
MARCH PATIENT NEWSLETTER



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 remain open between 8am - 5pm.

- Thursday 8th May 2025
- Tuesday 3rd June 2025
- Wednesday 2nd July 2025
- Tuesday 12th August 2025
- Wednesday 10th September 2025
- Tuesday 7th October 2025
- Thursday 6th November 2025

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.

In this newsletter you can expect:

Coping with
Winter
Pressures

Our Care Team

Groups & Clubs

Our Bookings
Team

NHS App

Greener Practice

COPING WITH WINTER PRESSURES



As you are already aware, across the NHS we experience considerable pressure over the winter months, and this one has been especially difficult due to high levels of flu and RSV across Kent and Medway. Over the winter, the number of people with flu in hospital in England quadrupled over one month and was rising "at a very concerning rate", NHS chiefs warned.

With the increased exposure to illnesses like the flu, we experienced a lot of staff sickness and a high volume of patient queries, which resulted in extremely long phone wait times. **On average we received 420 calls, over 250 medical requests, and over 80 acute hub visits each day!**

We want to take this opportunity to thank all our patients for their understanding and ongoing support during these difficult months.

A message from our Acute Hub Team:

The Acute Hub walk-in service for acute same-day presentations at Linton for Greensand patients opened on 1st May 2024. We are incredibly happy to say that the vast majority of feedback we have received from our patients has been positive.

Since September we have welcomed our patients from our Headcorn Surgery, who are also very happy, for the most part, to travel to Linton to be able to receive timely healthcare for their new and acute illnesses.

There are very few GP surgeries with this kind of facility; however, upon receiving feedback from our patients about the difficulty they sometimes faced being able to be seen on the day when they were acutely unwell, the walk-in style service was created. At first it was staffed by the existing staffing pool; however, its popularity has now meant that the surgery has appointed dedicated staff to the service, and we are soon to be employing another 2 advanced practitioners.

During the summer, our numbers were averaging 50-60 patients per day with waits rarely above 45 minutes. However, the winter always brings increased attendances throughout the whole of healthcare and our facility was no different, on some days, we were experiencing very high patient numbers often above 90 patients and often people with very complex healthcare needs. Healthcare staff are not immune from illness, and sadly, we were dealing with staff sickness as well as high patient volumes.

The high patient volumes, staff sickness, and complex healthcare needs of our patients meant that our waiting times on some days swelled, and unfortunately, some people were waiting in excess of 2 hours. On some days we had reached our capacity very early in the afternoon, and unfortunately, we had to close our doors early. Sadly, we received some quite negative comments regarding these decisions; however, we can assure you that our practitioners do not take these decisions lightly, and they are made in conjunction with our operations and business manager to ensure the safety of both our staff and our patients.

The staff work incredibly hard every day to deliver expert healthcare to patients that need to be seen on the day; however, sometimes we see patients that could either self-treat or be given advice from a pharmacist. We also have patients that attend for very routine problems or for medication reviews. We have highly trained support workers and assistants who are able to triage and appropriately signpost our patients to more appropriate healthcare. If ever you are in doubt about your suitability to be seen in this setting, please do ask to save you a disappointing and unnecessary journey.

We have seen an increase in the number of patients that are here before 8am. The British do love a queue! On some days we are arriving to up to 20 people queuing in the cold and wet. Please, can we politely suggest that unless you absolutely must be seen at 8am, you refrain from joining this queue and perhaps return later in the day. The wait is likely to be less, our coffee shop will be open, and it is likely to be a much more pleasurable experience.

Pharmacy First:

Pharmacists can now provide treatment or some prescription medicine, if needed, for seven common conditions, without having to see a GP. Usual prescription charges will apply for the seven common conditions, just like if they received a prescription from the GP. Patients that were already exempt from prescription charges will still be exempt.

Each condition is subject to age eligibility when providing prescription medicine:

Condition	Age eligibility
UTI	16-64 years
Sinusitis	12 years and over
Earache	1-17 years
Sore throat	5 years and over
Shingles	18 years and over
Impetigo	1 year and over
Infected Insect Bite	1 year and over

For more information on the pharmacy first scheme please visit: nhs.uk/thinkpharmacyfirst

OUR CARE TEAM

At Greensand Health Centre, we realise the challenges some of our patients have to face and understand how this can affect your physical health as well as your mental health. To ensure that the practice is supporting our patients to the highest ability, we decided to form the Care Team. The Care Team is made up of multiple individuals who strive to support patients during any difficult times they may be facing. We can offer support in many different ways. Please read on for a more in-depth overview of our Care Team and their roles.



