Shipston Medical Centre
Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Website: https://shipstonmc.warwickshire.nhs.uk/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/ShipstonGP
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ShipstonMC
Instagram: shipstonmedicalcentrenhs

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SPRING EDITION



STAFFING UPDATE

In February we welcomed Dr Tom Stroud and Dr Vignesh Shankar Babu, two registrars who will be with us for the next year.

PATIENT MEETING 2025

Tuesday 3rd June, 7.15pm
Townsend Hall, Shipston



Come along and meet the Partners and other members of the Practice team for the latest updates.

YOUR feedback helps us shape future services!





Across the Shipston community we've heard the acronym 'ICB' a lot recently particularly in relation to the community beds consultation.
But what is the ICB, how does it work, and how does that impact our local healthcare services?
So this month, the focus for this series turns to…
Jamie Barrett – Head of Primary Care, NHS Coventry & Warwickshire Integrated Care Board (ICB)

Jamie's route to Head of Primary Care began in 2005 in Public Health, continuing from there in a range of roles in an ever changing NHS before joining Coventry & Warwickshire ICB in 2023. 'Health improvement' and 'commissioning' have featured large within these roles, the former self-explanatory, but the latter perhaps less so. Jamie explained that commissioning in healthcare is essentially the process of determining what services a community needs, then prioritising, planning and purchasing those services to get the best possible health outcomes for that community.

Simple for me to write, not so simple to put into practice!
Not least because we as patients frequently have different views of the healthcare services we need, but more of that later.

So, overall, the ICB exists to contribute to NHS England's objectives and priorities in our part of the world. These include, improving health outcomes, achieving best value for money and a reduction in any health inequalities, making health services easier to access and improving patient experience of those services. Jamie's responsibilities in these areas are achieved through coordination with the 31 GP Practices in South Warwickshire and the 20 Primary Care Networks (PCNs, groupings of GP Practices), across Coventry and Warwickshire.

What practical difference does that make for us as patients though?
Well – when it comes to standards of service ('targets') which are nationally defined (examples being how quickly you can get a GP appointment, early diagnosis of cancer, identification and treatment of patients with high blood pressure), then the role of the ICB is to ensure that our local NHS is meeting those standards by putting in resource where it is most needed – the resource needed to reach a given number of patients might be very different in say Nuneaton to that needed here in South Warwickshire however.

In other examples the ICB has the flexibility to support development of services which are not 'one size fits all'. Jamie described his responsibility here as ensuring that PCNs, including ours, have the data and support they need to invest in new services which make a difference to their particular patient population. That information is also gained from individual patients who in telling their stories help build up a picture of the needs of their whole neighbourhood.

For this area, as we know only too well, living in a rural community means there is quite often a long distance to travel for some services; so, in an example of a local enhanced service, people needing treatment for their leg ulcers are now able to receive that at the medical centre rather than having to travel to Warwick or Stratford.

Relevant to our local situation, Jamie explained that the views of individual patients about how hospital, community or indeed primary care services are delivered can inevitably be at odds with those having to make investment decisions at the county level.

So, what does a typical day look like for Jamie? Well, it starts by dealing with emails; on the day that Jamie and I met, those included plans to increase how often patient bloods are collected for testing, a PCN funding initiative to address health inequalities in 2025/2026, finalisation of a governance report, a workforce query, and a patient registration challenge – quite the range.

Other than that, his day consists of meetings – with health and social care partners, with GP Practices and PCNs as needed, checking the progress of various projects, making sure that things are proceeding as planned. Much of that can happen remotely meaning that he can work with plenty of people in a given day, but inevitably some interactions are more productive when conducted face to face.

At the end of our meeting, Jamie reflected that his greatest satisfaction as a 'people person' is that he gets to work with a wide range of people, something he finds very rewarding. Also being able to challenge the status quo and help build new services which work better for patients. However, working with lots of different people across multiple organisations can also be very challenging. Seeking to progress projects as fast as possible whilst trying to manage everyone's expectations (knowing that it's impossible to keep everyone happy!), but nevertheless always operating with the end goal in sight – improvement of primary care services for communities across Coventry and Warwickshire – including ours.

Carole Nossiter, Chair, Shipston PPG

DO YOU NEED A FORM COMPLETING BY THE GP?
We regularly receive requests to complete work on behalf of patients that is not funded by the government under the NHS contract. You may not be aware, but this is non-NHS work and therefore not funded. Examples of such requests are:

- DVLA medical examinations
- Firearms and shotgun licence applications
- Holiday cancellation forms
- Life insurance forms

As this work is unfunded we charge either the company requesting the information or the patient for the doctor's time and expertise and this payment must be made in advance of any work being carried out.

On receipt of payment it will then take up to 28 days for the GP/clinician to complete the work. This is because some requests need patients to attend an appointment for an examination, or we

may need to track down medical records from previous doctors or hospitals to complete the request. Doctors often need to review the whole medical record of a patient before completing a form. All of these steps take time and due to the high demand for appointments and GP time, NHS patient care will always take priority over these administrative requests.

