

The West Norfolk Patient and Public Voice

West Norfolk CCG Patient and Stakeholder Newsletter

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Help to support your local NHS services

An appeal is being made to people in West Norfolk to help support the busy frontline teams by using health services wisely.

West Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group is asking the local community to consider visiting pharmacists for minor illnesses and injuries along with buying over the counter medication.



The CCG is facing a £10 million deficit and believes it could save £2 million on prescribing medication which can be bought cheaper from supermarkets and high street shops.

A packet of 32 paracetamols cost around 38p when bought over the counter but it costs the NHS £1.88 to prescribe the same drug. Last year the CCG spent £121,332 on hay fever remedies which can also be purchased over the counter.

CCG Chair Dr Paul Williams said: "This year we are trying to get you, the public, to help us to deliver savings by using the health service wisely. We are asking people to consider visiting a local pharmacist as a first port of call and to consider buying medication, such as paracetamol, from shops.

"The CCG has limited resources and spending £2million on drugs that can be bought cheaper over the counter is not the best use of that money."

Last year, the CCG spent £41,247 on prescribing anti-histamines and £14,425 on nasal sprays. Both can be bought from shops for less than £10.



The CCG has also issued advice warning people to use sun cream after nearly 60 people sought medical advice for sun burn last year.

Maggie McDermott, a Senior Clinical Pharmacist, has advised people to apply sun cream 20 to 30 minutes before heading out with a further application as they leave.

Take action to lower West Norfolk's rising Diabetes rates

More than 11,000 patients in West Norfolk have been diagnosed with diabetes but there could be many more out there who are not aware they have the condition.



During Diabetes Week, West Norfolk CCG backed a county-wide campaign to promote information of how people can reduce their risk of developing diabetes along with highlighting the free NHS Health Checks.

In West Norfolk, there are 855 people who have type 1 diabetes, which occurs when the insulin producing cells in the pancreas are destroyed and require daily injections or infusions. A further 10,755 patients have type 2 diabetes, which is caused when the body does not produce enough insulin or does not use it properly, and can be managed by lifestyle and diet changes along some medication.

Downham Market GP Dr Clare Hambling, who has a special interest in diabetes, said: "Some people are unaware that they have type 2 diabetes and may not be diagnosed until after they start to show signs of complications, which can be several months or even years after the onset of the condition. Early diagnosis and treatment is absolutely essential if we want to prevent or reduce the risk of disabling diabetes-related complications."

Among the diabetes-related complications are heart conditions, kidney disease, eye disease, amputation, dementia and reduced life expectancy.

People who are aged between 40 and 74 are entitled to a free NHS Health Check, which will assess the risk factors for a number of conditions, including diabetes and stroke.

●●● **For more information go to:** <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/health-and-wellbeing/adults-health/nhs-health-checks>

Dispelling the myths around Dementia

Around 1,500 people in West Norfolk with dementia but are not able to access vital support as they have not been officially diagnosed.

There are 1,723 patients over the age of 65 who have access to health advice after being diagnosed with the condition but there is an estimated 1,147 people who are missing out as they have not been to the doctor.



West Norfolk CCG has helped to support the variety of services which are available in the area to encourage more people to go to their GP.

King's Lynn GP Dr Pallavi Devulapalli said: "We know that some people may be nervous about getting a diagnosis as they fear that they will be forced to move out of their home and end up in a care facility or they fear there is no point because dementia does not have a cure.

"However it is important to know that people can live well with dementia. Getting a diagnosis has a number of benefits for both the patient and those who care for them. Drug treatments for some types of dementia are more effective the earlier someone is prescribed them."

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One of the groups making a difference in West Norfolk is Downham Dementia Support Association, which runs two cafes a month for patients and carers along with encouraging businesses to be “dementia friendly”.

Chairman Joan Alfred said: “The café provides people with dementia and their carers the opportunity to socialise with others in a supportive atmosphere.

“I would recommend that anyone who is concerned about their health to speak to their GP as a diagnosis can help.”

Further information on the services available can be found via the LILY Directory, www.asklily.org.uk/checks or call 01553 616200 to speak to an advisor.

Welcoming Uma to West Norfolk CCG

A GP who is passionate about patients being access to the right treatment has been appointed to the Governing Body of West Norfolk CCG.



Dr Uma Balasubramaniam attended her first meeting with the Governing Body in May and is keen to work for the benefit of patients in West Norfolk.

Uma specialised in Gynaecology before moving into General Practice and has previously held roles at neighbouring South Lincolnshire CCG.

