Shipston Medical Centre
Patient Participation Group (PPG)
Website: https://shipstonmc.warwickshire.nhs.uk/
X: https://x.com/ShipstonGP
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ShipstonMC
Instagram: shipstonmedicalcentrenhs
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LATE AUTUMN EDITION



A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome three new colleagues to Shipston Medical Centre!

Luke Harper joins our Reception Team this week, while **Alex Green** joins our Dispensary Team. We are also pleased to welcome **Juliet Marshall**, who will be joining our Clinical Admin Team on a fixed-term basis. We wish Luke, Alex and Juliet every success in their new roles and hope they all enjoy being part of the team.

We would like to clarify that Dr Caroline Ward who recently left the Practice, is now working as a Community Urgent Care GP working in the Same Day Emergency Care units in Gloucestershire and with the Urgent Care Response team in Oxfordshire.

QUEEN'S NURSE AWARD FOR JAN FLYNN



We're delighted to share that Jan Flynn, Frailty Advanced Care Practitioner, and our Frailty Team Lead has been awarded the prestigious title of Queen's Nurse - a fantastic achievement and a real recognition of her dedication to nursing.

The Queen's Nurse Award celebrates nurses who go above and beyond in their work, sharing their knowledge, helping to improve care and making a tangible difference to patients, families and their local communities.

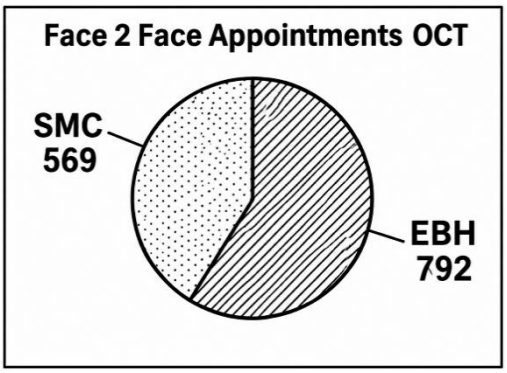
Jan will be attending the annual awards ceremony hosted by the Queen's Institute of Community Nursing on 26th November in South Kensington, London, to receive her award.

We're incredibly proud of Jan and the wonderful care she gives to our more frail and vulnerable patients. She is a real asset to our community. Please join us in congratulating her on this well-deserved recognition!

PLEASE CHECK YOUR APPOINTMENT LOCATION!

We appreciate that with patients now being seen across both of our sites, it can be confusing as to where your appointment will take place. This has been a learning curve for both our patients and our team, and we are working hard to make sure that appointment locations are communicated clearly and consistently.

Of the **2,298** appointments which took place in October, **1,361** were conducted face to face. The graph on the following page shows the split of appointments between the Medical Centre (SMC) and the EBH Rooms (EBH):



How can you check where your appointment is?

- **Booking in person:** If you book at reception, we will print an appointment card showing the type of appointment and the location.
- **Booking by telephone:** Our reception team are working to ensure that the appointment location is consistently confirmed when booking.
- **Booking through the NHS App:** You should be able to see the location of your appointment within the App.
- **Booking through a link we have sent you:** If we send you a link to book an appointment, the location should be included as part of the booking process.

An important point about recall appointments
We have recently identified that when patients book appointments as a result of an 'AbTrace' system text message inviting them to arrange routine monitoring, such as a blood test, or potentially a vaccination, the booking process does not always make it clear which site the appointment is at.

We are trying to resolve this situation. In the meantime, if you have booked through one of these messages, please take extra care to check your appointment location. If you are unsure, please contact our reception team, who will be happy to confirm this for you.

What else are we doing to help?
We are also trying to minimise any changes to appointment locations once they have been booked. Where changes are unavoidable, we will contact affected patients to let them know.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE FLU



Flu season is here – would you know what to do if you become unwell?

Flu symptoms usually come on quickly and can include a sudden high temperature, an aching body, feeling very tired or exhausted, a dry cough, sore throat, headache, difficulty sleeping and loss of appetite. Some people may also experience diarrhoea, tummy pain, nausea or vomiting.

Most people can look after themselves at home if they have flu. Get plenty of rest and sleep, drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration, and consider paracetamol or ibuprofen for a temperature, aches or pains if these medicines are suitable for you. A pharmacist can also offer advice about treatments and flu remedies.

Try to stay at home and avoid contact with others if you have a high temperature, feel hot, cold or shivery, or are not well enough to carry out your usual activities.

Seek medical advice if you are very unwell,

become short of breath, your symptoms have not improved after 7 days, or if you're in a group at higher risk of becoming seriously ill.

NHS flu symptoms and self-care advice: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu/

ARE YOU LOOKING AFTER A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER?