May Crosby



Lyndsey Cooper



Wendy Adams

Social Prescribing Link Workers - May & Lyndsey

As social prescribers here at Greensand Health Centre, our role is to support a patient on a one-to-one basis to listen to what really matters to you. We understand that there can be many contributing factors affecting an individual's life; we are here to support you in any nonclinical and well-being issues.

We will support you to connect with a variety of community services and activities based on your individual needs, interests, and goals. Social prescribing aims to enable you to develop your own skills and resources to take control of your own health and well-being.

Care Coordinators

Learning Disabilities

My name is Wendy, and I am the learning disabilities coordinator. As care coordinators, we advocate for specific groups of patients, such as people who have learning disabilities, carers, and palliative care patients. We support patients to coordinate and navigate care across the health and care system. We support people to become more active in their health, encouraging them to make the right connections with the right teams, agencies, and volunteers. We are skilled in assessing people's changing needs and ensuring those most affected by health inequalities can benefit from personalised care and support. We are family, friendship, and community-centred, always having the patients well-being, health, and care as our main focus. The care team is excited about the developments that are taking place, embracing new concepts and welcoming volunteers to work with along the way. I am overjoyed to be a part of the team that always makes sure all our patients get the support, time, and care that they need. If you would like more information, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Safeguarding for Adults and Children

Hi there, my name is Ellana, and I am the safeguarding coordinator. My role within the care team involves coordinating all safeguarding matters to ensure that as a practice we are doing all that we can to support our patients through these processes. However, all of our staff members are responsible for prioritising safeguarding, so please speak to a member of staff if you feel at risk. At Greensand we take safeguarding very seriously. Our staff are here to keep you safe and are here if you need support. If you are experiencing abuse or in immediate danger and cannot speak freely on the phone, come to the surgery and speak to one of our receptionists. If you have experienced or know someone who is experiencing abuse, please take a look at some of the support services available.

Palliative Care

My name is Clare, and I am the palliative care coordinator at Greensands. My role is to help the GP practice to ensure that we provide the best palliative care and service we can for our palliative patients and their families. I am also a point of contact should our palliative patients or their families need any support or assistance.

GROUPS & CLUBS



At Greensand Health Centre we have an amazing group of volunteers who support our Care Team by providing their time to create groups and support groups for the patients. Please see the groups and club's flyer attached in this newsletter for more details.

Below is a timetable of our groups and clubs for 2025; if you would like to join or have any questions, please contact our Care Team by emailing kmicb.ghccareteam@nhs.net or calling the surgery.

A message from our volunteer coordinator:

Update on volunteer-led therapeutic groups:

We have lots of good news since the last newsletter, as we are in the process of starting up these three new groups.

Linton:

As I type this, the group is referred to as the Men's Breakfast Club, but at their first meeting (February 11th), they will decide what they would like the group to be called.

They will meet monthly on the second Tuesday of the month between 10:30am and Noon and they meet up in the café to select a breakfast and then go up to the library for the meeting. The group will be led by Steve and Paul.

We are restarting the Knit and Natter group, which will be led by Nicola—some of you will know her from the Games group.

They will be meeting monthly on the fourth Tuesday in the café area between 10am and 11.30. It will be great to have this group back. The first meeting is on Tuesday, March 25th.

Other exciting news for Linton is that a patient has very kindly made a donation in thanks for the help he has received there. He has agreed that we can use this money to kickstart a garden project to brighten up the lawns at the rear of the building. We have already been donated some sleepers to make the raised flower beds, so with this donation we can get started! So, a very big thank you to him.

Headcorn:

There is to be a new Carers group meeting their monthly starting in February on the first Tuesday between 10.30 and noon. The group will be led by Jane and Bryan. Members will meet up in Reception and then can make their way together to a room that has been assigned.

As always with these groups, membership is via the Care team and will run for 10 sessions. Then a break to evaluate the group's progress and plan what happens next.

Very importantly to finish with a huge thank you to volunteers who run our existing groups and those who will be leading these new groups.

