



An Apple A Day

Newsletter for patients registered at GP Surgeries in
Hitchin and Whitwell

 @hitchinandwhitwellpcn

HWPCN

**Hitchin & Whitwell
Primary Care Network**

Welcome to your quarterly Primary Care Network newsletter!

Flu season is fast approaching and this year we will once again be offering both flu and covid jabs for our eligible patients. Some people will only be eligible for flu and your practice will let you know if this is the case. It may be possible to have both vaccinations during one appointment – again, your practice will let you know what to expect.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE CAREERS EXPO FRIDAY 4TH OCTOBER

As mentioned in our summer newsletter, in October, we will be hosting a Health and Social Care expo.

The event is aimed at GCSE year, sixth form and college students as well as anyone interested in a change of career.

The event will be held at **Hitchin Town Hall on Friday, 4th October** from 12noon to 4pm – pop in anytime! We will have stands showcasing roles including GP, practice nurse, physiotherapist, receptionist, practice manager, health coach and more community options. A current member of staff from each role will be available to answer questions. We will be joined by HCPA Good Care Recruitment Team who can offer advice on how to begin your career within Health and Social Care!



NEW FRAILTY CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST

HWPCN is delighted to add Beth Lievesley, an experienced prescribing nurse practitioner, to our PCN team. Beth will be visiting our frail, housebound patients to offer reviews, care planning and support. We hope this will help provide more proactive care to keep people healthier at home for longer!

NEW NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

The NHS in England is one of the first countries in the world to offer access to a 24/7 full package of mental health crisis support through one single phone line.

People of all ages, including children, who are in crisis or concerned family and loved ones can now call 111, select the mental health option and speak to a trained mental health professional.

NHS staff can guide callers with next steps such as organising face-to-face community support or facilitating access to alternatives services, such as crisis cafés or safe havens which provide a place for people to stay as an alternative to A&E or a hospital admission.

Previously, local health systems had their own separate phone lines; the new system is designed to provide simpler access.

NHS Talking Therapy Services are also available for people who need help with other mental conditions such as anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder and PTSD and anyone registered with a HWPCN practice can refer themselves by calling 0300 777 0707.

The NHS continues to advise people to call 999 if there is a serious risk to life.



NEW WEIGHT LOSS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Are you looking for support to lose weight? "My Healthy Weight" is Hertfordshire's new, dedicated adult weight management service.

My healthy weight

This will include:

- Your own personal health advisor
- Insightful, psychologically-led behaviour change
- Advice on healthy eating and nutrition
- Support on getting more active
- Regular weight check-ins located in your area
- Digital portal for ongoing support

Eligibility criteria:

- Adults aged 18 years and above
- Live in Hertfordshire and/or be registered with Hertfordshire GP
- Have a BMI ≥ 30 OR BMI ≥ 27.5 for ethnic minorities and those with co-morbidities
- Have not completed a free Tier 2 programme in the past 12-months (Digital Weight Management Programme (DWMP), National Diabetes Prevention Programme (NDPP), Oviva, Slimming World, Shape Up or Type 2 Diabetes Path to Remission Programme)
- Have not previously self-funded sessions in the 3 months prior to referral

You can self-refer on line at www.tbdhealthcare.co.uk or call 01707 242188.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

We continue to offer an excellent, easily accessible, local First Contact Physiotherapy service, delivered in partnership with Pure Physio. We were sad to goodbye to our previous senior physio, Ed Fijalkaukas, but pleased to welcome Simon Chambers, who will be Ed's replacement.

Our First Contact Physio service see patients over the age of 16+ with a musculoskeletal problem, such as back or joint pain. Our team of Physios can assess and diagnose musculoskeletal issues, give expert management advice, suggest imaging and refer on to specialists if necessary. Some Physios can undertake joint injections. The Physio team can see any joint or muscle pain, neurological issues and can also refer on for further imaging if needed.

Please note – they do not undertake hands-on manipulation/treatment/acupuncture. Simon does offer joint injections where clinically appropriate.

Criteria:

- *16+ Years of age
- *Any joint or muscle pains, injuries etc
- *Neurological issues
- *MSK conditions
- *Sports injuries

Excluded:

- *Chronic pain patients
- *Offering of "treatment" like massage/acupuncture
- *Acute systemic illness
- *Age 15 and under
- *Acute mental health crisis



If you meet the above criteria please email hwpcn.admin@nhs.net to receive a self-bookable link.

PCN EDUCATION EVENTS

Our recent education events include "Diabetes Management" (September) and "Menopause and HRT" (July).

