

Newsletter for Patients

Autumn 2018

Practice News

Staff Notes

After 38 years in the NHS **Dr Nicci Soffe** retired from general practice at the end of May this year and we wish her a very happy, healthy and well-earned retirement. Nicci would like to say thank you to her loyal patients and the team at Tower House Surgery for making her eight years here so enjoyable.

At the end of May **Dr Emily Eracleous** also left the Tower House team to move to Cyprus with her family and we wish her well on this adventure. Emily was sad to be leaving the practice and all her patients but hoped to stay in touch with us.

We welcomed **Dr Emma Williams** to the Tower House team in May on a permanent basis, working all day on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. Emma had recently finished covering maternity leave for Dr Midgley at our Riverside Surgery and we are delighted we have been able to offer her a permanent position in the practice.

We also welcomed **Dr Kirsty Bonney, Dr Josie Phillips** and **Dr Kyle Stewart** who joined the practice in August as part of their GP training. Josie and Kyle are based at Riverside Surgery and Kirsty at Tower House.

Dr Martin Rolph joined the team in September on a permanent basis as a salaried doctor and works all day on a Wednesday and a Thursday and is based at Tower House Surgery.

Christmas and New Year Opening Hours

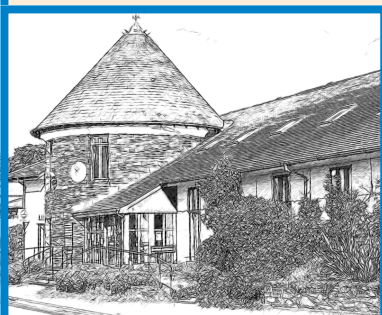
Friday, 21st December	8.30 – 1.00pm & 2.00 – 6.00pm
Monday, 24th December	8.30 – 1.00pm & 2.00 – 6.00pm
Tuesday, 25th December	CLOSED
Wednesday, 26th December	CLOSED
Thursday, 27th December	8.30 – 1.00pm & 2.00 – 6.00pm
Friday, 28th December	8.30 – 1.00pm & 2.00 – 6.00pm
Monday, 31st December	8.30 – 1.00pm & 2.00 – 6.00pm
Tuesday, 1st January	CLOSED
Wednesday, 2nd January	8.30 – 1.00pm & 2.00 – 6.00pm

All of our patient leaflets can be downloaded

All the leaflets we've produced for our practice are not only available for collection from Reception but they can now be downloaded from our website. All you have to do is go to the following link and download one or more of them:

<https://www.towerhousesurgery.co.uk/pages/Leaflets>

See also pages 3, 6 and 8 of this Newsletter where you can see pictures of the leaflets.



**Riverside Surgery
Bovey Tracey**
**Tower House Surgery
Chudleigh**



Patients who don't turn up for their appointments

More than 95% of our patients let us know if they cannot make their appointment. However, each month there are occasions when patients fail to turn up. Every failed appointment means that the number of appointments available for patients is reduced by each patient who does not attend.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you cannot attend your appointment. It only takes a phone call.

Tell us you are unable to attend and we can then offer the appointment to another patient.

Alternatively, if you sign up to SystmOnline access you can manage your appointments from your phone, computer or tablet device. We have a new leaflet *Online Access for Our Patients*. See the foot of this page and also page 8 for details. Thank you for your co-operation.

Health Information Videos

Health information for patients is now available as short videos on many different topics including blood pressure, children's allergies, COPD, dementia, diabetes, inhaler technique, mental health, self care, stroke care, weaning.

These short videos are designed to be easy to understand, with very little text, and you can watch them whenever or wherever you need to. If you wish, you can save them to your device too.

You'll find all of these short videos at:

<http://www.hcvideos.co.uk/>

Alternatively, go to our practice home page:

<https://www.towerhousesurgery.co.uk>

Click on this link
on the home page:



[Health and Care
Videos](#)

Sharing Your Medical Record

Over 3,000 of our patients have now signed up to share their medical record.

Sharing your information can improve both the quality and the safety of care you receive, and in some cases can be vital in making life-saving decisions about your treatment.

With your consent we can share key information from your GP medical notes with out-of-hours GP services, hospital A&E units, community hospitals,

and community nurses, all of whom may, at various times in your life, be looking after you.

