



NEWSLETTER

August 2025

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Welcome to our August Newsletter

Welcome to our August edition of the Newsletter from the PPG and the Mersea Island Medical Practice. The summer is usually a quiet time, but this year there has been lots happening: the Ten Year Health Plan, restructuring of Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), changes to the NHS App to name just a few.

Practice News

The PPG received a query from a patient regarding some recent changes to the process for requesting repeat prescriptions at the practice. During COVID patients were able to request repeat prescriptions over the telephone, unfortunately, due to safety concerns, the practice has taken the decision to stop all telephone requests for repeat prescriptions.

The easiest ways to order repeat prescriptions are:

- using your NHS account www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/account/ (through the NHS website or in the NHS App)
- using the GP online system: NHS Patient Access www.patientaccess.com/

These accounts show you all your repeat medicine and dosage and you can choose the ones you need.

You can also:

- log in to Anima www.patients.animahealth.com/blue/ and complete a *Repeat Prescription* request via the practice website
- bring your paper slip to the surgery (to hand into reception or post in the box outside when the surgery is closed)
- post your request to the surgery.

Emergency Dental Service

The Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board have commissioned an additional 15,500 dental appointments for emergency dental care. These appointments are accessed by dialling 111. Twenty-five dental practices are currently offering this service in addition to their normal services for registered patients. It is hoped over time that more dental practices will take part to meet demands for patients who have not been able to register with a dentist. For patients who need emergency care, but are already registered, it is suggested they contact their own dental surgery first.

Summer Wellness Campaign

Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board has produced guidance on how to stay well in the summer weather, called 'Stay Well this Summer'. It can be accessed online at:

www.sneewellbeing.org.uk/summer

Ten Year Plan for the NHS

A ten year plan, the fourth long-term plan since 2000, has been launched by NHS England. The new plan focuses on how best to take the NHS forward to provide a world class service fit for this generation and those that follow. The desire to continue to have a health service free at the point of use and available to everyone in the UK has driven the new plan. At its heart, there are three relatively simple themes.

- Providing more care in the Community rather than in a hospital setting;
- Making better use of technology;
- A focus on preventing sickness in the first place, rather than just treating it.

The full report runs to more than 170 pages and comes as much from a political as a practical point of view, because there is much to be done before any definitive changes can be analysed. However, you can read more about the plans in a digestible format in the Executive Summary: www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future/fit-for-the-future-10-year-health-plan-for-england-executive-summary

Healthwatch Essex

Following their excellent presentation at our last PPG meeting, Healthwatch Essex are currently working with Essex County Council on an exercise to consult with carers. The exercise is called 'Carers Voices' and the aim is to hear about experiences, concerns and service issues that carers want addressed, what is working well and what can be improved.

In addition to listening to all carers, they have a specific survey for young carers. All feedback is anonymous. If you or anyone you know would like to take part contact Healthwatch by phone on **0300 500 1895** or email at carersvoices@healthwatchessex.co.uk or via their website healthwatchessex.org.uk/carers-voices

Mersea Surgery Development

The Practice and the Integrated Care Board continue to discuss work needed to make the Barfield Road premises fit for purpose, including ensuring confidentiality during consultations.

The Kingsland Road premises has been granted planning permission from Colchester City Council. The Surgery has completed the 'expression of interest forms' these are now with the ICB for consideration.

This will include deciding what needs to be done to meet the NHS guidance on GP surgery development.

Changes to Integrated Care Boards

Our GP practice is currently part of the Suffolk and Northeast Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB). All ICBs have been required to find around 60% cost savings by the end of the current financial year, and this will partly be achieved by reconfiguring ICBs across the country. This reconfiguration will be known as a clustering arrangement.

The latest information is that Suffolk and North East Essex ICB will be clustered with Norfolk and Waveney ICB. We can expect more detail about structures and what can we expect the work of the new ICBs to consist of.

Clearly they will continue to control Service Commissioning and we can also expect continued joint working with other local stakeholders. PPGs in our area have received considerable support from SNEE but as yet we don't know if that will continue and if it does what form that may take.

Our PPG will continue to work with other PPGs through the PPG Collaborative locally and nationally with PPGukNews, where we are developing a national collaboration platform for PPGs.

