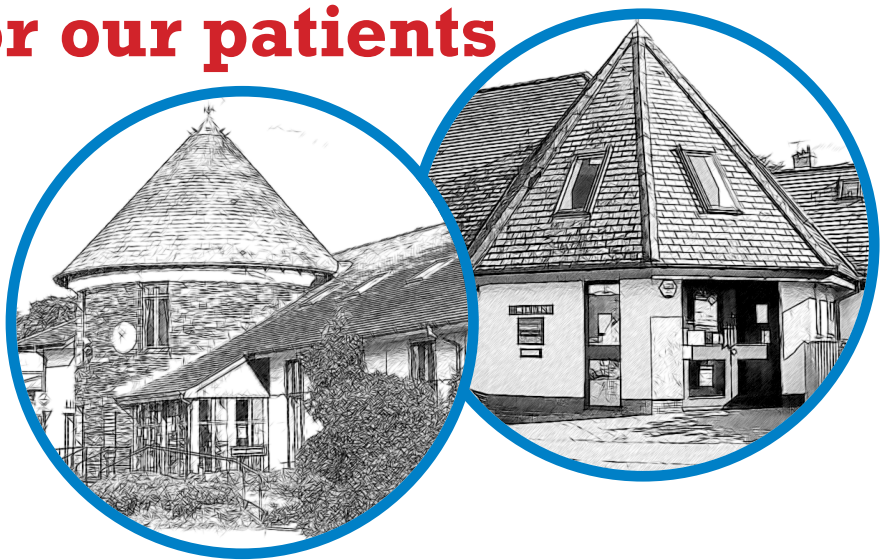


# Newsletter for our patients

August 2022

**Riverside Surgery**  
**Bovey Tracey**  
**01626 832666**

**Tower House Surgery**  
**Chudleigh**  
**01626 852379**



## Practice Staff News

We have successfully appointed two new Practice Nurses: Emma, who started with us in late June, and Laura who will be joining us, after her maternity leave, in early October.

We have also recruited a new Health Care Assistant, Haley, who will be joining us in early August. She comes from another GP practice and brings a wealth of primary care experience.

After a long recruitment period, we're really pleased to announce that Dr Thea Collins will be joining us as a salaried GP from late September. She will be joining us for six sessions and will mostly work from Riverside.

We will also have three new recruits to our admin team during August and September: Tracy, Hayley and Carol. They will bring plenty of admin experience derived from working in dentistry, primary care, optical and personal care.

Sadly, however, we have lost a few members from our admin team. We said goodbye to Fran, one of our Reception Team Leads, in May. She left us for the dental sector. We also said goodbye to Suzette and Miriam who left us in late June.

We are currently recruiting further additions to our reception and admin team, and we will update everyone further when we have more information.

## Masks

There has been an update to the guidance on infection prevention and control (IPC) on mask wearing in healthcare settings. It is now no longer mandatory for staff or patients to wear a mask in non-clinical areas (e.g., communal areas, waiting rooms, reception etc). It is now down to personal preference, so if you wish to continue mask wearing then please do so. We do ask though that patients are respectful of the personal choices of staff and other patients.

However, clinicians and patients are still required to wear masks during face-to-face consultations unless a person is exempt for medical reasons.

## Befrienders: an update

Riverside Surgery Befrienders is a local charity where a group of volunteers provide transport facilities for those patients who find it really difficult to attend health care appointments.

Users of the service are expected to make a donation to help keep the service going, the donations being collected by the

driver, handed to the charity's treasurer, and the driver then makes a mileage claim.

There is a suggested list of donations, the amount depending on the length of the journey to and from an appointment.

The Befrienders' Committee met recently, and discussed the question of appointments with dentists or opticians.

The Committee says that, unfortunately, they do not have enough drivers to be able to take on this commitment at the moment. They know that patients will be disappointed, but the priority must be provision of transport to surgery and hospital appointments. Even that will be a struggle over the next few months as many volunteer drivers are taking holidays at this time.

If you have access to alternative means of transport, perhaps provided by a relative or friend, please do use them.

