
SEPTEMBER PATIENT NEWSLETTER



GREENSAND
Health Centre

*"We aim to improve our community's health
and wellbeing and exceed their expectations"*

www.greensandhealth.co.uk

Welcome to our patient newsletter, which we hope you will find useful and informative.

Also, please don't forget we regularly post all our current news on our website and Facebook page, so be sure to take a look every now and again to stay up-to-date.

SURGERY CLOSURE DATES



Staff Training Dates

Please note all our surgeries will be closed from 1pm on the below dates for Protected Learning Time. Normal surgery hours resume the following morning. The Acute Hub at Linton will also be closed to enable our clinicians some much needed training time.

- Tuesday 15th September 2026
- Thursday 15th October 2026
- Wednesday 11th November 2026

We do understand an afternoon closure can be an inconvenience for some patients, but please be mindful that this protected time is invaluable for busy GP surgeries. It gives all staff, clinical and non-clinical, time to undertake formal mandatory training which cannot be completed in normal surgery hours. Patients are still able to use the 24 hour automated services, check and cancel appointments, use the mental health service, and the repeat prescription service.

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KNOW YOUR NUMBERS – BP WEEK

Know Your Numbers! Blood Pressure Week – 7th September

Know Your Numbers! Blood Pressure Week is the UK's biggest annual blood pressure testing and awareness campaign, organised by Blood Pressure UK.

The campaign aims to find the estimated 4.2 million UK adults who are living with undiagnosed high blood pressure. High blood pressure is a major preventable cause of stroke, heart attack, and kidney disease, so knowing your numbers could make a real difference to your health.

Our commitment to supporting our patients

As a practice, we are committed to promoting blood pressure awareness and education throughout the year. We want all of our patients to understand the importance of knowing and managing their blood pressure and the positive impact this can have on their long-term health.

Over the coming months, we will be expanding the information available to patients by creating a dedicated blood pressure education page on our website and displaying educational posters and resources across all of our surgery sites. Our aim is to provide clear, accessible information to help everyone understand what blood pressure is, why it matters, and what they can do to keep it within a healthy range.

FAQs:

- What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your arteries as your heart pumps blood around your body. It is measured using two numbers: Systolic pressure – the pressure when your heart beats. Diastolic pressure – the pressure when your heart relaxes between beats. Your blood pressure reading is recorded as systolic over diastolic, for example, 120/80 mmHg.

- Why is it important?

High blood pressure often has no symptoms. If left untreated, it can significantly increase your risk of: Heart disease, Stroke and Kidney disease. The good news is that high blood pressure can often be detected early with a simple check, allowing you to take steps to reduce your risk and protect your long-term health.

- How can I get my blood pressure checked?

You can have your blood pressure checked at any of our surgery sites – no appointment is needed. Each of our sites has an easy-to-use blood pressure machine available for patients. If you need any assistance, our reception team will be happy to help.

Simple ways to help lower your blood pressure naturally:

Healthy lifestyle changes can make a big difference. You can help lower your blood pressure by:

- Reduce the amount of salt in your diet.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Be physically active and exercise regularly.
- Manage stress and anxiety.
- Get enough good-quality sleep.
- Limit your alcohol intake.
- Stop smoking.

Know your numbers

Checking your blood pressure only takes a few minutes and could help detect a problem before it causes serious health issues.

If you haven't had your blood pressure checked recently, why not pop into one of our surgery sites during Know Your Numbers! Blood Pressure Week and take a few minutes to know your numbers? It could be one of the most important health checks you have. Together, we can help improve awareness of high blood pressure, encourage early detection, and support healthier lives within our community.

Know Your Blood Pressure Targets

For patients aged 79 years and under, the target blood pressure is:

- Clinic reading: 140/90 mmHg or less
- Home reading: 135/85 mmHg or less

For patients aged 80 years and over, the target blood pressure is:

- Clinic reading: 150/90 mmHg or less
- Home reading: 145/85 mmHg or less

Please note that blood pressure targets differ depending on where your blood pressure is measured. Home blood pressure targets are lower than clinic targets because readings taken at home are often naturally lower. Recommended targets may also vary according to your age and individual clinical circumstances.