For further information, or to sign up, collect from Reception a copy of our leaflet *Sharing Your NHS Patient Data* (have a look at page 8), follow the link below or contact our Reception team.

<http://www.towerhousesurgery.co.uk/pages/Patient-Confidentiality-Shared-Records>

More than 95% of our patients let us know if they can't attend for their appointments—and we can then give the appointments to other patients.

You can cancel your appointment easily by phoning us on one of the numbers shown below or by going to our website <http://www.towerhousesurgery.co.uk> and

Riverside: 01626 832666

clicking on the button **Cancel an Appointment** or, if you've registered to use SystmOnline you can cancel your appointment after logging on as usual.

Tower House: 01626 852379

Get Access to Our On-line Service

Our on-line service **SystmOnline** allows you to order repeat medications, book GP appointments, keep your contact details up to date, and access your Summary Patient Record—which includes allergies & drug sensitivities. Access to coded medical information can also be applied for using SystmOnline. Due to the complexities of nurse appointments, these are not available to book on-line at present.

In order to register for this service, call into the surgery with some form of photographic identification and a member of our Reception Team will then

issue you with a printed copy of your unique login details.

If you would like to register on behalf of another person, written consent and their photo ID will be required along with a completed application form. For those under 13, any proof of identification such as a birth certificate will be accepted.

For full details of how to register for on-line access, pick up our new leaflet *Online Access for our Patients* from Reception (shown on page 8) or go to: <http://www.towerhousesurgery.co.uk/pages/Online-Access>

Our Patient Participation Group (PPG)

- ❖ What exactly is the PPG?
- ❖ What is it for and what does it do?
- ❖ How can I become involved?

This leaflet has been prepared by the Practice's Patient Participation Group



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Your appointment: what to do if you're not well.

Before you book a GP appointment with the Practice, please see if it might be better for you to go straight to one of the other local services listed on the next page of this leaflet. If that's not the case, please go ahead and book your GP appointment.

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Medical Services Available in Our Area

Before you book a GP appointment with the Practice, please see if it might be better for you to go straight to one of the other local services listed in this leaflet. If that's not the case, please go ahead and book your GP appointment.

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Three new leaflets

The three leaflets shown here have been prepared by our Patient Participation Group (PPG) and are available from Reception.

The leaflet ***Our Patient Participation Group*** tells you all about the PPG and how you can join if you are interested in what it does.

The leaflet ***Your appointment: what to do if you're not well*** has a lot of useful detail about how to get the best out of your GP appointment. There are also a few hints on using some of the local medical services.

The leaflet ***Medical Services Available in Our Area*** has comprehensive information on how to refer yourself to suitable local medical services without having to see a GP. This self-referral can save you (and our GPs) a lot of time by allowing you to contact direct the service which is most suited to your needs at the time.

MRI scans if you have a cardiac pacemaker or defibrillator

MRI scans (magnetic resonance imaging) are frequently carried out and are a wonderful method of obtaining detailed pictures of what is going on within a patient so that a reliable diagnosis can be obtained.

The magnets used in MRI scanning are very powerful and that is why when you attend for a scan you will be asked to remove items such as metal belt buckles, underwired bras and all other metallic items. The MRI team will also wish to know whether you have had any metal objects implanted within your body, such as clips used for aneurysms and pins and screws used to repair broken bones.

You will also be asked if you have an implanted cardiac pacemaker or defibrillator. These devices contain delicate electronic circuitry and you might think that they would be damaged if subject to an MRI scan. There have been a few reports lately in the press and elsewhere that, often, people who have

an implanted cardiac pacemaker or defibrillator have been told when they arrive at the scanner that it is not safe to perform the scan. Such refusals are usually not necessary as all recently produced cardiac implants are safe to be scanned. There are some older devices which could be affected by the magnetic field of the MRI scanners but many older devices *are* safe to be scanned.

If you have a cardiac implant of any sort and are refused an MRI scan because it is 'not safe' to proceed, you should check things with the hospital and department which were responsible for implanting your device. They will know exactly what type of device you have and will be able to tell you whether it will be safe for you to have an MRI scan, and also whether any special precautions should be taken.

