LONDON ROAD SURGERY

Website: www.thelondonroadsurgery.co.uk

Telephone: 01268 765533

**NEWSLETTER December 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 January 2024. 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 to 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

**Last month we had 660 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.

On 15 December 2023 the Alzheimer’s Society did a Drop-in session for those looking after someone with Dementia. We had 16 meaningful conversations and they will be back later in 2024 to give more support.

**Next Patient Group meeting will be 1pm Wednesday 17 January 2024**

**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

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 to talk to [Samaritans](https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/), or email:  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 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

**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

**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

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

**January 2024**

**World Braille Day, 4th January**

World Braille Day celebrates the birth of Louis Braille. He developed a system where each character is comprised of six dots. There are characters for each of the letters of the alphabet, but also characters for words like “and” and “for”. Braille revolutionised written communication for the blind. <https://www.un.org/en/observances/braille-day>

**National Obesity Awareness Week, 8th - 14th January**

Obesity is a growing problem, with 50% of the UK population expected to be obese by 2050. Obesity has long-term impacts on your health and fitness.

If you’d like to move more, to help you lose or stabilise your weight, you might consider a programme like ‘Couch to 5k’. Designed for those who aren’t currently doing a large amount of physical activity, it helps you to run for 30 minutes within 9 weeks.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/obesity/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/running-and-aerobic-exercises/get-running-with-couch-to-5k/>

**Paget’s Disease Awareness Day, 11th January**

Paget’s disease is more common in the over 50s and affects bone growth. As bone is found in so much of the body, it can affect areas like hearing and the heart, as well as bones becoming more fragile and osteoarthritis.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pagets-disease-bone/>

**STIQ Day, 14th January**

Sexually Transmitted Infection Question Day is held annually on 14th January. STIQ Day encourages us to think about sexually transmitted infections and our own sexual health.

If you’re worried that you may have a sexually transmitted infection (STI), you can go to a sexual health clinic. Most clinics allow you to turn up and wait so that you don’t have to make an appointment, but you should check before you visit.

<http://www.stiq.co.uk/about/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sexually-transmitted-infections-stis/>

**Samaritans Brew Monday, 15th January**

Legend has it that the third Monday in January is the most difficult day of the year. The reality is that if you’re finding things tough, then any day might be difficult. The Samaritans are there 24/7 to provide non-judgemental listening. We can learn a great deal from the way the Samaritans listen; it can be challenging not to provide advice, but sometimes we need to just listen and be present in order to offer support.

The Samaritans also offer a free self-help app. You can use the self-help app to track how you’re feeling and to make plans for staying safe in a crisis, as well as completing activities to help you better navigate challenges.
If you’re feeling low or overwhelmed, we want to hear from you. But if you’re having an urgent mental health crisis, you can find your local mental health helpline or numbers to call for support on the NHS website link below:

[https://www.samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org/)

<https://www.samaritans.org/support-us/campaign/brew-monday/>

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/self-help/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/where-to-get-urgent-help-for-mental-health/>

**Cervical Cancer Awareness Week, 22nd - 28th January**

Cervical cancer mostly affects women under the age of 45. Almost all cervical cancers are linked to infections with certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV). The NHS now offers vaccination against many types of HPV. If you’re under 25 and you missed having the vaccination when you were aged 12-13, then you may be eligible for immunisation. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/hpv-human-papillomavirus-vaccine/>

Anyone who has a cervix can get cervical cancer. If you’re having vaginal bleeding or discharge that’s unusual for you, or pain during sex in your lower back, hips or pelvis, you should seek an appointment with a member of your GP practice team. While there are many reasons why you might have these types of symptoms, it’s important to rule out some causes.
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cervical-cancer/>

**Anytime in January

Men’s wellbeing**

One in five men die before the age of 65. The Men’s Health Forum aims to change the way we look at, and think about, men’s health so that we ensure we reduce the number of premature deaths.

On similar lines, Livewell Dorset has put together a fantastic resource to support men in thinking about their long-term health and wellbeing. You can find out more about how you can take care of your physical and mental health here:

[https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk](https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/)

[https://www.livewelldorset.co.uk/faq/get-active/men’s-health-tips/](https://www.livewelldorset.co.uk/faq/get-active/men%E2%80%99s-health-tips/)

**Drug abuse**

Whether you’re a child or an adult, if you want honest and accurate advice and information about drugs, then you might want to ‘Talk to Frank’.

If you’ve become aware that you or someone you care about has a problem with alcohol or drugs, Mind UK has a fantastic list of organisations that can help, with a range of support depending on the situation.

[https://www.talktofrank.com](https://www.talktofrank.com/)

[https://www.mind.org.uk/information...n/drug-and-alcohol-addiction-useful-contacts/](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/recreational-drugs-alcohol-and-addiction/drug-and-alcohol-addiction-useful-contacts/)

**New year, new challenges**

Often, the new year is seen as a time to start things afresh. It’s also a time of year when people make significant changes to their lives – perhaps to do with relationships or work. This BBC article highlights the challenges faced by those in relationships and considers the opportunities for counselling.