-Glen Peddar

Groups & Clubs Timetable					
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
AM	Beginners 2 Runners Weekly 10am Headcorn Games Club Weekly 10am-12pm Linton	Carer Support Group Monthly 10:30am-12pm Headcorn Men's Mental Health Breakfast Group Monthly 10:30am-12pm Linton Knit & Natter Group Monthly 10:00am-11:30am Linton Veterans Support Group Monthly 11am-1pm Linton	Book Club Weekly 11am-1pm Linton	Beginners 2 Runners Weekly 10am Headcorn	Health Walks 1st & 3rd Friday of every month 10:30am Linton
PM	Beginners 2 Runners Weekly 1pm Linton	Cancer Support Group Monthly 1pm-2:30pm Linton	Carer Support Group Monthly 1pm-2:30pm Linton	Beginners 2 Runners Weekly 1pm Linton	

2025 Dates

Carers Support Group Linton 08/01/25, 05/02/25, 05/03/25, 02/04/25, 07/05/25, 04/06/25, 02/07/25, 06/08/25, 03/09/25, 01/10/25, 05/11/25, 03/12/25.	Cancer Support Group Linton 28/01/25, 25/02/25, 25/03/25, 29/04/25, 27/05/25, 24/06/25, 29/07/25, 26/08/25, 30/09/25, 28/10/25, 25/11/25, 30/12/25.	Veterans Support Group Linton 04/03/25, 01/04/25, 06/05/25, 03/06/25, 01/07/25, 05/08/25, 02/09/25, 07/10/25, 04/11/25, 02/12/25.
Carers Support Group Headcorn 04/02/25, 04/03/25, 01/04/25, 06/05/25, 03/06/25, 01/07/25, 05/08/25, 02/09/25, 07/10/25, 04/11/25, 02/12/25.	Men's Mental Health Breakfast Group, Linton 11/02/25, 11/03/25, 08/04/25, 13/05/25, 10/06/25, 08/07/25, 12/08/25, 09/09/25, 14/10/25, 11/11/25.	Knit & Natter Group, Linton 25/03/25, 22/04/25, 27/05/25, 24/06/25, 22/07/25, 26/08/25, 23/09/25, 28/10/25, 25/11/25, 23/12/25.

Groups & Clubs

If there are any groups you are interested in please speak to a member of the team or email us.



mydoctor@nhs.net



KNIT & NATTER GROUP

The group meets in the Café at our Linton site and is a great opportunity to learn new skills and connect with others to support wellbeing.

GAMES CLUB

Come along to play a game with other members of the community. Every Monday from 10am to 12pm, located at the Linton Surgery.

VETERANS SUPPORT GROUP

At Greensand Health Centre we run a Veterans support group the first Tuesday of every month between 11am -1pm at Linton Surgery. Come along free of charge for mutual support, comradeship and coffee!

HEALTH WALKS

Let's get active! 1st and 3rd Friday of every month. Walking is simple, free and one of the easiest ways to get more active, lose weight and become healthier. Meet at 10:30am at the Linton Surgery by Café.

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Any patients living with cancer, their family, or friends are welcome to join us for a monthly support group. All located at Linton from 1pm-2:30pm.

Check out our care team leaflet for more information!

BEGINNERS 2 RUNNERS

Beginners 2 Runners are running a free, 10-week, health coach-led Couch-to-5k running course, suitable for all levels of fitness and ability. Their supportive team will be with you every step of the way! Please let us know if you would like to join us. Courses available at both Headcorn and Linton surgery branches.

BOOK CLUB

Join us free of charge every Wednesday from 10:30am-12:30pm at the Greenery Café, Linton surgery branch, to share your latest read, discuss and inspire others, or just listen. Books provided.

MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH BREAKFAST GROUP

The group is being headed up by two male volunteers and will offer mutual support and encouragement to seek help and talk openly about mental health over a bite to eat.

CARER SUPPORT GROUP

Our carer support group gives carers an opportunity to meet other likeminded carers in a similar position to yourself, as well as gaining support. Meetings once a month, available at both Linton and Headcorn surgery branches.

OUR BOOKINGS TEAM

Did you know we have a dedicated bookings team at the surgery? For a while now we have been operating a triage system. This enables us to ensure that patients with the highest or most complex health needs are prioritised and given sooner appointments if necessary.

What happens when I fill out an online request form?

The triage system we use is called Anima; patients can fill out requests themselves online via this system. For those who do not have access to online services, they call the surgery, and one of our receptionists fills the form out over the phone on their behalf.

Once the form is completed, it goes to our bookings team. The Anima system will help recognise the urgency of the requests. A clinician working alongside the bookings team decides on an appropriate course of action and informs the patients.

On average we receive 200 requests a day (this number often increases to 250+ during the winter period).

What are the benefits of having a dedicated bookings team?