She said: “One of the contributing factors to attract me to CCG work was the case of a patient I saw a few years ago. This patient became depressed after becoming housebound due to bladder weakness and getting to hospital was out of the question.

“This patient’s life changed after we sorted out the medication. We can do so much in primary care for patients like this and it makes such a big difference to the quality of their lives.

“I think it is important to look at treatment pathways from the patient’s point of view.”

Dr Mark Follows has also joined the Governing Body

University of Nottingham graduate Mark completed three years of gastroenterology specialist training before moving in to General Practice in 2003.

He went on to become a GP with a Special Interest at Airedale Hospital in West Yorkshire, where he established a primary care Dyspepsia service and was training lead for endoscopy.

He is keen to improve healthcare for people in West Norfolk using his experience of service redesign, GP education and clinical governance.



Mark, who has previously worked on the Governing Body at NHS Hull CCG and has worked for the Royal College of Physicians as an assessor for the Joint Advisory Group on GI endoscopy, said: “I really enjoy working as a GP as it allows you the opportunity to build up a relationship with the patient.”

Members of the CCG’s Governing Body are responsible for monitoring the performance and quality of hospitals, GP surgeries and other groups which provide health services.

Sarah is celebrating 40 years with the NHS

Nurse Practitioner Sarah Beart has celebrated the milestone anniversary of 40 years of caring for unwell children and adults.

Sarah still retains the same passion to help people as she did on her first day of training on April 10, 1978.



During her four decades of service, Sarah has worked as a staff nurse in a children's ward, a health visitor and finally as a Nurse Practitioner at the Woottons Surgery, along with gaining numerous qualifications. Director of Nursing and Quality Assurance, Sarah Jane Ward, helped to celebrate this momentous achievement with Sarah ahead of International Nurses Day on May 12.



Sarah said: "Nursing is a very rewarding career as I like to be able to help people. Sometimes all they need is for someone to squeeze their hand, plump a pillow or simply to just listen. Giving people the help and care they need is incredibly rewarding."

The CCG's Nursing and Quality team are pictured celebrating International Nurses Day.

MSK Triage

A new service has been launched to help support people with bad backs, knees and other muscular issues.



West Norfolk CCG is working with Allied Health Professionals (AHP) Suffolk to launch a Musculoskeletal (MSK) Virtual Triage and Single Point of Access service in April. GPs and patients are now able to refer directly to the experienced physiotherapists who staff the virtual triage service.

Patients are then referred onto the most appropriate service for their condition ranging from manual therapy, physiotherapist, secondary care, pain management and the Rheumatology service. AHP Suffolk Operational Director Tim Hague said the team were delighted to be working with all the system's stakeholders on this service.

He said: "Since April, we have already handled some 2,200 referrals helping patients access the right service first time. Whilst the majority of these referrals have been from GPs, we are excited that many patients have been using the web-based self-referral service available at www.ahpsuffolk.co.uk

"This offers great benefit to the wider healthcare system, such as freeing up GP time, and to patients, who are able to access self-management exercises in advance of physiotherapy appointments.

"We look forward to continuing to work with the CCG, GPs, MSK providers and other key stakeholders to improve the service and patient experience and outcomes."

New push for 'Smokefree Sidelines'

A campaign to ban smoking on the sidelines at youth football matches is gaining ground in West Norfolk.

Smokefree Sidelines was introduced last year in order to discourage youngsters from copying adult behaviour by lighting up.



Approximately 1 in 6 people in Norfolk are smokers and children who grow up with a parent or family member who smokes are three times more likely to start. A worrying 40% of smokers started the habit aged 16 or under.

Nearly 30 Norfolk clubs have signed up to the initiative, which encourages parents and visitors to refrain from smoking anywhere on site.

Chairman of Shouldham Youth Football Club Phil Riedlinger champions Smokefree Sidelines and says it has had a positive impact at matches.

Phil said: "At Shouldham Youth Football Club we believe that we have the responsibility and ability to influence all of our young members' lives. Youth football is not just about playing the game but teaches our children key life skills like teamwork, commitment, respect and how to win and lose.

"Smokefree Sidelines has been a wonderful opportunity to get our players and their parents to think about a key health issue and modify behaviors. It has been proven that our pitches are now smoke free. People who smoke and vape have moved away from the playing area and are showing discretion. It has also led to some of our children challenging their parents smoking resulting in changing behaviour."

●●● If you - or anyone you know - smokes and would like NHS support to quit, then you can search online for Smokefree Norfolk or call 0800 0854 113

If you would like more information about any of the topics in this newsletter or would like to provide feedback or get involved please contact:

Get Involved!

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