All of the events are recorded and can be accessed via the PCN website [Education Events « Hitchin and Whitwell Primary Care Network \(hitchinandwhitwellpcn.nhs.uk\)](https://www.hitchinandwhitwellpcn.nhs.uk)



NEURODIVERSITY SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

We recently introduced our Neurodiversity Social Prescribers (NSPs) to the PCN, but it soon became apparent that they were overlapping a great deal with the new Neurodiversity Support Hub run by ADD-vance. We've therefore taken the decision that it's best to avoid duplication and will no longer be proceeding with the NSP role. Parents or guardians with concerns about neurodiversity in their children can get fantastic support from the hub, with or without a formal diagnosis.

The Neurodiversity Support Hub for Hertfordshire is an advice service offering support, signposting and guidance. Signposting and guidance relate to a whole range of things relating to ADHD and Autism.



The Neurodiversity Support Hub can:

- Explain more about neurodiversity and what it means
- Signpost you to the right support
- Provide strategies you can use to support your child's development or behaviour

They can help you with questions you may have about:

- ADHD and Autism
- Anxiety
- Distressed behaviours
- School
- Anger
- Sleep
- Resources






They cannot help with:

- Recommending private assessors
- Updates to EHCPs
- Fast-tracking assessment or letting you know where you are on the waiting list



Contact the Neurodiversity Support Hub:

 01727 833963  supporthub@add-vance.org  [Hertfordshire.gov](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk)

Answer phone is available out of hours. The phones are answered by a team of parents and carers of neurodivergent children and young people and your child doesn't need a diagnosis for you to use this service.

BMA COLLECTIVE ACTION

You have probably noticed that something is wrong. Look at the difficulty you have in getting an appointment at your local surgery. When you do get through, it may not be an appointment with a GP at all. Have you lost your regular family doctor? You are not alone.

General Practice is collapsing. Every practice across England is struggling to keep its doors open.

We value our patients. We know that most patients value us too, especially when they need us regularly. You know we can deal with most of your health problems, keep you out of hospital, and have your best interests at heart. The problem is with the mismanagement of the NHS.

Your GP is an expert in general medical practice – trained over 10 years to deal with complex problems, spot serious symptoms, and decide when you need specialist help at the hospital.

But did you know that your practice receives just £107.57 per year for each patient, whatever their health needs. That's less than the cost of an annual TV licence. It's just 30p a day for every patient registered with us – less than the cost of an apple.



We believe general practice deserves a bigger slice of NHS funding so we can train and hire more GPs, deliver the services you require and make it easier for you and your loved ones to get appointments to see your GP and practice team. GPs want the same things that you do. We believe nobody should struggle to see their family doctor.

Did you know?



If general practice received a fairer share of NHS funding we could:

- Train and hire more GPs.
- Deliver the services you require.
- Make it easier to get the appointments you need.



This is why you struggle to see your GP

**General Practice is being broken.
We know you deserve better than this.
GPs Are On Your Side.**

THE HERTFORDSHIRE ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM (AAA) SCREENING PROGRAMME.

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm screening (AAA) is being offered free of charge by the NHS to all men during their 65th year. An AAA is a bulging blood vessel in the tummy and if it ruptures, around 8 out of 10 people either die before they reach hospital or don't survive surgery. AAAs are most common in men aged over 65 and all men registered with a General Practitioner will be invited for a scan the year they turn 65.

Screening involves a simple ultrasound scan of your stomach (abdomen) which takes about 10-15 minutes. If the aorta is not enlarged, then the gentleman is discharged from the programme. If a small to medium aneurysm is detected, then he will be monitored either yearly or 3 monthly depending on the size of the aorta. If he is found to have a large aneurysm (>5.5cm) then he will be referred to the vascular team at Watford General Hospital within 2 weeks where he will be advised on further treatment. All surgical procedures to repair the aneurysm are carried out within 8 weeks of referral. The GP will be informed of the screening result by letter.

If you would like to find out more about our programme do not hesitate to contact the programme on 01727 897719 or view the AAA Screening Programme website www.aaa.screening.nhs.uk.

WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK!

HWPCN has provided over 20,000 extra appointments for Hitchin and Whitwell patients in the last year, alongside hosting education events, our Carers' Café, staff training and other projects. Do let us know if you have any comments or feedback!

Patient feedback

Carers' Café
"First class example of the right people sharing expertise with those who need it in an informal meeting place."

"A big thank you to everyone for making these mornings possible. It is so nice to be able to talk to people who understand what you're going through."

Enhanced Access
"Easier for me to access while working"

"I was pleasantly surprised by a late evening appointment being available"

Education Events
"Very valuable and interesting!"

"I liked the format with lots of time for questions, very useful and informative talk"

Smear Saturday
"I wouldn't have had the smear done if it wasn't for the walk-in clinic"