Suicide Awareness

Last month, our staff took part in a Suicide Awareness PLT session as part of our continued commitment to supporting the wellbeing of our patients, colleagues and wider community. Suicide awareness is about much more than simply recognising the signs that someone may be struggling. It is about creating an environment where people feel able to talk openly about their mental health, knowing how to approach sensitive conversations, understanding when someone may need additional support, and knowing where to signpost them for further help. Suicide can affect people from all backgrounds and walks of life, and sometimes the people who are struggling the most may not appear to be in crisis. They may continue going to work, looking after their families and carrying on with their everyday lives while privately experiencing feelings of hopelessness, isolation or distress. This is why awareness and understanding are so important.

Talking about suicide can feel uncomfortable or difficult, but avoiding the subject can contribute to the stigma surrounding it. Creating opportunities to talk openly and sensitively about suicide can help people feel less alone and more able to ask for help.

For healthcare professionals, suicide awareness is particularly important. Our staff regularly interact with patients who may be experiencing difficult circumstances, changes in their mental health or significant life events. Having the confidence to recognise potential warning signs and approach someone with compassion can help ensure that people receive the appropriate support at the right time.

The training will also help our staff understand that asking someone if they are struggling or having thoughts of suicide does not put the idea into their head. Instead, asking a direct and compassionate question can give someone the opportunity to talk about something they may otherwise be keeping to themselves.

Suicide awareness means being prepared to listen without judgement, take concerns seriously and encourage people to seek appropriate support.

It also means understanding that there is no single reason why someone may experience suicidal thoughts. People can reach a point of crisis for many different reasons, and everyone's circumstances are different. Taking the time to listen and understand someone's individual situation is therefore incredibly important.

Our PLT session covered areas such as recognising potential warning signs, understanding risk factors, having sensitive and potentially difficult conversations, responding appropriately to someone who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts, and knowing how to access or signpost to further support.

Suicide prevention is everyone's responsibility. While healthcare professionals have an important role to play, small acts of kindness and compassion can make a difference in everyday life too. Checking in with someone, listening to them without judgement and letting them know that they don't have to face things alone can be incredibly valuable.

We hope that our Suicide Awareness PLT will give our staff greater confidence and understanding when supporting patients and colleagues who may be struggling. Most importantly, we want to continue building a culture where talking about mental health is encouraged, asking for help is seen as a strength, and people feel comfortable speaking up when they are not okay. Sometimes, a conversation can be the first step towards getting someone the support they need. ❤️

BLS TRAINING



In August, our staff also took part in Basic Life Support (BLS) training as part of our ongoing commitment to patient safety, staff development and ensuring our teams are prepared to respond confidently in an emergency.

Although we hope that serious medical emergencies are rare within our surgeries, it is essential that our staff are equipped with the knowledge and practical skills to act quickly if one does occur. In an emergency situation, every second can count, and having a team that knows what to do can make a vital difference while further medical assistance is on its way.

Our BLS training provides staff with the opportunity to refresh and practise the essential skills involved in responding to a medical emergency. This includes recognising when someone may be seriously unwell, knowing how to raise the alarm and call for emergency assistance, performing effective cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and understanding how and when to use an automated external defibrillator (AED).

The training also covers how to respond to situations such as choking and helps staff understand the importance of working effectively as a team during an emergency. This is particularly important in a busy healthcare setting, where different members of staff may need to take on different roles to ensure that the appropriate care is provided as quickly as possible.

Basic Life Support training is an essential part of maintaining a safe environment for both our patients and staff. While many people associate CPR and defibrillators with hospital settings, medical emergencies can happen anywhere, including GP surgeries, and being prepared can make a significant difference.

Regular training also allows our staff to practise these skills in a safe environment, helping to build confidence and ensure that procedures remain familiar. In a real emergency, staff need to be able to react promptly rather than having to remember procedures they have not practised for a long time. BLS training is not simply about learning CPR. It is about ensuring that our whole team understands how to respond, communicate and work together when faced with a potentially life-threatening situation.

Healthcare guidance and best practice can change over time, which is why regular refresher training is so important. It gives our staff the opportunity to review their existing knowledge, ask questions and practise their skills so they remain prepared.

We are proud of our team's commitment to ongoing learning and development. By regularly completing essential training such as BLS, we can help ensure that our staff are as prepared as possible to respond to emergencies and continue providing a safe environment for everyone who visits our surgeries.

Being prepared could make a vital difference when every second counts.



Back to School



Wash your hands!

