LONDON ROAD SURGERY

Website: www.thelondonroadsurgery.co.uk

Telephone: 01268 765533

**NEWSLETTER November 2023**

Welcome to the practice newsletter. In it you will find some useful information, especially if you are not able to use a computer. **However, there are references to important websites and it might be useful if you have a friend or relative who could gain access to the relevant information for you. This is a bumper issue this month as there are lots of campaigns listed for December 2023. Please see end of the newsletter.**

**All prescription requests must be made online via the NHS App or via Online Services accessed by using the London Road Surgery website. Alternatively, you can post your request through our letterbox or send it by Royal Mail.**

**We are experiencing a high demand for appointments please ask your Pharmacist for advice or use e-consult online consultation and receive a reply within 48 hours.**

**e-consults or Online Consultations**

**We have available via the website** [www.thelondonroadsurgery.co.uk](http://www.thelondonroadsurgery.co.uk) **a platform for consulting online a clinical or admin queries. This is called e-consult. Please follow the instructions to submit your query. You will get a response within 48 hours.**

**New Reception Staff**

We have new staff who have joined our Reception team. Please be patient while they deal with your queries. Our reception staff are now called Healthcare Navigators because they can sign post you to Health Care Professionals who support the doctors in primary care.

Thank you for your kind comments for some of our new reception staff.

These staff are trained professionals and if unable to support you they will refer you back tp the doctor. These are: Pharmacists, Paramedic, Social Prescriber, Mental Health First Contact Practitioner, and retail Pharmacists. We also use the weekend appointments available to all the practices in Wickford.

**Ideas and Suggestions**

Please let us know if you have any ideas or suggestions by writing to us via the email address or by post.

Thank you.

**Veteran Friendly Accreditation**

**We are now accredited as an Armed Forces veteran friendly accredited GP practice. Dr Richards is the Lead GP for this.**

**Patient Contact Details**

**Please keep us up to date with your contact details either by popping a note through our letterbox or by emailing us at** [londonroadsurgery@nhs.net](mailto:londonroadsurgery@nhs.net)

**Last month we had 803 patients with no mobile number on their record. This month we have 785 patients with no mobile number on their record. Please email us with your mobile number and email address.**

**Primary Care Network (PCN) Staff**

**In line with NHS England guidance and the development of Primary Care Networks (PCN’s) some new allied Health Care Professionals have joined the team at London Road Surgery. We have a Paramedic and 2 Advanced Nurse Practitioners who can treat minor illness. These staff members join the doctors and nurses and the new Social Prescriber and Mental Health First Contact Practitioner to help you.**

**To assist you with your request to see a clinician our Receptionists/Care Navigators will ask you the reason for your appointment so that they can guide you to the correct clinician for your condition.**

**PCN Pharmacists – now work at the surgery and you may be contacted by them before you see a doctor. They can sort minor illnesses as well as review all medication.**

**We encourage self-care and there are lots of information on our website and NHS App.**

**Local Pharmacists are happy to discuss with you about your minor illness and we can refer you to them using our clinical system. They will call you back in a few hours.**

**Basildon & Brentwood CCG website also has Health Information** <https://basildonandbrentwoodccg.nhs.uk/>

**Looking after yourself**

**We continue to offer free health checks for patients aged 40-74 who have not had a health check in 5 years and for those over 75 years.**

**Please call reception to book your health check with Natalie or Mel our Paramedic.**

**Contacting Us**

**Please do not use our email address to send any clinical queries to us. Please call the practice to make an appointment or use e-consult (see above). Please use NHS App to order repeat medication. We can process requests faster this way.**

**Patient Group Activity**

The Patient Groups of all 3 practices in Wickford are working together with **Action for Family** **Carers** to develop a Carer’s Directory. The minutes of the meeting on 31.5.23 will be on the website. We will be discussing how the practices in Wickford can better identify patients who are unpaid carers. There is a Universal Form for patients to complete. Please check our website.

**Next Patient Group meeting will be in January 2024 – date to be decided**

**Website**

We understand that lots of our patients are unable to view our website if you know a member of your community is housebound or without any computer access please print this and deliver it to them. London Road Surgery thank you for this kindness.

**Healthwatch Essex**

<https://healthwatchessex.org.uk/>

Is an independent charity set up under the Health & Social Care Act 2012 and they use your voice to improve health and care in Essex. They undertake high-quality research and engagement to uncover your experience of services and use it to shape health and care. They are also proud hosts to the Essex Neurology Network.