The situation will be reviewed in the late Autumn.

<https://boveytracey.gov.uk/Riverside-Surgery-Befrienders/Bovey-Tracey/>



**RIVERSIDE SURGERY**  
**Befrienders**  
**BOVEY TRACEY**

## 'Help Us, Help You' (HUHY) campaign

Public Health England (PHE) and NHS England and Improvement have launched a 'Help Us, Help You' Cancer Campaign taking a radically different approach to detecting cancer earlier for patients, when it is easier to treat. The campaign aims to encourage anyone who notices something in their body that doesn't feel right, and is worried it could be cancer, to contact their GP straight away.

'Help Us, Help You' focuses on tackling the general fear of cancer rather than specific symptoms. The plea comes alongside worrying new findings showing that four in ten people are too concerned about being a 'burden' on the NHS to seek help from their GP.

The 'Help Us, Help You' Maternity Campaign reminds pregnant women about the importance of attending check-ups, contacting their midwife or maternity team when something doesn't feel right.

## NHS App

There's a new NHS App you can use wherever you are, at any time of the day or night. It will give you access to a range of NHS services.

### What does the app do?

The NHS App puts information about your health and treatments at your fingertips. This means, for example, that you can see it and use it when speaking to a health and care professional.

The app is secure and easy to use and has been designed and operated by NHS England to give you secure access to a wide range of NHS services.

Your identity will be fully checked when you register.

## Covid Boosters

Please remember that GP practices are no longer involved

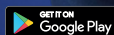
"I use the NHS App to book my GP surgery appointments and order repeat prescriptions to help manage my condition."



Lauren, midwife

Your NHS, your way  
Download the NHS App 📱

NHS  
App



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in the Covid vaccination programme, **so please don't phone us with vaccination queries.**

Full information is available via **119** or on-line at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/how-to-get-a-coronavirus-vaccine/>

### Spring boosters

Eligible patients are:

- ❖ anyone aged 75 years and over, residents of care homes for older adults and those aged 12 and over who are immunosuppressed.
- ❖ anyone who has completed a primary course (two or three

doses, as applicable) and who had their last dose more than 91 days ago.

If you are newly immunosuppressed, you should continue to be offered vaccination through the summer period.

If you received a booster vaccination on or after 21st March, it is recommended that you don't have an additional dose until the autumn.

The Spring Booster vaccination programme will end on 31st August.

### Wait for an autumn booster?

Anyone over 75 years old on or after 1 July 2022 or who has had a spring booster on or after 21st March 2022 is now advised

# Introducing the NHS App

You can use the NHS App **wherever you are, at any time of the day or night**. You can use it to access a range of NHS services.

The NHS App will not replace existing services. You can still contact your GP surgery in the usual ways if you prefer. For example, by visiting or telephoning your practice.

## Use the app to:



### book and cancel appointments

book, view and cancel appointments at your GP surgery



### view your record

access your GP medical record securely



### order repeat prescriptions

see your available medicines and place an order



### check your symptoms

find trusted NHS information on hundreds of conditions and treatments and get instant advice



### register your organ donation decision

choose to donate some or all of your organs and check your registered decision



### find out how the NHS uses your data

choose if data from your health records can be shared for research and planning

the winter, when you need it most. Note that this advice might not apply to anyone with a weakened immune system.

If you do decide to go for your delayed spring booster, please take a list of your current medications with you, and please be patient with the vaccination staff: they're doing their best in a complex situation.

## Carer's Assessment

Under the Care Act 2014, adults who are caring for adults are entitled to a Carer's Assessment. This looks at a carer's individual needs and places a duty on the local authority to provide appropriate support if required.

The rights of parents caring for a child aged under 18 are covered by the Children and Families Act 2014, which places a duty on councils to provide a Carer's Assessment if it appears that the parents have unaddressed needs, or a parent carer requests it.

The rights of young carers (children under 18 who have caring responsibilities) come mostly from the Children Act 1989 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

The local authority has a duty to ensure that, as part of a 'whole family approach', if an adult is being cared for, the local authority must consider whether any children are involved in the provision of care and what impact that is having on the child.

