



# NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2020

## WELCOME.....



This edition features a slightly different staff welcome section. We have two new permanent doctors joining us but they will be familiar faces to you!

**Dr Grace McGeoch** joined us early in her career as a GP trainee, when she qualified she went on to become a GP Partner at the Goodinge practice and then came to us for the last year covering a year of maternity cover. We are delighted that Dr McGeoch will be staying with us.

**Dr Ed Dewhirst** also joined us as a GP trainee and since finishing training he has been with us as a locum GP. It is with great pleasure we announce he is joining the permanent team.



To

***Dr Sabrina McIntyre & Dr Edwina Lawson***

Both doctors have now returned from maternity leave and getting used to the new way of working that we have had to adopt during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## *Farewell message from*

***Dr Chris Cooper***



***The beginning...***



***The end***

It is with sadness that I will be leaving St John's Way Medical Centre at the end of this year. I feel very fortunate to have been part of the team here from 2001-2020 and am now ready to take on a new challenge.

I continue to believe that working in the NHS is a privilege. The huge majority of patients are polite, thoughtful and grateful for what the NHS is able to deliver. I've learnt a lot from people over the years and have been most humbled by those dealing with illness and difficulty pragmatically with quiet stoicism. I've witnessed clinicians and staff working extremely hard to do their absolute best for our patients.

A big thank you to all the patients and colleagues who have shared the last 19 years in N19

Wishing you the best of health for the future,  
Dr Chris Cooper

***The partners and staff are extremely sad to see Dr Cooper move on but we wish him all the very best in his new adventures.***



### FLU SEASON!



#### WHO NEEDS A FLU JAB?

You are eligible to receive a free flu jab if you:

- are 65 years of age or over
- are pregnant
- are living in a long-stay residential care home or other long-stay care facility
- receive a carer's allowance, or you are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if you fall ill
- The flu vaccine is given as an annual nasal spray to:
  - children aged four to 18 years at risk of flu (except 4-8 years olds as they will be vaccinated in school).
  - healthy children aged two and three years

#### Have any of the below medical conditions

- chronic (long-term) respiratory disease
- chronic heart disease
- chronic kidney disease
- chronic liver disease
- chronic neurological conditions
- diabetes
- problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease, or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system due to conditions such as HIV & AIDS, or on steroid medication or chemotherapy
- if you live with someone who has a weakened immune system, speak to your GP for advice.

#### HOW TO BOOK A FLU JAB

- **Ask our Receptionist to book your flu jab appointment...**

OR

- **Relax with your diary at home and do it online – see News at: [www.stjohnsway.nhs.uk](http://www.stjohnsway.nhs.uk) (you'll need a login so if you don't already have one, ask our Receptionist to print one for you now, photo I.D will be required)**

### WINTER WELLBEING

The winter wellbeing project is back for winter 2020. If you are over 65 and live in Islington or Camden you can get help and advice to stay warm, active, healthy and connected this winter.

From October 2020 to March 2021 North London Cares can:

- connect over-65s to organisations who will help keep their home warm and safe, provide benefits and housing advice, and keep bills low
- help over-65s to access health services and advice on where to get a flu jab
- connect over-65s with organisations to help with practical tasks such as shopping and prescription pick-ups
- arrange small grants and warm items for over-65s in difficult circumstances
- introduce over-65s to friendly local groups and activities for fun and friendship, like North London Cares' Social Clubs, currently held online and over the phone, and in person when safe to do so
- introduce over-65s to a younger local for regular phone calls, visits, conversation and friendship
- provide advice and information on support available for over-65s needing to self-isolate, NHS test and trace and other issues related to coronavirus.

**Call 020 7118 3838 (option 3) or email [Emily.groves@northlondoncares.org.uk](mailto:Emily.groves@northlondoncares.org.uk)**



**Do you have a child who was  
2 or 3 years old on  
31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 or is in an 'at risk group'?  
Book them up for a nasal vaccination now**

### Protect yourself, protect others

If you are not sure if your child has had all their routine vaccinations, check their personal health record (Red Book) or contact the GP surgery.