As I'm sure you are aware, we have extremely busy phone lines. By having a dedicated bookings team, this frees up our receptionists to deal with general queries at the front desk and on the phone. Our bookings team also follows strict smart booking guidelines, which helps us reduce the number of DNAs or wasted appointments.

What can reception book?

Our reception team can book the following appointments with our nurses and HCAs:

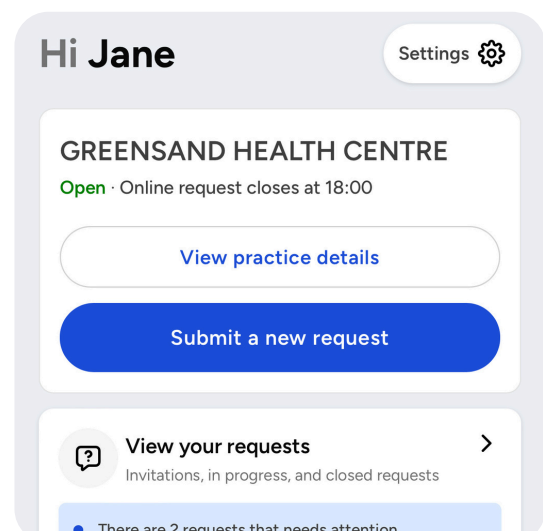
- NHS Health Checks (if patient is eligible)
- Shingles Vaccine (if patient is eligible)
- Pneumonia Vaccine (if patient is eligible)
- Smear (if patient is due)
- Asthma Review
- COPD Review
- Blood test (if requested by a clinician)
- Part 1 diabetic review
- Dressing
- B12 (if patient is due)
- ECG (if requested by a clinician)
- Blood pressure check
- Child Immunisations
- Depo-Provera Injection
- Prostag/Zoladex Injection
- Whooping cough vaccine

We value your feedback on these systems and are constantly looking into ways we can make healthcare more accessible to all our patients. Thank you for the continued support.



You can access the Anima patient dashboard online via your web browser.

Visit:
patients.animahealth.com



NHS APP

There are lots of different apps available that patients can use to access their health records and order repeat prescriptions. This is each patient's personal decision as to which app they would like to use. The NHS App gives you a simple and secure way to access a range of NHS services.

You can download the NHS App on your smartphone or tablet via Google Play or the App store. You can also access the same services in a web browser by logging in through the NHS website.

What you can do with the NHS App:

- Order repeat prescriptions 
- View your GP health record 
- View your NHS number
- Track referrals
- Cancel appointments
- View hospital appointments
- Use NHS 111 online to answer questions and get instant advice or medical help near you

What you need to set up an NHS login:

- Email address
- Mobile phone or a landline number

 This is the quickest and most secure way to process prescription requests and view your GP health record.

Once your login is set up, it will ask you to verify your identity. There are two ways to do this:

- Use photo ID to prove who you are
- Linkage key from the surgery

Simply call the surgery to get your linkage key, ODS code, and Account ID or email us at mydoctor@nhs.net.

Once you are logged in and your identity has been verified, you will have full access to your GP health records, tracking referrals and ordering repeat prescriptions.

If you need further assistance in setting yourself up on the NHS App Kent Library IT Buddies can help you! Email AKL@kent.gov.uk or call 03000 41 64 38.

Alternatively, there are lots of guides on the NHS App website: www.nhs.uk/nhs-app

See your GP health record on the NHS App



We have signed up to the Green Impact for Health Toolkit.

What does this mean for the Practice?

We will be making changes to become a more sustainable and greener practice by focusing our efforts on the following:

- Inhaler recycling
- Active transport solutions
- Energy efficiency
- Social prescribing
- We'll be encouraging staff and patients to think about how they can bring greener practices into their day to day lives.
- We'll be keeping you up to date with our progress on the website and around the practice – and we'd love to hear your stories too.

Why are we doing this?

As health professionals, we have a responsibility to work in the best interests of all our patients. The climate crisis is the biggest public health issue we are facing, and we believe it is essential to make changes in order to work towards a better, healthier future for all.

Health care in the UK contributes 4-5% of the UK's carbon emissions. We need to enhance the health of today's population without compromising the health of future generations, and this means operating within the sustainable boundaries of the planet. Fortunately, most of the solutions for the planet also make our health better - for example eating a mainly plant-based diet, engaging in active travel and exercise in nature, avoiding smoking, reducing pollution etc. These activities all enhance our health and reduce our need for medications, with further benefits to the NHS, your health and the carbon footprint of healthcare.

For more information please visit: www.greenerpractice.co.uk

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 kmicb.ghcfeedback@nhs.net