For more information on having a Carer's Assessment please contact the helpline on **03456 434 435**.

## Our Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Members of the Group have provided the details which follow.

Our PPG was created to facilitate good relations between the Practice and our patients by communicating patient experiences, interests

to wait until the autumn for their next booster. The NHS will be contacting those patients.

## Autumn boosters

An autumn booster programme will be starting in September: everyone aged 50 and over will be offered a Covid-19 booster and a flu vaccine.

Where these vaccinations will take place has yet to be decided.

Also not known at present is whether the two vaccinations will be carried out together or separately.

## Missed the spring booster?

If you were told that you were eligible for a spring booster but you didn't take up the offer, you've probably received many communications, by text, email

or even letter, reminding you to go and get your spring booster.

If you now decide that you'd like your spring booster after all, you might find that there is some discussion at the Vaccination Centre about whether you're eligible to receive a dose. This may be because it would make more sense to wait until you are offered your autumn booster.

There's a good reason for this advice: if you have a dose now, you will not be able to have another one for at least 91 days, which will therefore be in late October or early November instead of in September when the autumn boosters should become available.

By waiting until September for your next dose, you will gain maximum protection over

and concerns. It provides constructive feedback to the Practice on current procedures and any proposed new developments

The PPG works collaboratively and positively with the Practice to improve services and facilities for patients, and we act as a representative group to support the Practice and also influence local provision of health and social care.

The PPG is open to all registered patients and to anyone who is a carer of a registered patient. No training is required to become a member, just a genuine interest in taking positive action to help the Practice by giving constructive opinions and some time.

You can get involved in the work of the PPG in a number of ways and you can participate as much or as little as you able or wish.

### PPG Core Group

The Core Group is a group of a maximum of 20 people, including an elected Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary. It generally meets every quarter for a couple of hours during a morning or afternoon at a time to suit the majority of the attendees.

Practice staff also attend PPG meetings.

Each meeting has an agenda that includes reviews of feedback the Practice has received, together with ideas and suggestions. These are discussed and acted on.

There's also a formal Annual General Meeting which is open to all of our patients.

### Useful skills

Some of our Core Group have particular skills, for example in IT or journalism. We benefit tremendously from this.

If you have a special interest or expertise which could enrich our discussions, please come to a meeting or get in touch.

Attendance at every meeting is not essential.

### Wide range of activities

From our agendas and minutes, you'll see we often develop ideas received from patients, for example developing dementia friendliness in our two surgeries.

If you would like to find out what we are working on at the moment, use the following link to see our minutes etc.

<https://towerhousesurgery.co.uk/pages/Patient-Participation-Group-Reports--Other-Surveys>

Or you can contact Ben Bishop, our Practice Manager by email [btcp.ppg@nhs.net](mailto:btcp.ppg@nhs.net)

### You could respond to Practice Newsletters

Quarterly, the PPG produces a Practice Newsletter, just like this one. Copies are available from our two Receptions and are also emailed to everyone who has said they'd like to receive our Newsletters.

The PPG often has a section in our newsletters, with information about the progress the group is making and other projects. Your ideas and thoughts are always welcome.

### Some PPG plans for the future

Here are some of aims and interests of our PPG.

- ❖ Become more visible and known to patients as their 'voice' via newsletters, notices and so on
- ❖ Develop the use and effectiveness of our Facebook page @RATHPPG
- ❖ Support the Practice in responding to feedback from patients, carers and others
- ❖ Encourage people to take control of their own health, by promotion of health awareness and other events,
- ❖ Help the Practice wherever we can, for example at flu clinics

### Learn more about the PPG

Further details of the PPG can be found on our Practice website which has lots of helpful information:

If you're interested in contributing to the PPG, go to <https://towerhousesurgery.co.uk/pages/Patient-Participation-Group-Reports--Other-Surveys> and then, in the menu items on the left, click on "Join Patient Participation Group"

### Subscribe to the Newsletters

If the PPG is not for you at the moment, you might still wish to be kept informed about what is happening at your Practice. Please sign up via the Practice website to receive our Newsletters by email.