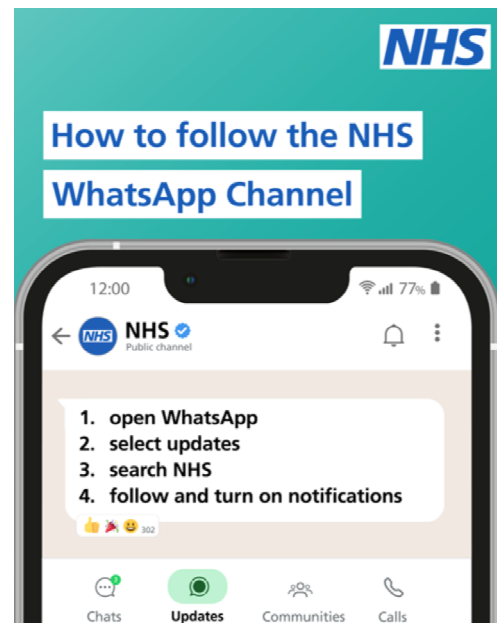
We will keep you up to date with the changes as they unfold.

NHS WhatsApp channel

The NHS England social media team has launched a new official NHS WhatsApp Channel, designed to get trusted health information straight to the public's phones.

The channel will be sharing short, visual updates on public health campaigns, key NHS announcements and myth-busting and fact-checking content.

The channel can be found either on a phone or by searching 'NHS' in the WhatsApp 'Updates' tab.



NHS App promotion

Suffolk and North East Essex ICB is currently looking for local people to take part in a series of videos talking about the NHS App. The idea is to encourage wider use of the App.

If you are interested in taking part please contact:

sarah.colley@snee.nhs.uk

Type 2 Diabetes Support Group

Following the recent afternoon event on Type 2 Diabetes hosted by the PPG and the Practice and delivered by North East Essex Diabetes Service, interest was expressed in a Type 2 Diabetes Support Group being formed on Mersea.

This has now been organised and will take place at 2.30pm on the last Wednesday of the month starting in August and will be at the Town Council Offices in Melrose Road.

Contact **davirobinson57@gmail.com** if you are interested in attending future events.

The NHS App

The NHS App is being promoted as the digital front door to the NHS. For the majority of the population, it is intended that the NHS App will become 'the doctor in your pocket'. It has been stressed that for those unable or unwilling to use the technology, this should not become a barrier to access. Traditional means of communication will continue to be available.

Latest figures for number of Mersea patients who are registered to use the NHS App indicate we have over 65% of patients over 13 years of age registered.

Some recent updates and future plans include:

- **Graphs** with more historical test results that enable users to see trends over time;
- **Problems** have been fixed that prevented some users seeing their medical records;
- **Prescriptions** – see the last issue date on prescription medication and see when prescriptions have been approved by the GP. Work continues with pharmacy software providers to enable patients to see when their medication is ready for collection from the pharmacy.
- **Messaging** – users can now flag messages and remove old messages and work is under way to enable more health care providers to send messages to patients via the NHS App
- **Navigation** – work continues to improve how users can find what they need, improving login experience and seeking to personalise the app as much as possible. Looking at ways to improve services for people who are managing the healthcare of others, e.g. carers.
- **Appointments** – users can now add GP appointments to the digital calendar. Work continues to allow patients to request follow up appointments via the App and improvements to waiting list data on the App.

Future plans include improvements that will extend booking and managing hospital appointments for people with proxy access.

DO YOU NEED HELP?: The PPG can provide support to patients who need assistance to download or the use the NHS App – Contact the PPG by email at MerseaPPG@hotmail.com

The PPG is open to patients (and their carers) who are registered with the Mersea Island Medical Practice. There is more information on the Practice Website at www.westmerseasurgery.co.uk or you can contact Maureen at [Mersea PPG@hotmail.com](mailto:MerseaPPG@hotmail.com) to find out more or request a membership form.

Do you need help registering with a GP?

Contact the Integrated Care Board on 01473 770000 or the PALS service on freephone 0800 389 6819

Community Open Day — 11th October 2025

10 a.m. — 2.00 p.m.
MICA Centre

This is an opportunity for people to find out about the various community organisations on Mersea Island.

We plan to have a stall again this year to raise awareness of the PPG. Please do pop along and say hello and tell all your friends.

The Mersea Scouts will again be in charge of refreshments, and the home made cakes are to be highly recommended!.



Next PPG Meeting

Tuesday 9th September 2025 :
5.30pm at the Community Support Hall. Melrose Road