



Issue 3

Winter Newsletter

Winter Pressures

As I am sure all our patients are aware, there is an increased demand for appointments over the winter period with the increase in coughs, colds and virus'.

It is impossible to provide on the day appointments for everyone, despite our best efforts; however, we can offer an appointment at the HUB at Prince Consort Road, Jubilee wing at QE Hospital and Blaydon walk in centres, with a GP if we are at full capacity.

Every year, millions of us visit our GP with minor health problems that a local pharmacy could help with.

By visiting your pharmacy instead of your GP, you could save yourself time and trouble – no need to book an appointment, just walk in. This also means your GP can focus on treating people who are sicker than you.

Pharmacists can help recognise and treat many common illnesses. They can give advice and where appropriate, recommend over-the-counter medicines that could help clear up the problem.

If they think you need to see a GP for your illness, they will advise you to do that.

Coming together as a community

Christmas is just around the corner and for many families, this a time of financial crisis and despair. The Bridges, as a practice, have therefore decided to act as a collection point for the Gateshead foodbank (a charity providing food to those in acute need) on an ongoing basis.

Further, any and all donations made between now and 15th December 2019 will be matched by the practice.

Please donate : Tinned products, Sugar, Breakfast cereals, Soup, Pasta, Rice, Pasta sauce, Tea or coffee, Biscuits, Snacks



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A Winter Message from the Senior Partner

Dear all,

As the new(ish) senior partner at Bridges, I'd like to take the opportunity to say hello to all our patients, new and old, and to re-iterate that the retirement of Val Hempsey should change little about how the place runs and about our ethos of providing timely, effective medical care which changes over time as the evidence does (in medicine, as in life, little stays the same as the years progress).

On the subject of change, you may have noticed new faces in the practice - we are pleased to welcome Samantha Annison, who joins us on an apprenticeship, and to confirm the permanent appointment of Lauren Quinn, who has just completed her own apprenticeship. Both are Gateshead residents who see their future in providing healthcare to the community in which they live. We have also seen over the last couple of months the return to full nursing duties of Lindsey Wade, who worked for us several years ago before taking a career break, and Drs Fiona Steedman and Ben Michie, both GPs on temporary contracts for the present, in lieu of Dr Helen Ryan, who departed the practice just before the summer holidays; in due course we hope to fill this gap permanently. On staffing, we also wish to announce, with sadness, the departure of Edita Vasiljeviene, who has served as a practice nurse for many years and who leaves us for a new job elsewhere in the country; we wish her well and count ourselves grateful to have had the time we have with her.

Finally, I intend to use this column each issue of the newsletter to deal with a subject on my mind, or on yours - if there is a question you'd like answered in the newsletter about the workings of the practice, or a particular service, please ask away. However, for now, I'd like to announce that the practice's Christmas charity is to be the Gateshead Foodbank, in recognition of the fact that far too many local families go hungry in a supposedly-first-world nation. We are therefore taking donations from now until 18 Dec 19, and will match from practice funds all donations made by the public. A list of stuff the foodbank needs is at reception, but in general tinned/dried/jarred foods, sanitary items and Christmas puddings are welcomed by the foodbank. Please do not feel compelled, but all donations will be received with gratitude and will help struggling people locally not go hungry.

Dr Paul Evans

Students

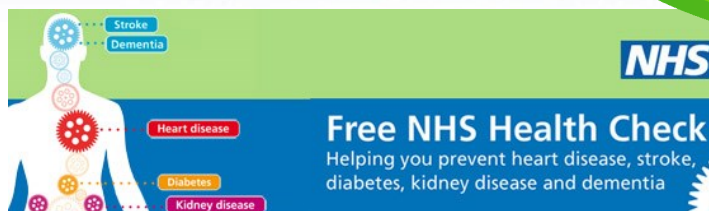
We are Proud to say that we now facilitate nursing students from Northumbria University and doctors from Newcastle here at the Bridges Medical Practice to develop the workforce of the future.

You may be asked by the clinician you have an appointment with if you would allow a student to sit in on your consultation. You are under no pressure to allow this; feel free to decline, but it is an important service.

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The NHS Health Check is a health check-up for adults in England aged 40-74. It's designed to spot early signs of stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia. As we get older, we have a higher risk of developing one of these conditions. An NHS Health Check helps find ways to lower this risk.

Once you've had your NHS Health Check, your healthcare professional will discuss your results with you. You'll be given advice to help you lower your risk of a stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, diabetes or dementia, and maintain or improve your health. But you don't have to wait until then to make healthy changes.

Surgery Training Dates

The surgery will be closed from 12.30 on:

12th November 2019

24th March 2020.

This is enable our staff to have the best opportunity to increase their knowledge and skills in preparation to assist all patients more effectively.

The NHS APP is released

The NHS App is now available to the public on Google Play and Apple app stores.

95% of practices are now connected to the NHS App.

Patients can check if their GP practice is connected when they open the app for the first time. If the practice is not connected, patients can leave an email address and will be notified when it is.

The NHS App enables you to:

- ◆ Check their symptoms using the health A-Z on the NHS website
- ◆ Find out what to do when they need help urgently using NHS 111 online
- ◆ Register as an organ donor
- ◆ Choose whether the NHS uses their data for research and planning

DNA's

We still experiencing a large amount of appointments wasted by people who do not attend appointments they have booked. These could have been used by others in order to reduce the waiting times at present please therefore cancel any appointment you are unable to attend.

Carers

If you care for someone and you need support, help or guidance you can locate this information at :

<http://www.gatesheadcarers.com>

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We are now a Military Veterans Accredited Practice

NHS care for the Armed Forces community
The NHS is responsible for providing all hospital and most community services for serving personnel (except for mental health, general practice and rehabilitation services). The NHS also provides nearly all community, general practice and hospital services for the families of serving personnel, reservists and veterans. Included as part of this are the following dedicated services and initiatives to support the Armed Forces community: NHS mental health services for veterans The Veterans' Mental Health Transition: Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS) for serving personnel approaching discharge from the military and veterans with mental health difficulties. The service provides a range of treatment, from recognising the early signs of mental health problems and providing access to early support, to therapeutic treatment for complex mental health difficulties and psychological trauma. Help may also be provided with housing, employment, alcohol misuse and social support.

Every Mind Matters!

What is a good mental health?

Having good mental health helps us relax, enjoy our lives and achieve more. Looking after your mental health is not something we should just do if we are struggling, feeling low, anxious or stressed. It's actually something we should

think about all the time and really invest in, just like with our physical health.

There are lots of things we can do to look after our mental health and wellbeing every day – make a start with these 6 top tips.

Reframe unhelpful thoughts - The way we think, feel and behave are linked. Sometimes we develop patterns of thoughts or behaviours that are unhelpful so recognising them, and taking steps to think about things differently.

Be in the present - If we take time to be aware of ourselves and be in the present moment, noticing our own thoughts and feelings, and the world around us, we can gain a better perspective.

Connect with others - Spending quality time with friends or family, talking to someone about how we are feeling, or finding ways to help other people can all help stop you from feeling lonely and improve your mental health and wellbeing.

Live a healthy life - Being active, enjoying the outdoors and having a healthy, balanced diet all impact how we feel.

Get good sleep - Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel mentally and physically, so it's important to get enough.

Do something for yourself - From enjoying your favourite hobby, learning something new or simply taking time to relax, it's important to do things that make you happy.

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**Merry
Christmas**