They can help you find out about and access health and social care services through our Information & Guidance Service**. Call 0300 500 1895, text 07712395398** between 10am and 2pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Outside of those times, you can use it to leave them a message. Check out how to get involved!

[info@healthwatchessex.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchessex.org.uk)

Message on **07712395398**, Monday - Friday, 9am to 4:30pm

**Looking After Your Mental Wellbeing**

Looking after our mental wellbeing sometimes falls behind on our list of priorities. But keeping mentally well helps us to keep physically well too. Visit this website for some tips on how to look after your mind: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

**Free listening services**

These services offer confidential advice from trained volunteers. You can talk about anything that is troubling you, no matter how difficult:

Call [116 123](tel:116123) to talk to [Samaritans](https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/), or email:  [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) for a reply within 24 hours.

Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the [Shout Crisis Text Line](https://www.giveusashout.org/), or text "YM" if you're under 19.

If you are under 19, you can also call [0800 1111](tel:0800%201111) to talk to [Childline](https://www.childline.org.uk/). The number will not appear on your phone bill.

**The Essex Wellbeing Service 0300** **303 9988**

We provide Essex residents (excluding Southend-On-Sea and Thurrock) with access to health checks; stop smoking services; weight management courses; and emotional health and wellbeing support.

We also support Essex organisations at work via our three-tiered Working Well Accreditation. This consists of workplace health and wellbeing sessions; Mental Health First Aid training; and the Working Well Accreditation itself where organisations can be recognised for their commitment to staff health and wellbeing.

EWS also runs a volunteering service where we recruit and connect volunteers with Essex residents in need of support with everyday tasks, social isolation and making long-term friendships.

The Service is commissioned by Essex County Council. But we couldn’t do this without our amazing alliance of partners…

**Provide CIC**

Provide CIC is a Community Interest Company (social enterprise) that delivers a broad range of health and social care services in the community throughout Essex, Cambridgeshire and East Anglia.

Provide works from a variety of community settings, such as three community hospitals, community clinics, schools, nursing homes and primary care settings, as well as within people's homes to provide more than 40 services to children, families and adults.

Provide CIC has been commissioned by Essex County Council to deliver the Essex Wellbeing Service, in partnership with all the organisations listed on this page.

**Priority Digital Health**

Priority Digital Health (PDH) build digital solutions which empower better self-management and service-management of patients' health and wellbeing.

PDH ensures people get the help and support they need, swiftly, whilst remaining true to their 'Tell Your Story Once' mantra.

PDH’s speciality is disease prevention; their background is in changing behaviour, and their focus is cost-saving and service efficiencies – but not at the expense of user experience.

They have three main products: The Priority Platform (customisable case management software); Diabetes Book & Learn (connecting people with Diabetes to the right education); and AmaraHealth™ (a whole-body health and wellbeing app).

For Essex Wellbeing Service, PDH provides the case management system that digitises lifestyle bookings; volunteer sign-up and management; and referral or self-referral for support with everyday tasks.  
  
PDH provides their marketing services for the EWS and Working Well website and social media. EWS also have access to PDH’s AmaraHealth™ app where Essex residents can track, analyse, and manage their whole-body health inside one app.

**Age Well East**

Age Well East offers community friendship services to anyone in Essex who is over 18 with an aim to end loneliness. They provide one to one volunteer friendship (befriending), pen friending and access to social groups and activities to empower people to live happier and healthier.

Age Well East believes everyone deserves to age well and they have been empowering people in later years since 1950. Their knowledgeable staff and volunteers provide excellent support services which are easily available.

They understand that changes in circumstances make people particularly susceptible to loneliness. When left ignored, loneliness can escalate from a temporary situation to a chronic challenge, which the NHS estimates as having the same detrimental impact as smoking 15 cigarettes a day on health deterioration.In Essex alone, as many as 80,000 people are thought to be lonely, which is one of many reasons Age Well East is so committed to providing excellent and trusted support.

**HCRG Care Group**

HCRG Care Group changes lives by transforming health and care. They are one of the UK’s leading independent providers of community health and care services, working with health and care commissioners and communities to transform services with a focus on experience, efficiency and improved outcomes.