How can you speed up the process?

- Make payment promptly
- If an appointment is needed please indicate your availability and ensure you attend
- Be as specific as possible as to what is needed and check with any third parties if there is a specific form that needs completing. Making a request in writing rather than on the phone helps with relaying complete information
- Check with any third parties whether a specific form needs completing and provide us with return addresses and stamped addressed envelopes
- Give copies of any paperwork received e.g. travel cancellation, medical certificate/claim form. This will help us complete the request
- Make sure your telephone numbers are up to date and indicate in your request whether we can contact you via text, email or leave a voicemail

In addition to their NHS duties, the Document Management team ensures this process is completed efficiently. If there is a problem they will let you know. We advise patients to contact us no less than four weeks after making the requests to receive an update if they have not heard already.

Please note: we do not complete power of attorney, witness signing (including passports) or capacity assessments.

COMMON ISSUES WITH THE NHS APP

The January edition of our newsletter featured an article showing the benefits and functionality of the NHS app. We thought it would be helpful to follow this up with a frequently asked questions segment. Highlighting some of the common issues our patients face and how they were overcome.

QUESTION: I've forgotten my password, can you reset it?

Visit https://access.login.nhs.uk/enter-email, type in the email address registered with your NHS app account and click continue. Instead of typing in your password click reset your password. You will receive an email to choose a new password.

QUESTION: I have changed my mobile number and/or email address, how do I change it on my NHS app account?

The NHS app support team will be able to change these details for you. Visit https://help.login.nhs.uk/contact?error=CID1111 to log an issue for the support team.

QUESTION: Why won't the app let me register another person using my email address?

A limitation of the app is it will only allow an email address to be used once. Any additional family members will need to have a separate email address, however a mobile number can be associated to more than one account.

QUESTION: I would like to view my wife's medical record, how do I set this up?

With the patients permission we are able to give authorised persons what we call "proxy" access to view and complete actions on a patients NHS app account. The user uses their own account to access the proxy account, which prevents the sharing of account details which we discourage. If needed in the future we are able to restrict access without disabling the patients account for example in the event of a separation.

For these requests please fill in a 'Contact us online' form via our website or contact reception. We will contact the patient to give permission to give you access. For children under 11, it will be at their GP's discretion to give access to a parent or guardian. For children over 11 we will contact them directly to obtain permission. For patients aged 18 and over who are unable to give consent we can only give

access to their attorneys under a lasting power of attorney agreement.

QUESTION: I can no longer see all my medical information on the NHS app, why is this?
Have you recently changed surgeries? It is a limitation of the system that when patients move GP surgeries the NHS app reverts back to its original settings meaning you will need to apply again for full medical record access. Please fill in a 'Contact us online' form via our website or contact reception to request full medical record access again. Another reason could be that your medical records are incomplete. When patients move surgeries it is the responsibility of the previous surgery to send both your electronic and paper records on to us to be inputted on our local record. It may be we need to chase this up, please fill in a 'Contact us online' form via our website or contact reception to let us know so we can look into this.

QUESTION: I am trying to book an appointment but cannot see any on the NHS app?
Not all appointments are available to book on the app as sometimes it is not appropriate. We operate a total triage system meaning appointment requests must go through our duty team to be clinically triaged to ensure our patients see the right person at the right time. If you cannot book an appointment it is likely to be due to this rather than a system error.

We hope this has been helpful to our patients to show how to access help when things go wrong. If you are experiencing an issue that has not been mentioned, do not hesitate to contact our friendly and helpful team through the 'Contact us online' form or via reception.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY TEST
You may have received a text message in the past asking you to provide feedback on your experience after an appointment at the Medical Centre. This is called the Friends and Family Test and directs you to a form that asks you two simple questions:

1. Thinking about your recent appointment at Shipston Medical Centre. Overall, how was your experience of our service?
2. Do you have any comments to add?

We use the answers to these questions to feedback to our team and consider changes we could make to improve the patient experience.

This is sent to all our patients after the appointment if they have opted in to receiving appointment reminders via text message. The test is also available via our website https://shipstonmc.warwickshire.nhs.uk/feedback.

We have received feedback recently that some feel this quick survey is sent too frequently. We wanted to let our patients know that it is an optional survey and does not have to be completed every time. It is however a contractual requirement from the NHS that we promote the Friends and Family test and the system we use does not allow us to change the frequency.

We would like to remind patients that all comments are anonymous and we are unable to respond. On occasion we have had comments asking for appointments to be booked or cancelled or very specific health questions asked. If you require a response or an action completed please submit a 'Contact us online' question via our website or phone reception.

HAY FEVER
FACT: Did you know hay fever affects 50% of the population worldwide?

Between March and September when the pollen count is at its highest, lots of our patients experience symptoms of hay fever. Hay fever is a common allergy to pollen that can affect adults and children. Hay fever causes sneezing, coughing and itching eyes when pollen comes in to contact with our eyes, nose and/or mouth.

