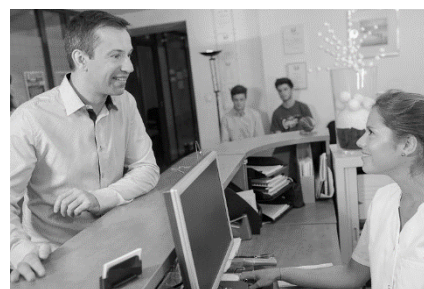


PCN NEWSLETTER

First Edition 2024



*** Welcome to the first edition of The PCN Newsletter ***

(For this Newsletter in LARGER PRINT or an ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGE, please advise Reception).

What are PCNs?

PCNs (Primary Care Networks) are groups of GP Practices working together as a network, in which they are commissioned to deliver what are known as **Enhanced Services**. These services are provided by practices, over and above the core 8am-6.30pm contract. The GP Practice that you attend is part of the **Sedgley, Coseley and Gornal Primary Care Network** which cares for around 55,000 patients. The PCN practices are:

• Ridgeway Surgery	• Northway Medical Centre
• Lower Gornal Medical Practice	• The Greens Health Centre
• Coseley Medical Centre	• Woodsetton Medical Centre
• Castle Meadows Surgery	• Bath St Medical Centre

Please see the Extended Surgery Hours table later in this Newsletter.

PCNs are led by Clinical Directors who may be a GP, general practice Nurse, clinical Pharmacist or other clinical professional working in general practice.

PCNs are small enough to provide the personal care valued by both patients and GPs, but large enough to have an improved impact by working together with other GP practices and others in the local health and social care system. One immediate change that has been welcomed by patients has been the development of the extended hours provision where you may be offered an appointment at another practice outside of the usual opening hours if this suits you. Further developments in patient care and services will come along as the PCN develops.

PCN-PPG meetings

Regular meetings are held where members of the PPGs (Patient Participation Groups, made up of registered patients at a particular GP Practice, the Practice Manager and a Doctor from the practice) from each of the practices within the PCN are invited to attend. This enables matters to be discussed and shared which affect the whole PCN and speakers can be invited to speak on PCN-wide initiatives.

PPG members are encouraged to comment and make suggestions, share ideas which can be taken back to individual practices, and identify matters on which to work together.

Calling all Patients.... Are you aware you have a PPG? Like to join? Please ask at your Reception.

Chiropodist or Podiatrist?

You may have come across both of these terms. There is no difference between a chiropodist and a podiatrist but the term “podiatrist” is now more commonly used.

Podiatrists are highly trained specialists in the treatment of a range of conditions in the foot and lower limb. These can include skin and nail problems, pain and musculoskeletal problems or foot problems as a result of some long-term health issues such as diabetes.

Free mobile data for those in need

The Good Things Foundation offer free mobile data for those in need. Visit goodthingsfoundation.org/westmids for more information.




**Free mobile data
for people in need**

Like a foodbank but for mobile data, the National Databank provides free SIM cards to help people get connected.

There are over 1,700 local community organisations giving out free mobile data across the UK you can visit to get free and friendly help.

Or visit:
goodthingsfoundation.org/westmids
for more locations

Or scan to find your nearest databank



Good Things

Support for Parents and Carers

There is help available for parents and carers in the Dudley area. Please visit www.dudleyparents.co.uk to see what is on offer online and in person or you can email parenting@dudley.gov.uk for more information.

Positive People and their Services

Stuart Bates **ICB (Integrated Care Board)** engages with individuals, community groups, people of influence, and stakeholders across the Dudley Borough. To listen to their views, insights, good practices, and any frustrations they may have on the health service and act on the feedback he receives and helps to influence decisions made at the NHS, we also work closely with our partners across the healthcare system. He often finds that communities facing health inequalities are keen to speak to us about their experiences, to raise awareness of what is working well and what could be improved. To book a community conversation please email stuart.bates4@nhs.net

Pippa Boulton (also **ICB**) checks how patient data is used to plan health care across the local area and how patient data is protected from outside agencies.

Queens Cross Network (Manager Paul Astley) is a drop-in Disability Hub in Wellington Road Dudley which offers different services such as a vision support service, deaf support service, enabling community support to help people live independently in their own home and provides activities such as yoga and dance. Tel: **01384 813460**.

Simon Bagley from The Ridgeway Surgery reflects on the use of IT (**Information Technology**).

“With the help of IT, we can ensure our patients are being reviewed on time and effectively. Electronic hospital referrals reach departments quickly and securely. One of the latest developments in the surgery is electronic dermatology referrals; when a patient sees the GP, photographs are taken and the referral sent immediately. These are reviewed at the hospital and feedback is received quickly. During Flu and Covid vaccination seasons our IT helps us to find and contact eligible patients to call in and keep them protected. It also helps us to search through all of our patients with chronic health conditions and monitor and improve their levels of care”.

Simon’s role within the practice is to implement these systems, ensure they are working properly and to train others in their use. He also helps with IT issues and writes searches to confirm targets as a practice are met.