Copies of the current newsletter and the minutes from our Core Group meetings are also available from Reception at each surgery.

### Getting more involved

Are you interested in finding out more? Or would you prefer an informal chat with the Chair of the PPG Group first?

Email your interest to [btcp.ppg@nhs.net](mailto:btcp.ppg@nhs.net) or phone the surgery and ask to speak to Ben Bishop, our Practice Manager.

### New shared record system for Devon and Cornwall (DCCR)

The Devon and Cornwall Care Record is a secure computer system that brings together information about your health and care and presents it as a single record. Previously, it was difficult to share information about your health and care between different areas of the system. Now, healthcare staff can see the details held by GP practices, hospitals and other health and care organisations across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

## Saving time and improving care and treatment

Having a more complete view of your medical history helps healthcare professionals identify problems more effectively and make quicker diagnoses. For instance, they can see which allergies you suffer from, and any treatment and medication you have received.

As well as making treatment safer, the care you receive will be more co-ordinated, giving you a smoother journey through the health system.

It also saves staff the time it takes to find information and spares you the frustration of having to answer the same questions repeatedly or undergo duplicate or unnecessary tests.

## Transforming information flow

Dr John McCormick, GP and Chief Clinical Information Officer at Devon Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "The Devon and Cornwall Care Record has the potential to transform the way we care for patients in our region.

"By enabling information to flow more easily between the organisations that provide services, we will produce a more efficient system and improve the experience for patients.

"For example, it means an oncologist treating a patient for cancer in Plymouth can see the same information as their GP in Callington."

John Garman, Chief Clinical Information Officer at Kernow Clinical Commissioning Group added: "It's a common—and justified—grumble from patients that they have to repeat their stories and answer the same questions as they move through the system."

## Aiming for efficiency

"This programme will go a long way to solving that problem, as well as cutting down on other inefficiencies – like calling

patients for tests they've already undergone.

"Initially, some organisations will both contribute and use data (including GP practices, acute hospitals and social care providers), while others will just use data.

"However, in time, more and more organisations will come on board, expanding the programme's reach and improving the care of increasing numbers of patients."

## Who is involved?

There are more than 760 health and care providers in Devon and Cornwall and, potentially, all of them can participate in the programme.

These organisations include GP practices, NHS hospitals, social care services, mental health services, hospices, community care services and out of hours services.

If you would like to know if one of your health or social care providers is participating in the programme, you can ask them directly or check the participating organisation list at: <https://www.devonandcornwallcarerecord.nhs.uk>

## Personal data

Keeping your personal data safe is a key aspect of the Devon and Cornwall Care Record and all required measures are taken to keep your information secure and confidential.

Shared care records are subject to UK data protection legislation. They can only be viewed by people involved in your care, and those people all work under strict codes of conduct.

## Where can you find out more?

For further details, visit the Devon and Cornwall Care Record website at <https://www.devonandcornwallcarerecord.nhs.uk>

If you would prefer that your information is not shared, you can say so by filling in the objection form located on the data security and privacy page of the above website.

## Breast screening

As a practice we very much support breast screening. With 1 in 8 women being diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime, it's important to detect cancer as early as possible to have the best chance of successful treatment.

All women registered with our practice and aged 50 to 70 years will be invited for screening every three years. Make sure you attend your appointment when you receive your invitation.

## Screening saves lives.

If you want to speak to a health professional about breast screening, contact **01803 655350**. They can talk you through what will happen and what to expect. You can also find a handy guide about what happens at breast screening here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/breast-cancer-screening/what-happens/>

## Trends in eye care

Many people are now finding that when they visit their optician, the optometrist not only tests eyes for glasses and contact lenses but may also provide more and more clinical monitoring which used to be carried out at hospitals.

Depending on the optometrist's qualifications, there may be diabetic monitoring using retinal photography and cross-sectional retinal scans; detection, monitoring and prescribing for glaucoma; aids for low vision; reading aids for dyslexia.

Much of the advanced equipment now used at high street opticians was until recently available only in hospitals.