The children and family healthy lifestyle service is here to support your family in making long term, sustainable adjustments to suit your lifestyle. If you are unsure if your child is within the healthy weight range, you can check their body mass index (BMI) using the NHS BMI Calculator. The calculator takes into account your child’s age and sex as well as their height and weight.

If you find your child is outside the healthy weight range - don’t panic! There are lots that the team can do to support you in making healthier lifestyle choices and to help your child achieve a healthier weight as they grow.

Being active and making balanced food choices is important, but HCRG Care Group will work with your family to make sure our support is the right offer for you and your family.

HCRG Care Group’s teams have lots of resources that they would like to make available to your family. If you would like to register your interest or find out more about what HCRG can offer your family, please contact EWS.

HCRG Care Group also runs Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service on behalf of Essex County Council.

**Rural Community Council of Essex**

Many Essex villages exude an air of prosperity. However, behind the affluent facade there is evidence of hidden deprivation, and with it the potential for people to be unreasonably disadvantaged by living in a rural location.

Rural communities are the reason for the existence of the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) and remain the focus of the vast majority of their work, but they do provide some services, notably Community Agents Essex and United in Kind Coaches on a countywide basis.

Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) works to provide local communities with the skills, resources and expertise necessary to achieve a thriving and sustainable future.

RCCE provides support and facilitation for local community organisations and projects; develops initiatives that improve the life chances of disadvantaged people and families; and provides an influential voice for rural communities in Essex.

Part of their attention focuses on helping people who may experience disadvantage and exclusion through factors such as low wage employment, the high cost of housing, lack of access to essential services and a scarcity of public transport.

**Terrence Higgins Trust**

Terrence Higgins Trust (THT) team of specialist health and wellbeing coaches will work to re-engage those who have disengaged from or who have lost trust in the system.  
  
The service works closely with a diverse range of populations across Essex, and in partnership with the wider EWS service to maximize opportunities for LGBT+, Traveller, Roma, and Racially Minoritised communities, as well as Drug and Alcohol Misusers, Homeless / those at risk of Homelessness, as well as those within the criminal justice system.

THT believes that involving and empowering local communities, particularly disadvantaged groups, and young people is central to both promotion of excellent Health and Wellbeing and the reduction of health inequalities.  
THT champions that partnership approaches to service delivery, combined with innovation, improve engagement with service users, contribute to directly addressing marginalisation and powerlessness underpinning health and social inequalities and are effective in building sustainable communities.  
  
THT is also the UK’s largest HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health charity.  
  
Building upon the already excellent established working relationship between THT and Provide in Essex the THT Essex Wellbeing Service (EWS) partnership will engage with and empower Seldom Heard From Communities.

Services

* [Stop Smoking](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/stop-smoking)
* [Physical Activity](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/physical-activity)
* [Social Isolation](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/social-isolation)
* [Mental Health](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/mental-health)
* [Alcohol Reduction](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/alcohol-reduction)
* [Sleep](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/sleep)
* [Health Checks](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/health-checks)
* [Child Lifestyle Service](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/child-lifestyle-service)
* [Weight Management](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/weight-management)

T: 0300 303 9988

E: [provide.essexwellbeing@nhs.net](mailto:provide.essexwellbeing@nhs.net)

**Opening Hours**

Monday to Friday 8.00am - 7.00pm

Saturday 9.00am to 12.00pm

All enquiries, will be responded to during the opening hours above

**Complaints / Feedback**

T: 0300 303 9951

E: [provide.customerservices@nhs.net](mailto:provide.customerservices@nhs.net)

**NHS App**

If you have a smartphone you can download the NHS App which allows you to order repeat prescriptions and book appointments quickly and easily.

We encourage use of the NHS App as this saves time for the patients.

**Contact Details**

Don’t forget to let us know if you have new phone number or change address. You can email us or call us.

**The Good Grief Trust**

**Website** [**www.thegoodgrieftrust.org**](http://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org)

If you have been affected by a sudden bereavement during this crisis and need support, advice and guidance.

PLEASE CALL; SUDDEN BEREAVEMENT HELP 0800 2600 400,

OPERATING HOURS: 10AM – 4PM MONDAY – FRIDAY.

**Mental Health Information**

VitaMinds offer a free and confidential NHS Service and Psychological talking therapies. They offer support for Anxiety, Low mood, Depression, Panic attacks, Social anxiety, sleep problems, PTSD, OCD and specific phobias. You can self-refer online vitahealthgroup.co.uk or call 01268 977 171 Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm and Saturdays 9am – 12.30pm or Out of Hours emotional support 24/7 01268 977 171

**Contact Us Online**

We have updated our website and added a tab called Contact Us Online. This is for patients to send us administrative queries or medical issues. Hopefully this will free up our phone lines for those patients without internet access.