Unfortunately, there is no cure for hay fever and the condition cannot be prevented. However, there are things patients can do to ease their symptoms.

Do

- put petroleum jelly (such as Vaseline) around your nostrils to trap pollen

- wear wraparound sunglasses, a mask or a wide-brimmed hat to stop pollen getting into your nose and eyes
- shower and change your clothes after you have been outside to wash pollen off
- keep windows and doors shut as much as possible
- vacuum regularly and dust with a damp cloth
- try to use a pollen filter in the air vents of your car, if you have one, and a HEPA filter in your vacuum cleaner

Don't

- do not cut grass or walk on grass
- do not spend too much time outside
- do not keep fresh flowers in the house
- do not smoke or be around smoke – it makes your symptoms worse
- do not dry clothes outside – they can catch pollen
- do not let pets into the house if possible – they can carry pollen indoors

If symptoms persist, in the first instance we ask patients to contact a pharmacist who may be able to help. They are able to suggest treatments such as antihistamine drops, tablets or nasal sprays and steroid nasal sprays.

If symptoms have not improved or are getting worse after seeking advice from a pharmacist, we would recommend filling in a contact us online form (available on our https://shipstonmc.warwickshire.nhs.uk/) for a non-urgent appointment to discuss alternative treatment options and possibly a referral for specialist advice.

SURGERY CLOSURES

Staff Meetings

The surgery is closed for staff meetings between 1 and 1.45pm on:

Tuesday 22nd April 2025
Wednesday 14th May 2025

Staff Training

Each month all Warwickshire GP surgeries are closed for one afternoon from 12.30pm for staff training. The next dates are:

Thursday 10th April 2025
Wednesday 21st May 2025

THE DR SUE PRITCHARD MEMORIAL CHALLENGE

This is a huge legacy of the Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership and supported by the Shipston Medical Centre and community. It has been running free of charge for a number of years. However, as with all good things, this has had to come to an end. The activities are still continuing, with a range of activities, both in Shipston and further afield, however, sadly funding has run out. As a result, these activities are now chargeable. We are a not-for-profit charity, the costs are nominal and designed to cover the cost of the instructor and hall hire. If you would like further information, please visit our website www.shwp.org.uk [shwp.org.uk]

NEW TOY LIBRARY VENUES OPENING

Further to the launch of The Stour Toy Library in 2024, we are delighted to report that we have added to our locations. We are now having 2 sessions, the first located on a Monday at the Baby and Toddler Stay and Play session at the Scout Hut, from 10 - 11am and secondly, at Little Fishes on a Thursday at The Townsend Hall, also between 10 - 11am. Members will be able to collect and return toys while enjoying the benefits of these fantastic stay and play sessions. There is an online booking system in place to pre-order your toys in advance. http://borrow.shwp.org.uk [borrow.shwp.org.uk]. There is an initial administration cost for becoming a member of £5 but borrowing is then free of charge for the year. Initially the toys available will be for babies and preschool children. If you would like more

information, please email thestourtoylibrary@gmail.com and we hope to see you there.

www.shwp.org.uk [shwp.org.uk]

To find out more, take a look at the website (https://www.shwp.org.uk/) or call 01608 663320 or email admin@shwp.org

COMMUNITY WARM HUBS

The Shipston Community Warm Hub continues to be open each Thursday 10am to 12 noon at the Scout Hut on New Street. You're assured a warm welcome, a good cuppa and biscuits and the chance to make new friends. Keep an eye out for updates in future newsletters on regular events that will be hosted there on a monthly basis. Also why not check out the news page on Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership's website: https://www.shwp.org.uk/news/

Every Thursday Jacqui Close, Social Prescriber from Shipston Medical Centre and a counsellor from Mind are on hand to assist with any health and wellbeing needs.

1st Thursday of each month there are tools and resources to help people get online. Staff will be able to run through basic digital questions.

1st and 2nd Thursday of each month there will be cooking sessions with Wendy. Ideally, please book a place the week before.

3rd Thursday of each month the Frailty Nurse from Shipston Medical Centre will be there.

4th Thursday of each month Shipston Home Nursing staff will come to offer **bereavement support.**

HAVE YOU HEARD OF HEALTHWATCH WARWICKSHIRE?

Healthwatch Warwickshire is an independent service for everyone who uses health and social care services. Together with their volunteers they help make your voice heard and improve services including GP surgeries, Hospital Services, Social Care Services, Dental Practices and others. Tell them about your experience of local NHS and social care services. This is their webpage https://www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk/ but they can also be contacted on phone - 01926 422 823 and on email - info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk; Instagram - healthwatch_warwickshire and Twitter. - @healthwatchwarw

SHARING THE INFORMATION

If you know of patients who aren't on Facebook do let them know that the newsletter is available for collection from Reception, Dispensary and in the Waiting Room. If they have their medication delivered, they can also ask the delivery driver for a copy.

The newsletter is also published on our website under Patient News, and we alert on Facebook and Twitter when it's published. If you would like the newsletter emailed to you please contact reception.