You should ask for the implant team to liaise with the MRI team.

Seasonal Influenza Vaccinations

If you're eligible for flu vaccination and haven't had yours, please telephone Reception to find out when you can attend

Public Health England and all our doctors recommend that you attend for an influenza vaccination if you are in one or more of the following groups:

- ❖ People aged from 6 months to under 65 years of age with a serious medical condition such as:
 - Chronic (long-term) respiratory disease, such as severe asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or bronchitis
 - Chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
 - Chronic kidney disease at stage three, four and five
 - Chronic liver disease
 - Chronic neurological disease, such as Parkinson's disease or motor neurone disease or learning disability
 - Diabetes
 - Splenic dysfunction
 - Weakened immune system due to disease (such as HIV/AIDS) or treatment (such as cancer treatment)
- ❖ Pregnant women (including those women who become pregnant during the flu season)
- ❖ People in long-stay residential care homes
- ❖ People aged 65 years or over (including those becoming 65 years by 31st March 2019)

- ❖ People in receipt of a carer's allowance, or those who are a main carer of an older or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill. Consideration is also given to the vaccination of household contacts of immunocompromised individuals, specifically individuals who expect to share living accommodation on most days over the winter.
- ❖ Morbidly obese with a BMI of 40 and above
- ❖ Children aged two and three years on 31st August 2018 (we will be holding separate clinics for our children and will contact parents to make the appointment.)

The following children are also advised to have the vaccination but this will be arranged via their school rather than through the practice.

- ❖ Children in reception class and school years 1, 2, 3 and 4

Vaccination appointments are still available for you to book.

You Can Use SystmOnline for Booking Vaccination Appointments

If you haven't signed up yet for on-line access, please contact our reception staff, in person or by telephone (see pages 2 and 8 for further details).

If you would like to have a copy of this Newsletter in a different format to make it easier to read, please contact the Practice.

Extension of NHS Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme

Flu is a highly infectious disease which in some cases can lead to serious complications, particularly in people who have long-term health conditions. It is therefore important that all steps are taken to protect health and social care staff, and the people they care for, from the risks of flu.

NHS England has therefore announced an extension to the seasonal influenza vaccination programme to include:

Health and social care staff, employed by a registered residential care home or nursing home or

registered domiciliary care provider, who are directly involved in the care of vulnerable patients or clients who are at increased risk from exposure to influenza, (meaning those patients/clients in a clinical risk group or aged 65 years and over).

Eligible social care workers will need to bring to the practice appropriate confirmation of their eligibility (for example, an ID badge, a letter from their employer, a recent pay slip).

For more information, please contact reception at either surgery.

Eligibility for Shingles Vaccinations

From 1st April 2017, eligibility for shingles vaccination was changed to:

- ❖ the date a patient turns 70 years
- ❖ the date a patient turns 78 years (for the catch-up cohort)

For example:

- ❖ anyone in their 70s who was born after 1st September 1942 and has not yet had the vaccine

- ❖ anyone aged 79 years old who has missed out on the vaccine

Patients remain eligible for the shingles vaccine up until their 80th birthday—people aged 80 years and over are not eligible for the shingles vaccination because the vaccine becomes less effective as people get older.

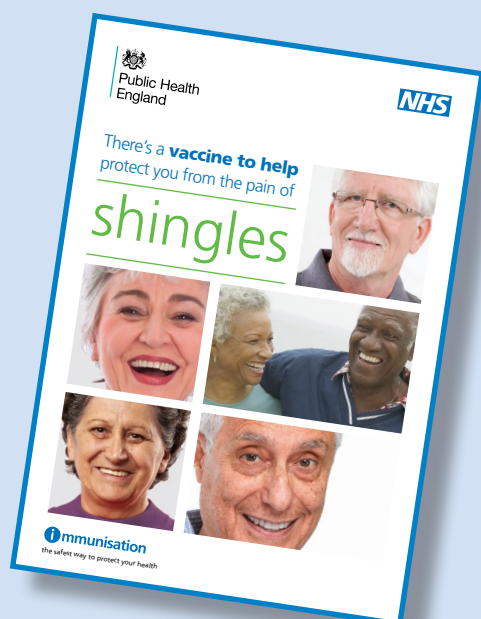
The vaccine is also available for those previously eligible but who missed immunisation.