**Useful Telephone Numbers**

Boots Allianz The Wick 01268 574018

Boots Mayflower 01268 820235

Boots Willowdale 01268 761911

Co-op 01268 970532

Garbetts 01268 732042

Medipharm 01268 735777

Sainsbury’s 01268 270282

Shadforths 01268 733313

Shotgate 01268 768547

Tesco Mayflower 01268 367647

Wells Pharmacy 01268 762605

**CARING FOR OTHERS**

If you are caring for a relative, you can access information & advice, specialist support, groups & activities through Carers First. Carers First is a charity commissioned by Essex County Council:

Telephone: 0300 303 1555

Email: [hello@CarersFIRST.org.uk](mailto:hello@CarersFIRST.org.uk)

Please let us know if you are an unpaid Carer and if you need support

**Useful Resources:**

**Alzheimer’s Society:** 01245 260911 3 Lockside Marina Chelmsford CM2 6HF

**National Domestic Violence Helpline**: 0808 2000 247 https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

**NSPCC helpline**: 0808 800 5000

**ChildLine**: 0800 1111

**MIND**: www.mind.org.uk

**YoungMinds**: https://youngminds.org.uk

**ICON**: Babies cry: You can cope https://iconcope.org

**IRISi:** irisi.org/iris/find-your-local-iris-site

**DECEMBER 2023**

**World AIDS Day, 1st December 2023**  
  
World AIDS Day is on 1st December, aiming to raise awareness of AIDS and the impact that is has on the people living with it.  
  
The government has pledged to end HIV transmissions by 2030. While we’ve made huge strides in treating the symptoms of HIV, the best way to deal with symptoms is to avoid contracting HIV in the first place. There are ways to reduce the risk of contracting HIV and options include pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis, though this should not be a substitute for the use of condoms.  
  
[https://worldaidsday.org](https://worldaidsday.org/)  
  
<https://www.tht.org.uk/hiv-and-sexual-health/about-hiv>  
  
**Chron’s & Colitis, 1st to 7th December**  
  
Chron’s & Colitis UK are holding a number of virtual social events for those who suffer from these diseases, and their families, to chat and share experiences.  
  
They also have a brilliant tool to help you decide whether you should seek advice about your bowel symptoms. While there may be innocent causes for unusual bowel symptoms, if you’re concerned, it’s best to get checked.  
  
[https://crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/vir...ent-crohns-and-colitis-awareness-week-morning](https://crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/virtual-social/virtual-social-event-crohns-and-colitis-awareness-week-morning)  
  
[https://crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](https://crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/)  
  
**Grief awareness, 2nd to 8th December**  
  
The Good Grief Trust aims to support those who find themselves grieving.  
Each December, the Good Grief Trust holds an awareness week to raise awareness of the impact of grief. This year the campaign focuses on the idea that we’re “better together” as we come together to support each other.  
  
Run for the bereaved by the bereaved, the website provides many useful links, information and signposting to other support organisations.  
  
<https://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/ngaw/>  
  
[https://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org](https://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/)  
  
**International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3rd December**  
The world is likely to miss several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set for 2030. The UN acknowledges that we’re even further behind in meeting SDG targets for those with disabilities. We need to bring inclusion to the fore.  
<https://www.un.org/en/observances/day-of-persons-with-disabilities>  
  
**Mental Health and the festive season**  
  
Andy Williams sang “It’s the most wonderful time of the year”, but not everyone enjoys the festive season. 36% of people surveyed by Mind said they feel too embarrassed to admit they feel lonely at Christmas. That’s one in three people. Let’s normalise talking about it.  
If you struggle with your mental health at this time of year, there are lots of options for support, including talking to one of the team at your GP surgery. If you need help while the surgery isn’t open The Samaritans offer a non-judgmental listening service 24/7, including on Christmas Day. They also have some advice on how you can self-care during the run-up to Christmas. If you’re not in crisis, but could do with some company and you’re on “X”, formerly known as Twitter, there’s a Christmas Day chat called #JoinIn with host Sarah Millican. It provides a bit of friendly chat and company on Christmas Day.  
  