The Practice, PPG and local partners continue to work together to improve the support provided to our patients who have caring responsibilities.







Please do let the reception team know if this is the case so that we can respond appropriately when needed.

SUPPORT AT THE END OF LIFE IN SHIPSTON AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

In discussion with Anna Briggs, Head of Nursing at Shipston Home Nursing (SHN)



Following recent conversations with friends, some of whom live in other parts of the UK, I felt it was a good time to find out more about the support available in our own community for people approaching the end of their lives.

To help me understand how things work locally, I met with Anna Briggs, Head of Nursing at SHN which provides free hospice-at-home care for adults living in Shipston, Kineton, Bidford, Wellesbourne and surrounding villages.

Anna explained that she and her team work closely with a wide range of health and care professionals to provide truly person-centred support for people following a terminal diagnosis. For patients at SMC, this includes the GPs and Jan and Nikki from the Frailty Team, and various South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust (SWFT) teams, including the District Nurses, specialist palliative care and community rapid response teams.

The latter is particularly valuable, as it can respond overnight to urgent nursing requests for palliative patients, such as the need for medication or assessment. In many other parts of the country, this would generally need to be arranged through NHS 111.

We all hope for person-centred care at every stage of our lives, but achieving it is not always straightforward. Nobody wants to have to repeat their story to a succession of different professionals, however caring they may be. Nor does anyone want to lose their independence, dignity or sense of self-worth. And, at a time when life is already difficult, not knowing who to contact when a problem arises can be particularly distressing.

Anna described how the local teams work together to ensure that people approaching the end of their lives receive joined-up care, with their individual needs, preferences and values at the heart of everything.

Getting to know the person and their wishes
Following a life-limiting diagnosis or referral to palliative care, a healthcare professional can refer someone to Shipston Home Nursing. Alternatively, individuals or family members can contact SHN directly.

The SHN team aims to visit the patient at home within 48 hours of receiving a referral. A senior nurse will carry out an initial assessment, taking time to get to know the person, understand their needs and wishes, and consider how best these can be met with support from SHN and the wider network.

This process often includes what is known as *advance care planning*. It can also include helping someone complete a ReSPECT form – a personalised document recording their preferences for clinical care in the event of a future emergency if they cannot speak for themselves. This is done in conjunction with other professionals such as a GP or the Frailty Team.

Anna was keen to emphasise the importance of getting to know patients and their families relatively soon after diagnosis. The aim is not simply to provide care at the end of life, but to help people live as well as possible until the end of life.

In the earlier stages, this might simply involve signposting people to other sources of help, such as social prescribing or therapy services. SHN might also provide respite care during the day or overnight, giving family members the opportunity to rest and recharge. In the final few months, the SHN nurses often become more directly involved, working alongside the GP practice, District Nurses and carers to provide daily personal care, manage symptoms and medication.

A remarkable level of joined-up care
I was particularly interested to hear how the different teams coordinate their work. Anna described an impressive level of communication,

which helps ensure that everyone involved understands the care an individual needs and who is responsible for providing it.

GPs continue to oversee a patient's care, even when the day-to-day support is being delivered by another member of the multi-disciplinary team (MDT).

At Shipston Medical Centre, weekly 'Gold Standards' meetings bring GPs and the wider MDT together to discuss patients approaching the end of life. These discussions help ensure that everyone has a shared understanding of the care required and that responsibilities are clear.

There is further coordination beyond the practice. Each morning, local palliative care providers, including hospices and specialist teams, check capacity to ensure that the care needed can be provided. SHN and the District Nurses also have daily lunchtime calls to share updates and review individual care plans.

Importantly, these conversations continue at weekends. I find it particularly reassuring to know that, at such an important time, those potentially involved in someone's care – and that of their family – remain in regular contact, supported by shared electronic records.

Emotional support for patients and families, too
Another aspect of SHN's work that I consider to be especially valuable is its support for families and loved ones.

Nurses and healthcare assistants are experienced in providing emotional and bereavement support, including identifying anticipatory grief – the feelings of loss and sadness that patients and their families may experience following a terminal diagnosis, even before a death has occurred. SHN has a dedicated counsellor available to both patients and their families at any stage it is needed.

Support does not stop when someone dies. SHN makes follow-up calls to family members and can also refer them to its bereavement counselling service where appropriate.

It would be easy to assume that this kind of holistic, coordinated end-of-life care is available consistently across the UK. From what I have heard from friends and colleagues living elsewhere, however, that is not necessarily the case.

We are fortunate to have such a comprehensive network of support in our own community, and I am very grateful to Anna for taking the time to explain how it works.

As a reminder: All patients registered with Shipston Medical Centre are eligible for **free** Hospice at Home care from Shipston Home Nursing, and for bereavement counselling – whether or not SHN cared for the person who has died.