To get the best protection for your child, they need to have had two doses of MMR vaccine. For a checklist of the vaccines and the ages at which they should ideally be given visit [www.nhs.uk/vaccinations](http://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations)

#### **Why children are offered flu vaccine**

Flu is a very common infection in babies and children. It can be very unpleasant for them.

Children with flu have the same symptoms as adults, including a high temperature, chills, aching muscles, a headache, a stuffy nose, a dry cough and a sore throat lasting up to a week.

Some children develop a very high temperature or complications of flu, such as [bronchitis](#), [pneumonia](#) and a painful [ear infection](#).

They may need hospital treatment, and very occasionally a child may die from flu.

In fact, healthy children under the age of 5 are more likely to have to be admitted to hospital with flu than any other age group.

For children with long-term health conditions, such as [diabetes](#), [asthma](#), [heart disease](#) or lung disease, getting flu can be very serious as they're more at risk of developing serious complications.

#### **Stopping the spread of flu**

The nasal spray flu vaccine will not only help protect your child against flu, the infection will also be less able to spread from them to their family, carers and the wider population.

Children spread flu because they generally do not use tissues properly or wash their hands.

Vaccinating children also protects others that are vulnerable to flu, such as babies, older people, pregnant women and people with serious long-term illnesses.

### SHINGLES INFO

Who is eligible?

- If you are 70 years old
- If you are in your 70s and born after 1<sup>st</sup> September 1942
- If you are aged 78 or 79 who has not yet had the vaccine

Please call the surgery and tell the receptionist you would like to book a Shingles vaccination with one of our Practice Nurses.

**What is Shingles?** It is an infection of a nerve and the skin around it. It is caused by the herpes varicella-zoster virus, which also causes chickenpox. Shingles usually affects a specific area on either the left or right side of the body. It causes a painful rash which develops into itchy blisters. Most people feel unwell for several days before the rash appears.

**What causes shingles?** Most people have chickenpox in childhood, but after the illness has gone, the virus remains dormant (inactive) in the nervous system. The immune system (the body's natural defence system) keeps the virus in check, but later in life it can be reactivated and cause shingles.

It is not known exactly why the shingles virus is reactivated at a later stage in life, but it may be due to having lowered immunity (protection against infections and diseases).



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### Patient Participation Group Page

#### Your surgery needs you!

Have you ever thought about joining our Patient Participation Group?



Our Patient Participation Group, or PPG, is run by volunteer patients and our Operations Manager, Jan Lenny, to help strengthen the relationship between the practice and you, our patients. Your PPG contributes ideas, feedback and suggestions to improve patient experience. If you would like to know more or want to get involved, please speak to Jan today. During the COVID-19 pandemic all meetings are happening remotely online.

#### SJW PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG)

The last meeting was held online 10<sup>th</sup> September and was a great success with many patients being able to dial in and participate. Jan discussed the issues we had faced during the initial stages of the pandemic and how our working lives had to adapt and heard feedback from the patients on their experiences during lockdown. You can read the minutes of the meeting on our website [www.stjohnsway.nhs.uk](http://www.stjohnsway.nhs.uk) and on our PPG notice board.

If you haven't been before feel free to join us at our next meeting on **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020 at 1.30pm** details for the zoom link will be sent to all those registering an interest.



#### The Saturday Flu Event – Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2020

The surgery held its annual flu vaccination event on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October. The surgery was open from 9.00am until 3.00pm to give any eligible St John's Way patients their free NHS flu jab in a booked appointment slot. This year we faced many challenges with a very different way of working and we are pleased to say the day went extremely well.

We also offered walk in jabs on the day. We managed to vaccinate 420 patients in one day. If you missed out this year, be sure to attend next year's event where we hope to protect even more of our patients by giving the flu vaccine and be able to go back to providing music and goodies for us all to enjoy.

It's not too late to get your jab though.....

.....If you were not available on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October, we are holding flu vaccination clinics throughout the winter so please book and protect yourself, your family and the Islington community from the flu this winter. You can call 0207 272 1585 to book or book a flu clinic appointment online.