[https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campai...rassed-to-admit-they-are-lonely-at-christmas/](https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/news/third-of-people-too-embarrassed-to-admit-they-are-lonely-at-christmas/)  
  
[https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-c...time/spending-christmas-festive-season-alone/](https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-having-difficult-time/spending-christmas-festive-season-alone/)  
  
<https://sarahmillican.co.uk/joinin/>  
  
If you’re facing the thought of Christmas alone and you’re an older adult, the Salvation Army may be able to help. They’re offering meals and support to a wide variety of individuals and families.  
Could you offer friendship to an older adult? Age Concern run a telephone service where you can volunteer to speak to someone each week. This helps to ensure that older people aren’t isolated, and you gain the opportunity to find a new friend. You’re matched with someone with similar interests so you can get a really good conversation going.  
  
<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/christmas>  
  
<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/telephone-friend/>  
  
**Flu vaccination and child flu**  
  
Flu can make you feel very unwell and, for some people, it can cause serious complications.  
  
Flu can cause pneumonia, exacerbations of existing health conditions and serious complications like inflammation of the heart or brain.  
  
If we’ve contacted you about your flu vaccination or a flu, it’s because you’re likely to be at higher risk of complications if you catch flu. If your child is considered more “at risk” from complications of flu, you should have received an invitation for vaccination. If you haven’t booked an appointment for you or your child and we have contacted you, please contact us to make an appointment.  
  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/child-flu-vaccine/>  
  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/>  
  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu/>  
  
**COVID-19**  
  
While you’re no longer required to isolate if you have COVID-19, you can take simple steps with any illness to help your own recovery and to ensure you minimise the risk of your passing it on to someone else.  
  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/covid-19/>  
  
**Child development**  
  
Children develop rapidly in the first few years of life. With changes visible almost daily, UNICEF have a brilliant guide to child development so that you can see the important things you need to know at every stage of your child’s development.  
  
If you’ve got a young baby or child, you’ll have regular contact with your health visiting team. From birth onwards, your health visitor will help and offer advice. They’ll also carry out routine checks at set stages in your child’s development to help ensure they’re on track. If you have questions about your child’s development, you can ask your health visitor for advice.  
  
<https://www.unicef.org/parenting/child-development/your-babys-developmental-milestones>  
  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/babys-development/height-weight-and-reviews/baby-reviews/>  
  
**Childhood illness**  
  
The Lullaby Trust has developed an app to support parents of babies to know whether their child needs help from a medical professional. Using a series of questions, the app will guide parents, using a scoring system, to help them know how unwell their baby is and will then direct the parents to seek appropriate support.  
  
Additionally, Cardiff University have developed a leaflet called “When Should I Worry?” to help parents know when care at home is the right treatment for common minor illnesses, and what the usual course of minor illnesses is.  
  
<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/baby-check-app/>  
  
[http://www.whenshouldiworry.com](http://www.whenshouldiworry.com/)  
  
**Maintaining healthy eating**  
  
Food prices have gone up significantly over the last few years. For many people, this means having to eat more cheaply. You can still have a good, varied diet on a budget and the British Dietetic Association has some brilliant ideas for reducing food costs while maintaining a healthy diet.  
  
Do we know whether we’re eating the right amounts of the right foods? The British Nutrition Foundation has a handy guide to portion sizes, and rather than concentrating on weighing and measuring, it uses easy-to-compare measurements, such as a baked potato the size of your fist being a portion.  
  
<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/food-facts-eat-well-spend-less.html>  
<https://www.nutrition.org.uk/putting-it-into-practice/balancing-the-diet/get-portion-wise/>  
  
**Staying warm**  
  
Staying warm when it’s cold outside can be challenging, and the UK is expected to see a colder than average start to December. Budgets are squeezed for many, so cost-effective tips from the BHF are especially welcome.  
  
The Red Cross have information about staying warm during the winter, including a link to the 3,000 plus Warm Hubs across the country that are offering a warm place to be if you’re struggling to heat your home.  
  
Longer term, to save money on your energy bills, you might want to consider ways to make your home more energy efficient. The Energy Saving Trust has advice about the ways in which you can improve the efficiency of your home.  
  