During the colder months, Germs are able to travel faster and last longer, particularly in the crowded school setting. Viruses are able to survive longer in colder temperatures, and lower humidity levels allow droplets produced from coughs and sneezes to float in the air for longer. If you imagine this scenario along with drastically reduced fresh air whilst windows and doors are kept firmly shut, and rainy playtimes and PE lessons are rescheduled inside, it can mean only one thing;

“Poorly children” as a result of everyone in the classroom breathing in the same trapped, recirculated air particles! You can see therefore why so many children get ill during winter.

However, there is one, simple, cheap, proven activity we can all do to minimise the spread of viruses and that is to “WASH OUR HANDS”.

Children as young as 3 are very capable of learning this skill, and up to 40% of all viruses could be prevented if we all washed our hands properly!

Not only does this protect your child from viruses such as Flu / Chest infections / Coughs and Colds / Chicken pox / Measles / Vomiting and Diarrhoea bugs, but it stops the spread of these germs with you- their parent, their siblings, their grandparents, and vulnerable others. When your family is healthy, you don't have to worry about missing school, work, or other activities.

So why not make a pledge for you and your family to wash your hands? Learn to do it properly, and protect everyone around you!

How to Wash Hands Properly

Teach your kids how to scrub those germs away using the 4 EASY steps below. Or better yet, wash your hands together often, so they learn the importance of this good habit:

1. Wet hands with clean, running water (warm or cold). Make sure the water isn't too hot for little hands.
2. Use soap and lather up for about 20 seconds. You can sing a song like “Happy Birthday” twice to help kids wash for the whole 20 seconds. Antibacterial soap isn't a must - any soap will do.
3. Get in between fingers, on the backs of hands, and under the nails where germs like to hang out. Don't forget the wrists!
4. Rinse well and dry well with a clean towel.

Adults can use more detailed videos and guidance from the NHS to learn how to wash hands properly by following this link: [How to wash your hands - NHS](#)

When Should Hands Be Washed?

Building hand washing skills takes time. At first, your child will need regular reminders of how and when to wash hands. It is especially important to remind children to wash their hands after using the bathroom, before eating, after touching pets, after playing outside, and after coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose. But once hand washing becomes a habit and a regular part of your child's day, they will practice it throughout their lives.

Washing Hands When Out & About

What if you don't have soap and water? Hand sanitisers or scrubs are good, too. You can buy travel sizes to keep in your book bag, car, locker, purse, or sports bag.

Wet wipes - Good or bad?

Baby wipes may make your hands look clean, but they're not designed to remove germs from your hands. Leaders in Infection Prevention recommend washing hands with soap and water when possible.



FACTS

- Handwashing with soap could protect about 1 out of every 3 young children who get sick with diarrhoea, and almost 1 out of 5 young children with respiratory infections like pneumonia
- Hand washing reduces absenteeism due to gastrointestinal illness in schoolchildren by 29-57%
- Estimated global rates of handwashing after using the toilet are only 19%
- Germs can be transferred more easily to and from wet hands; therefore, hands should be dried after washing. However, the best way to dry hands remains unclear because few studies about hand drying exist! Whether you choose a clean towel, a hand drier, or paper towels, all are better than leaving your hands wet! Children may need particular reminders about this!
- Scientific research shows that skin underneath rings harbours significantly more microbes than bare fingers, making jewellery a hidden reservoir for winter cold viruses. To stay well, health experts recommend removing or lifting up your rings to prevent germs from surviving your routine.

August Achievements

Welcome to the section in our newsletter dedicated to celebrating the achievements and successes of our team from the previous month. This segment highlights the outstanding contributions of individual staff members, departmental accomplishments, and positive milestones across the surgery.

Our aim is to give patients a greater insight into the hard work, dedication, and teamwork that takes place behind the scenes every day. From professional achievements and training successes to improvements in patient care and team accomplishments, we want to recognise the people who help make our surgery a welcoming and supportive environment for everyone.

By sharing these positive staff wins, we hope to keep our patients informed, connected, and engaged with the ongoing efforts being made to continually improve the care and service we provide.



Last month, Greensand welcomed three new medical students to our practice! They will be joining us for the next 2–3 years as they continue their medical training and gain valuable experience in general practice. During their time with us, the students will initially shadow our GPs, observing consultations and learning more about the day-to-day work of a GP practice. As they progress through their training and gain experience, they will eventually have the opportunity to run their own clinics under supervision. This is a fantastic opportunity for our students to develop their skills, build confidence and gain first-hand experience of caring for patients in the community.