For more information, visit www.shipstonhomenursing.co.uk or call **01608 664850**.

Carole Nossiter, Chair, Shipston MC PPG

WHY MIGHT I BE KEPT WAITING WHEN I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT – BUT MIGHT NOT BE SEEN IF I'M LATE..



We sometimes hear from patients who feel it is unfair that they may have to wait when a clinician is running late, yet could be asked to rebook if they arrive late themselves.
We understand why this might be frustrating, so we'd like to explain how our appointment system works and why both situations can arise.

How long are appointments?
Appointment lengths vary depending on the type of care required. For example, blood tests usually take 5 minutes, face-to-face GP appointments are now 15 minutes, and nursing appointments vary according to the procedure or treatment.

Importantly, a GP's 15-minute appointment includes not just time with the patient, but also updating records, arranging referrals, prescribing medication and completing other necessary tasks. Our clinicians generally have patients booked back-to-back, with very little time between appointments.

Why might I be asked to rebook if I'm late?
If you arrive 10 minutes late for a 10-minute appointment, your allocated time has already passed. Your clinician will usually have other patients booked immediately afterwards, so seeing you could delay everyone else.

We will always try to accommodate late arrivals where possible, but sometimes rebooking is the only practical option. This isn't about being inflexible; it's about ensuring everyone receives safe and appropriate care.

Why do clinicians sometimes run late?
Unfortunately, we cannot always predict what will happen during an appointment. A seemingly straightforward problem may turn out to be more serious, or a patient's condition may suddenly deteriorate. Calling an ambulance to the practice is not unusual, and our clinicians must give seriously unwell patients the time and attention they need while waiting for emergency assistance.

Other consultations may involve difficult news or complex health concerns which can cause significant distress and cannot appropriately be rushed. These situations inevitably affect appointments later in the session.

We would do the same for you
We appreciate that waiting can be frustrating, particularly if you feel unwell or have other commitments. However, delays are rarely within our clinicians' control and are usually because another patient has needed additional care.

If you were seriously unwell or needed extra time during a difficult consultation, we would want our team to give you that same care and attention.

Thank you for your understanding
We work hard to keep appointments running on time and recognise the importance of keeping patients informed when delays occur.

We ask you to arrive promptly because our schedules are tightly booked and lost time cannot always be recovered. Equally, we ask for your patience when clinics run late, even though patient confidentiality means we cannot always explain the reason.

Our priority is to give every patient the time and care they need, even when that means running a little behind schedule.

PROTECTING YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY – HOW OUR WHOLE TEAM SUPPORTS YOUR CARE



At Shipston Medical Centre, protecting patient confidentiality is something we take extremely seriously. We thought it might be helpful to explain a little more about how our team works, why different members of staff may need access to patient information, and the safeguards we have in place.

There are more people working behind the scenes than you might realise!

You may be surprised to learn that we have a little over 50 people working at SMC!

Most patients will be familiar with our receptionists, dispensary team, GPs, nurses and other clinicians, as these are the colleagues they see or speak to regularly.

However, behind the scenes, there is a much wider team working hard to ensure that we can provide safe, effective and well-organised care for our patients. Whilst you may not meet all these members of staff, the work they do is essential to supporting our clinical teams and keeping the practice running smoothly.

How do we protect your information?

Every SMC member of staff is required to sign a confidentiality agreement as a condition of their employment. All staff also undertake regular training on confidentiality, data protection and information governance.

The NHS has strict rules about how patient information can be accessed, used and shared, and these apply to everyone working in the practice, regardless of their role.

One of the most important principles is that patient information is accessed on a **need-to-know basis**. This means that staff should only access the information they need to carry out their responsibilities.

For example, a member of our clinical administration team may need to access part of your medical record to arrange an investigation, process a referral or support a GP with your ongoing care. However, that does not mean that every member of staff has a reason to look at your medical history.

Most people working in the practice will not know about your individual health needs. Unless they need that information to carry out their role, they should not be accessing your medical record.

What checks and safeguards are in place?

Importantly, protecting confidentiality is not simply about trusting staff to follow the rules.

We also have checks and balances in place to ensure that patient information is accessed appropriately.

Staff use individual logins to access our clinical systems, which means that access to patient records can be traced to individual members of the team. Our systems maintain audit trails, allowing us to review who has accessed a patient's record and investigate whether that access was appropriate.
These safeguards help us monitor compliance with confidentiality requirements and identify and investigate any concerns about inappropriate access.

You may have seen reports in the press about NHS staff **working in other areas of the country** facing disciplinary action or dismissal for accessing patient records without a legitimate reason. The same principles and expectations apply at Shipston Medical Centre. Accessing a record out of curiosity, or simply because someone knows a patient, is not acceptable.

