/or mentally that you require during the day, frequent attention through the day with your bodily functions, continued supervision through the day to avoid substantial danger to yourself or others, and at night repeated and/or prolonged attention to bodily functions and to avoid substantial danger to yourself so someone needs to be awake for prolonged or repeated periods to keep watch over you.

Attention means active help that you need; it doesn't mean that you actually receive that help; it is purely about help you need.

Supervision means you need someone around to prevent accidents or danger to yourself; it is about supervision which reduces the risk of harm to you. Supervision must be reasonably required not medically required.

To apply for attendance allowance you need the claim form (the AA1) so please phone the attendance allowance helpline 0800 7310122 or download a form from the website [www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/how-to-claim](http://www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/how-to-claim) where you can find some more detailed information and guidance about making a claim for attendance allowance.

## COVID Booster Jabs

As the UK moves from an emergency response to COVID to a pandemic recovery phase, the focus will increasingly be on protecting people who continue to be more at risk of severe COVID infection in the coming winter. The aim is therefore to augment the immunity of people at higher risk. The following people are eligible for booster vaccination:

- residents in a care or nursing home for older people and staff working in those environments,
- front line health and social care workers,
- all adults aged 50 and over,
- people aged 5 to 49 in a clinical risk group,
- people aged 5 to 49 who are in a household contact of people who are immunosuppressed,
- people aged 16 to 49 who are carers, i.e., people providing unpaid care to a relative, friend or neighbour.

## Influenza Vaccination Programme 2022/2023



Once again, this year, influenza vaccination is going to be very important. Influenza infection rates in 2020/21 and 2021/22 were remarkably lower than usual and in both years vaccine uptake was high. As all kinds of social contact have returned to pre-COVID levels, it is expected that there will be a resurgence of influenza infections in the winter months of 2022 and 2023, probably a higher incidence than before the pandemic. The potential for circulation of influenza, COVID and other respiratory viruses is likely to add considerably to winter pressures in the NHS from November 2022 through to March or April 2023.

So once again, influenza vaccination this autumn is going to be vital in the prevention of severe illness, hospital admission and unnecessary deaths. Those people eligible for the NHS influenza vaccination this year are:

- children aged 2 or 3 years on 31.8.22,
- all primary school age children from reception to year 6,
- children and adults age from 6 months to under 65 years in clinical risk groups,
- pregnant women,
- people aged 65 and older,
- people in long stay residential / nursing home care
- carers
- close contacts of immunosuppressed people,

- front line staff in registered residential or nursing care, registered domiciliary care providers, voluntarily managed hospice providers and personal assistants funded through direct payments or personal health care budgets.

Additionally, it has been announced that the following groups will also be eligible once the above cohorts have been offered and given vaccination. We will not be allowed to do this until 15<sup>th</sup> October, and likely these will take place in November.

- 50- to 64-year-olds not in clinical risk groups (including those who turn 50 by 31 March 2023)
- Secondary school-aged children focusing on years 7, 8 and 9 and any remaining vaccine will be offered to years 10 and 11, subject to vaccine availability.

## Living with Depression and Anxiety

Depression is a long-lasting disorder of low mood, where a person can feel persistently sad and low for many weeks or months. Depression can interfere with our ability to get on with everyday activities and interests. Depression may be mild, moderate, or severe and is a common mental illness which can affect one in six of us. It is a condition which anyone can experience, and it is treatable; it is not something that you can snap out of, and it is NOT a sign of weakness.

Symptoms of depression may include:

- low mood, feeling sad,
- reduced or no energy,
- reduced concentration,
- changes in appetite and sleep pattern,
- feeling less good about oneself, guilty or worthless and
- loss of interest in things that you usually would enjoy.

There are a number of different types of depression so if these feelings have persisted for more than a couple of weeks it would be a good idea to consult your GP. As for causes of depression, there is not one single cause. Different issues can cause depression to develop. Research indicates several possible causal factors which include stressful life events such as problems at home or at work, financial difficulties, loss and/or bereavement, loneliness, abuse, or discrimination all of which individually or collectively may bring about depression. Hormonal and/or chemical changes in the body also can cause symptoms to develop.

The first step in dealing with depression is to speak with your GP. If a diagnosis of depression is confirmed, talking therapies such as those offered locally by Vitamins, anti-depressant medication and/or regular exercise, may be suggested. Your GP will want to monitor your condition and adjust the treatment plan based on evidence of how any prescribed treatment is working.

Anxiety is a normal response to various situations which in some way pose a threat to our normal pattern of living. It gives you a sense of risk or danger and how to respond, i.e., “the fight, flight, freeze” reaction. The brain responds by releasing stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol; when the situation that has prompted the reaction subsides, the body would usually return to normal.

In an anxiety disorder, feelings of risk, fear or danger persist and therefore interrupt the daily routine. Symptoms of anxiety disorder include:

- racing thoughts
- uncontrolled overthinking
- problems with concentration
- panic attacks
- poor sleep
- changes in appetite
- wanting to escape the situation you find yourself in.

There may be many physical symptoms too such as sweats, fast breathing and/or faster heartbeat, excessive tiredness, hot flushes, and dizziness.