We're delighted to have them as part of the Greensand team and hope they enjoy their time with us!



We're happy to share that two of our Practice Nurses, Keeley Norton and Becky Goodsell, have successfully completed their Fundamentals in General Practice course with flying colours! 🎉

This is a fantastic achievement and reflects their commitment to developing their knowledge and skills within general practice. The course provides nurses with a strong foundation in the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to work confidently and effectively in a GP practice. For Keeley and Becky, completing this course means they have further strengthened their clinical knowledge and are better equipped to support our patients across a wide range of healthcare needs. It also provides them with valuable skills that they can continue to build on throughout their careers.



In August, we carried out 23 minor operation appointments at our practice! These appointments can include the removal of suitable moles, cysts, skin tags and other minor skin lesions, depending on clinical assessment. We offer this service to make treatment more convenient and accessible for our patients. Where appropriate, it means patients can have these procedures carried out by their GP practice, rather than having to arrange treatment privately or travel to hospital. This helps reduce unnecessary referrals and gives our patients access to care closer to home.

Physiotherapy



Did you know that you may not always need to see a GP first for problems affecting your muscles, bones and joints?

First Contact Physiotherapists (FCPs) are highly skilled healthcare professionals specialising in musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions. They are trained to assess, diagnose and manage a wide range of problems affecting your muscles, joints, bones, tendons, ligaments and nerves.

For many common musculoskeletal problems, an FCP can be the most appropriate healthcare professional to see as your first point of contact. This means you can often receive specialist advice and support without needing to see a GP first.

What can an FCP help with?

FCPs can assess and manage a wide variety of musculoskeletal conditions, including:

- Back and neck pain
- Shoulder pain and injuries
- Knee and hip pain
- Arthritis and joint problems
- Sports and exercise-related injuries
- Joint stiffness and reduced mobility
- Muscle strains and sprains
- Tendon problems
- Sciatica and nerve-related symptoms
- General aches and pains affecting your muscles and joints



Whether your symptoms have developed gradually over time or have started following an injury, an FCP can assess your symptoms and help you understand what may be causing your problem.

What happens during an appointment?

During your appointment, the physiotherapist will take the time to understand your symptoms and how they are affecting your everyday life. They may ask about when your symptoms started, what makes them better or worse, and how they are affecting your work, sleep, hobbies, exercise or normal activities. Where appropriate, they will carry out a physical examination to assess your movement, strength, joints and other relevant areas.

Your FCP will then explain their findings and discuss the options available to you. Together, you can create a personalised management plan based on your symptoms, lifestyle and individual circumstances.

This may include:

- Specific exercises to improve strength, flexibility and movement
- Advice on managing pain and your symptoms
- Guidance on staying active and returning to normal activities
- Advice about posture, movement and lifestyle
- Self-management techniques to help you manage your condition
- Support with preventing further injury or recurrence



Why see an FCP?

One of the main benefits of seeing an FCP is that you can often receive specialist assessment and advice sooner, without having to book a GP appointment first. Many common musculoskeletal conditions can be managed effectively through education, reassurance, appropriate exercises and self-management. Starting the right treatment and advice early can help you understand your symptoms, remain active and support a quicker recovery.

Seeing the right healthcare professional for your needs also helps ensure that GP appointments are available for patients who require a GP's expertise.

What if I need further treatment or investigations?

If your symptoms require further assessment, your FCP can help arrange the appropriate next steps. Where clinically appropriate, they can refer patients for further investigations, which may include X-rays, ultrasound or MRI scans. They can also refer or signpost patients to other appropriate services, such as community musculoskeletal physiotherapy, orthopaedic teams, rheumatology services or other hospital specialists.

If your FCP identifies symptoms that may be unrelated to a musculoskeletal problem, or that require assessment by another healthcare professional, they can advise you on the most appropriate next step.