Julie Austin (**Community Development Worker Health & Wellbeing Dudley Council**) Tel: **07870 361418**

“We support and help everyone within our borough: volunteers, community groups, or whole communities to bring about social change and improve the quality of life in their local area. We are able to listen, build trust, share ideas, and connect you to support resources, venues, groups and much more. We act as the link between communities and a range of other local authority and voluntary sector providers, such as the police, social workers and teachers. We can also help people find the community services they need, such as legal help, medical attention, financial assistance, housing, employment and much more.”

Parts of Our Healthcare Team....

GP: Doctors understand many different medical conditions, they help and treat patients of all ages, and refer patients to hospital to be looked into further. General practitioners can also do prescriptions.

GP Registrar/Foundation Year: These doctors are fully qualified and finishing their training, they can treat the same problems as our GPs, and they can do prescriptions.

Advanced Nurse Practitioner: The advanced nurse practitioner can understand your problem and treat patients with minor illnesses, they can also do prescriptions.

Nurse Practitioner: Can be seen for lots of different problems including acute back pain/joint sprains – acute chest infections – cystitis – diarrhoea/constipation/piles – dizziness-headache – earache/swollen glands – wounds, scalds/burns/rashes – tonsillitis/sinusitis – urinary tract infections – menstrual disorders, depression and contraception

Practice Nurse: They can help with family planning, travel vaccinations, dressings, removal of stitches, blood pressure checks, health checks and cervical smears and contraception. (continued.....)

Physician Associate: They work closely with the GP's and see patients with different problems. They don't do prescriptions

General Practice Assistants: They do admin work and some basic medical duties to help the GPs, freeing up their time and improving things for the patients. They don't do prescriptions

PCN Paramedic: They will understand and treat your urgent medical problems and they can do prescriptions. They can also refer patients to hospital to be looked into further

Musculoskeletal Practitioner: A Physiotherapist who deals with muscle and joint pain as well as soft tissue issues related to the musculoskeletal system. They will look at the best course of action for managing these problems.

Extended Surgery Hours

To book, patients should phone their own Surgery first.

MONDAY	Ridgeway Surgery Woodsetton Medical Centre The Greens Health Centre	} } 18:30-20:00 }
TUESDAY	Northway Medical Practice Castle Meadows Surgery Lower Gornal Medical Practice Bath Street Medical Centre (<i>clinics offered at Coseley Medical Centre</i>)	} } } 18:30-20:00 }
WEDNESDAY	Castle Meadows Surgery	18:30-20:00
THURSDAY	Ridgeway Surgery Lower Gornal Medical Practice	} 18:30-20:00 }
FRIDAY	On rotation across the 8 practices	18:30-20:00
SATURDAY	Coseley Medical Centre	09:00-13.00
SATURDAY	On rotation across the 8 practices – GP/Practice Nurse/Health Care Assistant appointments offered	09:00-17:00

ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM SCREENING

An abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) is a 'bulge' or 'blowout' of the main artery in the body that travels from the heart down the centre of the body. An AAA is caused by weakness or disease of this artery.

If an AAA develops then it may be silent and cause no symptoms at all until it ruptures or leaks. This can cause a sudden life threatening event from which 8 out of 10 men will die before they can get to hospital. Such a catastrophic event can mostly be prevented if the AAA is diagnosed early, so the NHS is offering all men over the age of 64 the opportunity to be screened to see if they may be developing an AAA. Only men are offered screening as they are 6x more likely to develop an AAA than women.

If an AAA is picked up early then it can be monitored with further scans and if it is enlarging to the point when rupture might occur, then planned surgery can be offered and the AAA repaired. This is much safer than any emergency procedure. Screening is a simple painless ultrasound procedure of the abdomen, similar to the ultrasound pregnant women have. The scan only takes a few minutes but could save your life. (continued.....)

AAA Screening is now offered to all men after the age of 64. The invitation will be sent to the patient and the screening scan does not normally need to be requested. If an AAA is found then planned surgery will be offered if the AAA becomes larger than 5.4cm across. At this size the AAA is at risk of rupturing. Smaller aneurysms will be monitored with further routine scans.

Those at greatest risk of AAA are:

- Older men
- Men with a family history of AAA
- Obese men
- Men with high cholesterol
- Smokers
- Men with hypertension

New NHS Pharmacy First advanced service was launched on Wednesday 31 January 2024

The new Pharmacy First Service will enable community pharmacists to complete episodes of care for patients without the need for the patient to visit their general practice. This, alongside expansions to the pharmacy blood pressure checking and contraception services Patients will access the new clinical pathway element by walking into the pharmacy directly or where appropriate, by contacting them by video consultation.

The Pharmacy First Service builds on the previous Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) by enabling community pharmacies to manage patients for seven common conditions, following specific clinical pathways. These conditions are:

Clinical pathway	Age range
Acute Otitis Media (ear infection)	1 to 17 years
Impetigo	1 year and over
Infected insect bites	1 year and over
Shingles	18 years and over
Sinusitis	12 years and over
Sore throat	5 years and over
Uncomplicated urinary tract infections	Women 16-64 years