There are several types of anxiety disorder but no conclusive evidence of what causes them. However, researchers indicate that genetics, life experiences, chemical changes in the body and drugs and alcohol may be causes of anxiety disorders.

Once again when your GP has confirmed a diagnosis of an anxiety disorder, talking therapies may be suggested; medication may also be a treatment and again your GP will want to monitor progress of your treatment to see if it needs adjusting.

Two national organisations have comprehensive information, advice and guidance for people experiencing depression and/or anxiety and their carers and families.

Rethink can be contacted on 0808 801 0525 and their website is [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org) MIND can be contacted on 0300 123 3393 or via their website [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

It is also important to be aware of the Samaritans who provide a service 24 hours a day 365 days a year on 116123 or for more information go to [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

## **Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)**

A Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) is a legal document enabling a person to appoint one or more people to help him/her to make decisions or make decisions on that person's behalf. The person making the appointment is the 'donor', the people appointed are 'attorneys'. You must be 18 and be able to make decisions at the time you make an LPA. There are two types of LPA, property and financial affairs and health and welfare.

A property and financial affairs LPA enables an attorney to manage the property and finances for the donor, such as run bank or building society accounts, pay bills, collect pension / benefits or sell a property. A health

and welfare LPA enables an attorney to make decisions such as medical care, moving into a care home and life sustaining treatment. To register / activate an LPA, costs £82 for each LPA.

The Office of the Public Guardian can offer help and guidance, via email on [customerservices@publicguardian.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@publicguardian.gov.uk) or by telephone on weekdays between 10am and 5pm on 0300 456 0300.

When a health and welfare LPA has been registered with the Office of the Public Guardian, here at the Practice we can add it to your patient record.

The “certificate provider” can be anyone who has known you for at least two years, or a solicitor. Full details on the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website.

## GP Patient Survey results 2022

WELLINGTON ROAD FAMILY PRACTICE HAS BEEN RATED ONE OF THE TOP THREE PRACTICES IN SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Wellington Road Family Practice has been rated as one of the top three practices for the SIXTH consecutive year in South Gloucestershire.

Every year a GP Practice patient survey is carried out. The results of the 2022 survey have just been published. Wellington Road Family Practice has scored higher than average in every area surveyed. 92% of Wellington Road Family Practice patients who responded to the survey, described their overall experience of Wellington Road as good; the national average overall experience was 72%. Our receptionist scored an amazing 97% for helpfulness and 95% of patients said that they found their experience of getting through to the practice by telephone good compared to a national average of 53%

GP Practices are judged on access to your GP service, making an appointment, your experience of your most recent appointment, your health as well as your overall experience. To achieve these excellent results for the sixth year running is outstanding, encouraging and a real boost to morale, especially as we have experienced one of the most difficult years ever with the pandemic.

Our aim is always to provide high quality, personalised care and we are delighted that the response from our patients yet again is so positive.

A very big THANK YOU on behalf of the whole team to all our patients who took the time to respond to the survey.

**If you would like to see the full survey results you can find these at: <https://www.gp-patient.co.uk/patientexperiences?practicecode=L81642>**

## Age UK in South Gloucestershire and Wiltshire

Age UK South Gloucestershire offers a number of services to older people, their carers and families. The information and advice service can help with benefit checks, applying for benefits and local activities and services offered by other local organisations.

This is a free service and can be contacted on 01454 411707. South Gloucestershire Age UK also provide activity day centres, befriending, toenail cutting and a free will writing service. More information about their services can be found on their website, [www.ageuk.org.uk/southgloucestershire](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/southgloucestershire)

## Your Patient Data Matters to Us!!

Following on from recent news and social media speculation about NHS Digital and data sharing as a number of posts are circulating on social media about the national data opt-out, containing incorrect information. We thought it may be helpful to provide some key information and links to help you with your decision making and if you might be now thinking of opting out of sharing any of your data as it's your choice.

### Understanding the national data opt-out - NHS Digital

Although, sometimes information about your health and care does help the NHS to improve your individual care, speed up diagnosis, plan your local services and research new treatments, you still have the option to decline sharing data that goes beyond the provision of your direct care.

✓ Have a look at our Privacy Notice which explains what we do with your data and who we share it with

✓ There is also a great webpage from NHS Digital with FAQs and myth busting.

<https://digital.nhs.uk/.../nat.../mythbusting-social-media-posts>

### WE DO NOT

- **We do not sell health and care data**
- **We do not share data with marketing and insurance companies**

If you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact our Data Protection Officer [Liberty@almc.co.uk](mailto:Liberty@almc.co.uk)



## Defibrillators

A defibrillator is a device that gives a controlled electric shock to the heart of someone who is in cardiac arrest. The shock is called defibrillation and it can be a vital part of saving the life of someone who is having a heart attack. The best thing to do if you come across someone experiencing a cardiac arrest is:

1. **Call 999**
2. **Start CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), the call handler on the other end of your 999 call will tell you what to do**
3. **Ask someone to bring the nearest defibrillator**
4. **Turn it on and follow the instructions.**

To find your nearest defibrillator go to  
<https://www.defibfinder.uk>