Additionally, you can use this link to make a self-referral. Completing your referral will take around 15 to 20 minutes. It is important you provide information which is as accurate as possible to ensure you are offered the correct management pathway. <https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/forms/msk-physio-self-referral-form/>

Don't ignore persistent pain

It can be tempting to ignore aches and pains or simply hope that they will go away. While many minor injuries do improve with time, getting the right advice early can help prevent some problems from becoming more persistent. An early assessment can help you understand what is happening, what you can do to help yourself and when you should seek further support. Your FCP can provide reassurance, practical advice and a treatment plan designed around your individual needs.

Supporting you to stay active and independent

Our FCP service is an important part of helping patients manage musculoskeletal problems and maintain their mobility, independence and overall wellbeing.

You don't necessarily need to live with ongoing pain or wait for symptoms to become severe before seeking advice. If you are experiencing a muscle, joint or bone problem, an FCP may be the right healthcare professional to see.

If you think your symptoms may be suitable for an FCP appointment, please speak to the practice team about accessing the service.

Taking the right first step can help you get the support you need sooner and get you back to doing the things that matter to you. ❤️

Macmillan Coffee Morning

We're delighted to announce that Greensand Health Centre will be hosting our very own Macmillan Coffee Morning at our Linton surgery on Friday 25th September!

We're bringing together our patients, staff and local community for a morning of coffee, cake, crafts, raffles and fundraising, all in support of Macmillan Cancer Support. We're hoping to raise as much money as possible for this fantastic charity while giving everyone the opportunity to come along, enjoy some refreshments and have a chat with members of our team.

💚 Supporting people affected by cancer

Macmillan Cancer Support is one of the UK's leading cancer charities, supporting people who are living with cancer as well as their families and loved ones. A cancer diagnosis can affect every part of someone's life. Alongside the physical effects of cancer and its treatment, people can face emotional, practical and financial challenges too. Macmillan provides information, advice and support to help people navigate these challenges and feel less alone. The charity offers support throughout a person's cancer journey, from the point of diagnosis and during treatment through to life after treatment. Macmillan also provides support to families and carers, helping them understand what is happening and where they can find help. By raising money for Macmillan, we can help contribute towards the vital work they do to ensure that people affected by cancer have someone to turn to when they need it most.

🍷 What will be happening?

We've been busy behind the scenes preparing for the Coffee Morning, and we'll have lots for you to enjoy!

☕ Coffee, tea and cake

No Coffee Morning would be complete without plenty of delicious cakes! Come along, grab yourself a hot drink and treat yourself to something sweet. Whether you have a favourite cake or simply want to see what's on offer, there should be something for everyone.

👩‍🎨 Staff-made arts and crafts

We'll also be holding a mini market featuring arts and crafts made by members of our very own Greensand team. Our staff have been getting creative, and we'll have a selection of handmade items available to purchase. It's a great opportunity to pick up something unique while supporting an important cause at the same time.

🎟️ Fantastic raffle prizes

Fancy your chances of winning something special? We'll be holding a raffle with some brilliant prizes up for grabs! We've been incredibly grateful for the generosity of those who have donated prizes, including popular local businesses, to help us with our fundraising, and we can't wait to see who the lucky winners will be!

☀️ Every donation makes a difference

Our main aim is to raise as much money as possible for Macmillan, and every contribution, no matter how big or small, will help. Whether you buy a cake, enter the raffle, purchase something from the mini market or simply make a donation, your support will help us raise money for people affected by cancer.

We know that cancer has touched the lives of many people in our local community, whether through personal experience, family, friends or colleagues. That's why we're particularly pleased to be able to support Macmillan and the important work they do.

📅 Come and join us!

So, if you're visiting our Linton surgery on Friday 25th September between 9am-11am, please have a browse! You don't need to stay for long – even stopping by for a quick coffee and a slice of cake will help us raise money. Why not bring a friend or family member along too?

Come for the coffee, stay for the cake, have a browse around our mini market, try your luck in the raffle and help us support Macmillan! ❤️

We'd love to see as many people as possible and are hoping to make this a really special and successful morning for a fantastic cause.

Thank you in advance to everyone who supports us – together, we can help make a difference to people affected by cancer. ❤️☕🍰🎟️



Don't forget we regularly post all our current news on our website and Facebook page, so be sure to take a look every now and again to stay up-to-date.



Greensand Health Centre



www.greensandhealth.co.uk

Finally, we would be interested to hear any constructive feedback on what you think of our newsletter, and if you have any ideas of articles or information you feel would be useful to share in the future, please email us at knicb.ghcfeedback@nhs.net
