

NEWSLETTER

Patient Participation Group

Mersea Island Medical Practice

December 2024

Welcome to the December 2024 Newsletter. It has been quite an eventful year. Our Mersea Island Medical Practice has closed their list due to the ever-increasing numbers of new patients seeking to register. The Practice have been struggling with lack of space for many years and a short-term solution was to rent some additional space at the Barfield Road premises. This is no longer sufficient and the practice is working with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) on a longer-term plan. The ICB are legally required to utilize existing NHS premises before they can consider recommendation for a new build surgery. The Barfield Road site is expected to become available in the coming months and the short-term and medium-term solution is to re-develop these premises to provide improved accommodation for the practice. In the longer term it is envisaged that this site could be further developed to provide a larger health centre. At the time of writing, the ICB team are developing a plan of action to get this approved for the increase in provision.

Against this background, we have a new government who are seeking to change the way the NHS operates following the report by Lord Darzi on the problems with the current systems. The plan is to refocus the NHS from an illness service, treating poor health, often needing surgical intervention at hospitals, towards a service that also focuses on promoting good health, helping people to stay healthy, offering more wellness support within patients' own community setting. This is an ambitious idea and will take time to implement the changes needed, and against this backdrop we having an aging population, many people with multiple long-term conditions plus an obesity epidemic.

As part of this big re-focus, everyone is being asked to contribute their thoughts on the future of the NHS and what improvements and changes would make it function more efficiently and meet the needs of both patients and staff. Comments were requested via the Change.NHS platform, this has now closed for public comments. However, there is still scope to have your say, some community events should be taking place over the winter months, more details to follow.

NHS App

The recent support event for patients at Mersea Library was fully booked and we plan to hold some more events in the New Year, we are going to try Tuesday afternoons this time. January 28th 4-6pm and February 18th 3-5pm. We will advertise these as widely as possible locally, to enable people to book places for a personal one to one session. We are also considering offering some online support via MS Teams, if this would be of interest, please contact Maureen at MerseaPPG@hotmail.com

There are a range of self-help videos available on the NHS England Digital Platform, follow this link: [NHS App walk through videos - NHS England Digital](#)

At a recent update meeting we were told that 75% (35million) of adults had registered for the NHS App, but not everyone is using it. Pensioners are the most active users, which makes sense really, and shows that age is not the big barrier to using technology that some people had initially thought. By using the NHS App, we are making it easier for those without access to digital technology to get through to the GP practice on the phone and improving the repeat prescribing of medication.

Did you know that if you are helping someone who cannot use the NHS App you can offer to get proxy access for them. They can apply to have you given access on their behalf to order repeat medication, remind them about their appointments and in some instances manage hospital appointments, to view their vaccination record and speak to practice staff about health related issues. Proxy access is currently only available if you are both patients at the same surgery, but the longer-term plan is to enable access for patients registered at different surgeries. The PPG and the Practice are working together to produce a leaflet giving more information on proxy access, this should be available early in the New Year.

Health Information and Resources

Several PPG members have suggested that it might be helpful to have a list of useful information that is available online. We usually share information by sending an email to our PPG members. However, it might be helpful to have the online details of some of these resources, let us know if you find this a useful item to be included in the newsletter on a regular basis.

Patient Information at Mersea GP Surgery

There is a range of health information on the Mersea Island Medical Practice website at www.westmerseasurgery.co.uk

When visiting the Surgery, there is also an ipad in the patient waiting room at the main surgery, which patients can use to look at the surgery website or search for health information while they wait to be seen.

In line with National Guidance, the Practice have recently updated their policy and will no longer be prescribing sedatives for radiology/ dental procedures and fear of flying. Radiologists and Dentists are able to support patients directly and whilst sympathetic to patients with conditions such as 'fear of flying' there are significant health issues and side effects from using benzodiazepines. There is a detailed explanation on the practice website about the clinical reasons for this decision and some links to websites that can help patients with this condition. www.fearlessflyer.easyjet.com; www.flyingwithconfidence.com and www.flyingwithoutfear.co.uk

Winter Wellness Campaign

Information on COVID and RSV vaccinations, eligibility and where to go for vaccinations. This page also has links to the Winter Wellness Guide which can be downloaded to find a range of information on Accessing Health Resources and Support over the winter months. <https://sneevaccine.org.uk>

Local Health Information and Consultations

The Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board have a website <https://letstalksnee.co.uk> If you are not already signed up to this site I would highly recommend doing so. It provides a way for people in Suffolk and North East Essex to influence the way their health services are planned, commissioned and delivered. Mersea PPG are represented on the People and Communities Insight and Oversight Group. This is a newly developed initiative to ensure the voices of the community are heard and listened to in developing NHS services in the area.

Unused Medicines Campaign to reduce wastage

The Integrated Care Board is taking part in this national campaign to reduce medicine wastage. It is estimate that across the UK unused medicines cost the NHS around £300 million every year, with an estimated £110 million returned to pharmacies and another £90 million unused medications stored in peoples' homes. The key messages for patients are to check what medicines you have at home before ordering more, don't store a supply of more than a one month of medicines. Any medicines returned to the pharmacy cannot be reissued, even if unopened. There is a short video on Youtube that provides more detail. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AY0EK3-ucq4>

Colte Primary Care Network (PCN)

Mersea Medical Practice are part of the Colte Primary Care Network (PCN), they provide a range of information on their Facebook page about health care and events for patients. Here is a link to their webside [The Colte Partnership | Primary Care Provider](#) at the top of this page there is a link to their Facebook page where they promote events and information for patients, for example details about Advanced Access Clinics. The Health and Wellbeing Bus will also be visiting Mersea on 19th February and will be providing information, advice and support on a range of healthcare conditions and lifestyle issues.

Free Hearing Tests at Mersea Town Council Offices

This information is available on the Mersea Town Council website:

<https://westmerseatowncouncil.gov.uk/Whats-On>

Free hearing checks, information on hearing loss and tinnitus, details of support and services in the area - no appointment required.

The next one takes place on Friday 7th February and then every 1st Friday of the month thereafter at the Council Office, 10 Melrose Road, West Mersea CO5 8JD. 10am to 11.30am

Replacement tubes, batteries, hearing screening, otoscopy, signposting and advice also available every 1st Friday of the Month (3rd January, 7th February, 7th March etc,) from 12.30pm to 2.30pm at the Council Offices as above.

For more information, please contact Angie Baker on 07442 538939

Email: angela.baker@RNID.org.uk

Healthwatch Essex Campaign “Carer’s Voices”

This new campaign has been launched to “hear” the voices of people who care for someone or have done so over the last five years. It can be caring for a member of your own family, caring for a friend or neighbour, perhaps doing shopping for someone who cannot get out, or more personal care. There will be many ways to take part, including face to face individual discussions, or taking part in an online survey. The latest online survey is for Young Carers. Healthwatch are working with Essex County Council and other agencies to ensure carers voices are heard and ensure that services and support are developed in line with patient and carers needs. The PPG have arranged for Healthwatch Essex to join one of our meetings later in 2025 to hear more about their current work and progress on the Carer’s Voices Campaign.

<https://healthwatchessex.org.uk/carers-voices>

Practice Opening Times over the Christmas break

The practice will be closed for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day, all other times open as usual. The details are posted on the Practice Door, with advice to ring 111 if you need urgent help.

Date of next PPG Meeting

This will be online on Teams on 14th January 2025. Our speaker will be Belinda White from 111 – invitations to members will be sent prior to the meeting, there is no need to download Teams software to take part, just click on the invitation and it will log you in, then wait for someone to let you into the meeting.