We take our responsibilities seriously and want patients to feel reassured that there are clear rules, systems and accountability in place to protect their information.

Why might a receptionist or administrator ask about my health?
We know that patients are sometimes surprised when a receptionist or other non-clinical member of staff asks about their symptoms, medical history or reason for contacting the practice.

Our reception and administration colleagues work closely with our clinical team to help organise care, manage requests and ensure patients receive the right support. They may therefore need to ask questions about your health or personal circumstances so they can direct your request appropriately, pass relevant information to a clinician or carry out tasks requested by the clinical team.

All our reception and administration colleagues are bound by the same confidentiality requirements as our doctors, nurses and other clinical staff.

We appreciate your cooperation in providing the information requested, as it helps our whole team deliver safe and effective care.

We recognise however that some information is particularly personal or sensitive. If you feel uncomfortable discussing something with a member of our team, please let them know. They will understand and can explain why the information is needed and discuss the best way to manage your request.

Confidentiality is everyone's responsibility
If you ever have any questions or concerns about how your information is being accessed, used or protected, please do speak to us. We will always take those concerns seriously and can explain how your information is handled or look into any specific concerns you may have.

Whether you are speaking to a GP, nurse, receptionist, dispenser or one of our colleagues working behind the scenes, please be reassured that everyone has a responsibility to treat your personal information with the same care, respect and confidentiality.

COLLECTION OF GP LETTERS AND FORMS



Due to the large number of requests we receive, and the fact that GPs must prioritise clinical workload over administration workload, we ask that you allow **28 days from the date of payment** for your request to be completed, before contacting us.

Please do not telephone or visit the surgery to check on its progress as we will let you know as soon as it is ready!

Please ensure therefore that you have submitted your request in plenty of time before you need it – and thank-you for your patience and understanding

Clinical Administration Team

SURGERY CLOSURES

Staff Training

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

Thursday 26th November
Wednesday 27th January

GOT QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR PRACTICE?

Do you have ideas, feedback, or suggestions about how our services run? Or maybe you'd just like to share something positive with the team but aren't sure who to tell?

Our Patient Participation Group (PPG) is here to help! They can:



- Find answers to your questions
- Pass on your ideas to the right person
- Represent patient views to improve our services

Shipston MC PPG

To contact them, email the Chair, Carole Nossiter, on shipstonppg@gmail.com including your contact details and she or one of the team will respond to you.

NEW ACTIVITIES AND FAMILY FUN FROM THE STOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP

A new **weekly pickleball** session has launched on Tuesday evenings from 6pm – 7pm at the Townsend Hall, Sheep Street, Shipston.

Whether you are completely new to the sport or already enjoy playing, the session offers a friendly opportunity to get active and meet people in the local community.

The initiative will be free for the first few months, making it easy for residents to come along and give pickleball a try. After this introductory period, the activity will become chargeable to cover the cost of the hall hire.

Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership has a busy programme of welcoming, affordable activities at the **Ellen Badger Hospital**. Whether you would like to meet new people, find support

or simply enjoy a cup of tea and a friendly chat, there is plenty to discover.

The **Community Hub** is every Monday and Thursday, 10am–12 noon. You will find a comfortable space, a friendly welcome and good refreshments—perfect for a chat, a pause in your day or finding out what support is available locally.

The Stour Toy Library continues to grow

Our popular Toy Library offers the opportunity to borrow toys for children under four, offering youngsters variety while helping households save money and reduce clutter. The Library is open every Tuesday, 9.30am–11am, and Thursday, 11am–12 noon. There is no need to become a member simply to visit, and annual membership to borrow toys costs just £5.

Parent Carers Support Group Parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are warmly invited to this supportive monthly group, held on the 24th November, 9.30am–11am. It is an informal opportunity to connect with people who understand, exchange experiences and access a little extra support.

Singing Down Memory Lane. Come along for music, memories and good company on the last Friday of each month, 27th November, 11am–12 noon. This relaxed singing group welcomes everyone, with no experience needed—just bring your voice and enjoy a singsong.

The Bereavement Café is on at the Ellen Badger on the first November of the month from 11-1pm. This is a friendly, no pressure peer support group.

The Repair Café is also continuing this month. The next session will be on the 14th November 10am - 2pm with the last bookings from 1pm

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 the medical centre receptions, the Dispensary and waiting rooms. If they have their medication delivered, they can also ask the delivery driver for a copy.

The PPG distributes hard copies to various locations around Shipston including the community hub at the Ellen Badger Hospital, the library, post office and town council offices.

The newsletter is also published on our website under Patient News, and we alert on Facebook and X when it's published. If you would like an electronic copy of the newsletter emailed to you each time there is a new edition, (every 2 months) please contact reception.