<https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/heart-matters-magazine/medical/beat-the-cold/keeping-warm>  
  
<https://www.redcross.org.uk/stories/health-and-social-care/health/tips-on-keeping-warm-this-winter>  
  
<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/>  
  
**Caring for relatives**  
  
The Carents Room is a website designed to support people who find themselves caring for their parents. This might be during a time in their lives when they’re also caring for their children, and working too. Providing information and links to help, the website aims to reduce the burden on those having to navigate health and care systems for the first time.  
<https://carents.co.uk/work-with-us-to-tackle-ageing/>  
  
If you’re caring for someone, you may be entitled to financial support. You can find out more about how the government supports carers by checking the government website.  
  
<https://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators>  
  
**Norovirus**  
  
Norovirus is known as the winter vomiting bug. We often see an increase in viruses during the winter and this is also true for norovirus.  
  
If you do find you catch norovirus, the symptoms should be better within a few days, though for some people the illness may be more severe or may last longer than normal, which may require medical treatment. Regular hand-washing and good hygiene, including during food preparation, is one of the ways we can help to make sure norovirus doesn’t spread. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/norovirus/>  
You can find out more about preventing the spread of norovirus by using the government website.  
  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/norovirus/>  
  
[https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2022/11/1...-you-catch-it-and-helping-to-stop-the-spread/](https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2022/11/17/norovirus-what-to-do-if-you-catch-it-and-helping-to-stop-the-spread/)  
  
**Food banks**If you’re struggling to feed yourself or your family, there is support available from food banks. Food banks offer only enough food to last a few days, but Citizens Advice can offer support to help you get on top of the difficulties you’re facing.  
Feeding yourself on a day-to-day basis is one concern, but many will still want to celebrate Christmas despite the challenges.  
  
If you’re on a limited budget and concerned about the costs of Christmas, you’ll find a handy guide from the BBC about making the most of your budget for Christmas dinner.  
  
<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/food-bank/using-a-food-bank/>  
  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/articles/christmas_dinner_budget>  
  
**Domestic abuse (Christmas)**  
  
Domestic violence increases over Christmas. If you’re in a relationship where your partner is controlling, or is physically abusive, you can seek help from Refuge.  
  
If you’re worried that your partner is checking on your online activity, Refuge has advice on how to seek help. Firstly, see if you can use a device belonging to someone else and then visit:  
  
<https://refugetechsafety.org/secure-your-tech/>  
  
[https://refuge.org.uk](https://refuge.org.uk/)  
  
**Christmas arrangements**  
  
England  
Over the festive season, if your GP isn’t open, there will be an out-of-hours service available for you. For help, you can visit: [https://111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk/)  
  
Scotland  
Over the festive season, if your GP isn’t open, there will be an out-of-hours service available for you. For help, you can visit: <https://www.nhs24.scot/?_id=111Website>  
  
Northern Ireland  
Over the festive season, if your GP isn’t open, there will be an out-of-hours service available for you. For help, you can visit: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/illnesses-and-conditions>  
  
Wales  
Over the festive season, if your GP isn’t open, there will be an out-of-hours service available for you. For help, you can visit: [https://111.wales.nhs.uk](https://111.wales.nhs.uk/)  
  
Over the Christmas period, we will be closed for four days as Christmas Day and Boxing Day fall immediately after a weekend. For up-to-date information about closures over the festive period, please visit our website: [insert web address]  
  
Over the New Year period, we will be closed for [three/four – delete as appropriate] days. To see the alternative arrangements that are available while we’re closed, please visit our website: [insert web address]  
  
**Kindness and courtesy to our team**  
  
Our team members arrive each day ready to help and support our patients. We know that at times, appointment availability is challenging, but our team will always try to find the best option for you. We cannot offer an appointment on the day if your problem is not urgent. We have worked hard to try and balance patient needs with the availability of appointments, and while we may not always get this right, our staff will do their best to try and accommodate your needs.  
  
We appreciate your patience with our team. Winter is challenging for appointment availability due to increased illness in our patients. While our team are working hard, we really appreciate your kindness and patience as this makes a difficult job easier.  
  
We know that when you’re feeling unwell, it’s frustrating not being able to get an appointment at the time you would like it. Our team work very hard to manage the appointments we do have so that the most unwell patients can be seen quickly. This does mean that sometimes you will need to wait for an appointment if your condition is not urgent. If your condition changes, then do please contact the surgery to keep us informed.  
  
We’d like to thank you for being polite to the members of our practice team. Our staff have feelings too, and your thoughtfulness and consideration when speaking to our staff members is appreciated.