Information about Shingles and the Shingles Vaccination

There's a very good 8-page leaflet you can download to find information on what shingles is and how effective the shingles vaccination is in protecting you.

The link for the leaflet is:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623656/Shingles_2017_A5_leaflet.pdf



Men's Problems

There's now much more awareness of how men tend to ignore symptoms 'down there', unlike women who grow up being much more ready to ask for advice and request help when they're worried.

As men grow older, they can notice symptoms such as weak or intermittent flow, difficulty starting or stopping, or urgency. Although many men ignore such symptoms, there's realisation now that it's ok to worry and it's ok to ask for GP advice—there's no need at all for embarrassment.

The earlier you get advice and diagnosis, the better the outcome is likely to be. Don't wait and then later regret that you waited too long.

If you have any concerns, have a look at the website <https://prostatecanceruk.org>. There's a wealth of information on that website and there are leaflets to download including:

<https://prostatecanceruk.org/prostate-information/further-help/other-prostate-problems>

https://prostatecanceruk.org/media/2491672/know_your_prostate-ifm.pdf

If you think you might have a problem with your prostate, talk to your GP.

You can also speak in complete confidence to Specialist Nurses at Prostate Cancer UK, on 0800 074 8383, or chat to them online.



We're here for you, for longer

New service for our patients—
evening and weekend appointments

Your NHS, here for you.



EveWkendAppts_V04-20181003



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This new leaflet, available from Reception, shows you how to make use of the new service for evening and weekend appointments to see a GP, practice nurse or health care assistant. The new service started

in early October. You can arrange for an evening or weekend appointment by booking ahead by phoning Riverside or Tower House. The appointments will be held at one of several GP practices in our area.

Guide to Social Care Support

NHS Digital has published a guide for people who may need social care, their families and carers.

The guide has been written by experts and extensively tested with users, including members of the public, local authorities, care providers and the third sector. It provides clear information about social

care to help people understand their options and where to go if they need help.

<https://digital.nhs.uk/news-and-events/latest-news/new-care-and-support-guide-released-on-the-nhs-website>

NHS Choices has been rebranded

As part of changes to the UK's largest health website, the NHS Choices name and logo will disappear but the web address will remain the same as before: www.nhs.uk.

The website now includes more accessible content, a better experience when using mobile devices, new content for helping people to manage long-term conditions, and improved page design.

Entering a postcode will still enable you to access any GP practice, hospital or other NHS facility.

Patient insight: improving integrated care

An [article](#) from the King's Fund argues that listening to what patients want across the entire pathway of care is essential to the design of integrated care systems. The King's Fund is a well-established independent charity working to improve health and care in England.

Recommendation for use of plain English

In new guidance aimed at getting outpatient clinics to write letters in plain English, clinicians are being encouraged by the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges to write direct to patients and send a copy of the letter to the patient's general practitioner.

The guidance says that writing letters direct to patients is in keeping with good medical practice, giving patients the information they want or need to know in a way they can understand. The NHS Constitution states that patients "... have the right to be given information about the test and treatment options available to them, what they involve and their risks and benefits, and also have the right of access to their own health records and to have any factual inaccuracies corrected."

The benefits of writing direct to the patient rather than sending them a copy of a letter written to their GP have long been recognised.

Letters sent direct to patients are written in language that the patient can understand and this is appreciated by most GPs as they no longer have to spend valuable consultation time interpreting the contents for the patient.

Prevention is at the heart of the NHS

According to the chief executive of Public Health England, if the [NHS long-term plan](#) is to succeed, it must prioritise prevention of three of the biggest killers, smoking, cardiovascular disease (CVD) and obesity can be prevented.

Bowel screening to start at 50

Currently, in England, men and women, aged 60 to 74, are invited for bowel screening and are sent a home test kit every two years to provide stool samples. Ministers have agreed to recommendations from the national screening committee that bowel cancer screening should in future start at the earlier age of 50.

The [evidence](#) shows that screening people at a younger age would enable more bowel cancers to be picked up at an earlier stage, where treatment is likely to be more effective and improve the chances of survival.