It’s not just personal relationships though, if a break over the festive season has clarified for you that you’re not finding things easy at work, you might want to consider talking to your employer informally to see if things can be resolved.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-64187350>

<https://www.acas.org.uk/how-to-raise-a-problem-at-work>

**Walk Your Dog Month**

January is ‘Walk Your Dog Month’. If you’re a dog owner, start the year as you mean to go on. Dogs need regular exercise, for both their bodies and minds, and ensuring your dog gets the right amount of exercise helps to make sure they aren’t frustrated or destructive. Making sure they have the right amount of exercise can help you to meet your exercise goals too!

<https://vetspecialists.co.uk/blog-post/walk-your-dog-month-january-2022/>

**Veganuary**

The excesses of the festive season can leave you feeling sluggish and bloated. Veganuary is a brilliant time to consider a more vegetable-based diet, and starting with a vegan month in January can really demonstrate the wide variety of meals you can eat which don’t include animal products.

No matter what type of food you prefer to eat, the Veganuary website has you covered. With over 1,000 recipes, there’s a recipe for every occasion and for anyone regardless of their preferences.

There are health benefits to a well-balanced vegan diet, and you can find out more about those benefits and the things you might need to bear in mind to ensure balance is maintained in your diet:

[https://veganuary.com](https://veganuary.com/)

<https://veganuary.com/recipes/>

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/vegan-diet-benefits#lose-excess-weight>

**parkrun**

Have you considered parkrun and decided against it because you don’t think you’re up to running? Whether you’re a runner, a jogger or a walker, parkrun welcomes you and wants to support you on your journey.
parkrun is a brilliant and supportive way to participate in a FREE event that helps get you out and about. You’ll never come last at parkrun, and whether you have support needs or children, there is a parkrun for you.

<https://support.parkrun.com/hc/en-us/articles/201853881-Can-I-walk->

[https://www.parkrun.org.uk](https://www.parkrun.org.uk/)

**Dry January**

January is an ideal time for a clean sheet. If you’ve had a festive season steeped in alcohol, then 31 alcohol-free days in January might be just what your body needs.

70% of people who ‘go dry’ for January report better sleep, and 66% report having more energy. At such a tough time of the year, most of us could use better sleep and more energy. Why not give it a try?

To support you with Dry January, you can download the Try Dry app. The Try Dry app helps you track any changes, access support and monitor your progress, all from your phone.

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/help-and-support/managing-your-drinking/dry-january>

[https://alcoholchange.org.uk/help-a.../dry-january/get-involved/the-dry-january-app](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/help-and-support/managing-your-drinking/dry-january/get-involved/the-dry-january-app)

**Love Your Liver Month**

January is ‘Love Your Liver Month’. The liver is vital for good health. The liver performs over 500 vital functions in the body; two of the most important are converting food to energy and helping to fight infections.

Three of the most common causes of liver damage are drinking alcohol, obesity and viral hepatitis. The British Liver Trust has a screening tool to help you understand the risk to your liver.

<https://britishlivertrust.org.uk/love-your-liver-month/>

<https://britishlivertrust.org.uk/at-risk-screener/>

**Winter fuel payment**

If you were born before 25th September 1957, you should be eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment. Most people will get this automatically, and will have received a letter in October or November to say they will receive the payment. If you haven’t had a letter, you can check your eligibility here: <https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment>

**Glaucoma**

Glaucoma is a range of diseases that damage the optic nerve. Age, blood pressure, family history, diabetes, ethnicity and short or long-sightedness can all contribute to your risk of glaucoma.
Glaucoma is often relatively symptomless to start with and as symptoms generally develop slowly, damage can occur without you being aware. Most people are recommended to have an eye test at least every two years unless they’ve been advised otherwise by a doctor.

<https://glaucoma.uk/about-glaucoma/what-is-glaucoma/>

<https://glaucoma.uk/about-glaucoma/signs-symptoms/>

**JAM card**

JAM stands for ‘Just a minute’. The JAM card is designed for those with hidden disabilities and communication difficulties to enable them to discreetly inform others that they need a bit more time. [https://www.jamcard.org](https://www.jamcard.org/)

**Thyroid awareness**

The thyroid gland is responsible for controlling your body’s hormone levels, which keep cells working normally. If the levels of thyroid hormones become too high or too low, then the way your body works will be challenged. Even symptoms like loose stools or constipation might be related.

Thyroid disorders are far more common in women than in men. The risk of developing an underactive thyroid also increases with age, so it’s not unusual to have women suffering from thyroid and menopause symptoms.

<https://www.btf-thyroid.org/what-is-thyroid-disorder>

<https://www.btf-thyroid.org/thyroid-menopause>

**Wash your hands**

During the pandemic, the importance of hand-washing was emphasised. But it’s no less important now, as good hand hygiene helps to prevent the spread of illnesses such as food poisoning and viruses like flu, COVID-19 and Norovirus.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>