NHS111: urgent help by phone

According to latest NHS data, in July this year, 20,000 people every day—over half of all calls to the NHS 111 phone service—are now getting urgent health advice from a doctor, nurse, paramedic or other clinical professional over the phone, the highest proportion since the service was introduced.

Calls are handled by fully trained staff who can advise, direct callers to local services or arrange appointments for further assessment.

[More details here.](#)

Better self-management could cut demand for urgent care

A briefing from the Health Foundation explores the link between how well people feel able to manage their long-term conditions—such as asthma, diabetes and depression—and their use of health care services. [The findings](#) show that avoidable health care use would fall and people's quality of life would improve if they were better supported to manage their long-term condition. The Health Foundation is an independent charity committed to bringing about better health and health care for people in the UK

You can order your repeat medication up to two weeks in advance. Why not sign up to do it on-line? Our new leaflet is shown on page 8. Remember to make sure during December that you will have enough medication to last you over Christmas and New Year

Sharing your NHS Patient Data

Help us to offer you coordinated and efficient treatment.

Years ago, GP surgeries kept patients' records on paper in cardboard files stored in the surgery office. These paper records were unwieldy, often very hard to read and very difficult to put in date order. Not only that, they took up a great deal of space. Today, of course, all patient records are stored on computers and are readily accessible, without taking up any physical space.

Confidentiality

Patients' records have always been kept absolutely confidential and that still applies today: Riverside and Tower House Practice will keep your patient records safe and confidential. However, now that all of our patient records are stored in computer files, you can give the Practice your consent to allow your records to be viewed by other NHS professionals, such as hospital consultants, staff in A&E departments, district nurses and so on.

It's your decision

You are free to decide not to share your records: it's up to you. However, you should be aware that opting out could in some circumstances hinder your care. To take a simple example, suppose you were admitted as an emergency case to your local A&E department. If the A&E staff could immediately look at your GP records they would probably be able to treat you more appropriately and quicker than if they couldn't look at your records. This could save valuable time in determining the best care for you.

Data Sharing, 004-2018015



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Sharing your NHS data

Now that the NHS stores patient data in computer files instead of in piles and piles of paper, it is now possible for NHS hospitals, clinics and GPs to view and add to patients' notes and record all aspects of their treatment. The records will include the results of consultations, blood tests, MRI scans, CT scans, X-rays and all manner of other information which will be very useful to a clinician when you're attending for treatment.

This leaflet explains how it all works and tells you how to opt in to sharing your data. It also explains how to opt out, if that's what you want to do. It's your choice, after all.

Collect your copy of the leaflet from Reception.

There's a form on the last page of the leaflet so that you can let the Practice know your choices about the sharing of your medical data.

Using our online services

Using the internet to access services at Riverside or Tower house can have great benefits for our patients. This new leaflet explains how the system works and tells you what you might gain from using online access. There are also a few comments about how online access might not be right for everyone.

Ask at Reception for your copy of this leaflet.

Amazing statistics

It's great that our patients are embracing the new facilities we are offering in this modern online world.

Nearly 74% of our patients have given us their mobile telephone numbers so that we can contact them more easily, especially to send them a text reminder about an upcoming appointment.

Nearly 30% of our patients have signed up to our online access services for booking appointments, ordering repeat medication, and so on. If you'd like to sign up, ask for a copy of the "Online Access" leaflet pictured on this page.

OnLine Access for our Patients

How to interact with our Practice via the internet

- ❖ If you wish to, you can now use the internet
- ❖ to book appointments with a GP
- ❖ to request repeat prescriptions for any medications you take regularly
- ❖ to look at your medical record

Even when you have online access, you will still be able to telephone the surgery, or call in, for any of these services: it's your choice.

Being able to see your record online might help you to manage your medical conditions. It would also mean that you could even access your record from anywhere in the world should you require medical treatment while away from home.

If you decide not to take up online access, or wish to withdraw later on, this is your choice and practice staff will continue to treat you in the same way as before. Your decision will not affect the quality of your care.

Note also that the practice reserves the right to cease to provide online access for anyone who doesn't use the facility responsibly. This leaflet tells you how to set up your online access and also outlines why it will be useful to you. Also covered are some possible disadvantages.

OnlineAccess, 003-2018016



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