## St John's Way Medical Centre

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## Coronavirus

It has been the most unusual year the country has experienced in many decades. We thought it may be interesting for you to hear from two of our team on their experiences during this time. Firstly Dr Kate Jolowicz gives an overview of what we have had to face and change at St John's Way and secondly Nurse Jess Bains will give you an insight into how she joined a new service to help patients that were shielding in the initial stages of the pandemic.

### **Dr Kate Jolowicz**

What an extraordinary few months this has been for SJW staff and patients. I have been at the practice since 1984, and although we have weathered some difficult times, the coronavirus has created an environment we could not have predicted – even a year ago. So... what has happened at the practice, in response to COVID-19?

- We had to close our doors to patients at the start of the pandemic – unprecedented!
- We started to do all our consultations by 'phone, and gradually video, photos and text messaging has been introduced.
- If patients thought they might have COVID, we would advise them to stay home, if they weren't too unwell, or to go to hospital if they were – especially those experiencing breathing difficulties and/or with long term conditions. A few patients fell somewhere in the middle, and these we invited to the surgery, where they were either seen outside (in the bicycle cage!) or in our 'Hot Zone'. They had to come in through a separate door at the back of the surgery, were given masks to wear, and the clinicians had to don PPE to see them. The most important thing was to check their oxygen levels before and after exercise – so patients were asked to walk up and down Ashbrook Road, to see whether they maintained their blood oxygen level. Some were loaned pulse oximeters to monitor their oxygen levels at home. For those who couldn't get to the surgery, there was a volunteer bike service, delivering and collecting pulse oximeters. Initially, there was no testing for COVID 19 outside the hospitals, but that has now become available, so that we are able to diagnose people more accurately.
- More recently, NHS England have been allowing us to invite patients back in to see their doctors and nurses, where necessary, but only after they have been assessed on the 'phone. We are still unable to book routine appointments, and have a triage system each day, so that if any of the doctors fall ill, patients will still be dealt with.
- And now there is eCONSULT. You are encouraged to complete this (details are on our website), so that we have an advance record of your symptoms, concerns and expectations, before we deal with your concern. Many of you are finding this a quick and efficient way of accessing the care that you need, and we hope that this system will continue to improve, as we all become more familiar with it.
- Any patients visiting the surgery are still asked to wear face masks inside the building, and the clinician seeing them will wear PPE. Home visits are difficult, because of infection risk, but we are in the process of learning ways of making them as safe as possible, so that we can go when they are absolutely necessary.
- We have had glass screens put up around the reception area to protect both staff and patients – actually, most people think they are very smart!

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SJW PATIENTS! You have been so considerate and helpful in keeping the surgery as safe as possible, and by understanding the pressures that we have been under. We have very much appreciated this.

We don't know what the future holds – but it looks unlikely that we will get back to our old appointment system any time soon. Whatever, we look forward to working with you all and to ensuring that we continue to offer you the best care that we possibly can!

## Nurse Jess Bains

I had just started my new role as Practice Nurse at St John's Way, navigating new systems and being trained by new colleagues in new skills, when out of nowhere the planet was struck by a global pandemic. Covid19 arrived. All of a sudden we weren't concerned about how we were going to fit all of our patients into busy clinics, but how we were going to keep them out of the surgery, in their own homes, protecting from this deadly virus. The country went into lockdown on March 23rd 2020, little over a month after my first day in the Practice.

Every day there was so many questions and so few answers: what happens when, what do we do if, who can we risk bringing in, and how can we help those that need to stay home? I, along with most of the country, wanted to help but did not know how. Having less to do in the Practice also presented its own challenges and opportunities. I learnt something that nurses rarely get to learn: having too much time can be almost as tricky as having too little!

In the wake of Covid19 swathes of patients were 'shielding', unable to leave home for any reason, with essentials such as food and medication being delivered to their door. For some this meant weeks or months spent entirely alone and new issues including isolation and loneliness rose up around established health concerns. NHS Community and District Nurses were suddenly inundated with new patients.

The opportunity to redeploy with Islington GP Federation (IGPF) came about a month into the lockdown. Recognising that the District Nurses needed support, IGPF created a new role that nurses in other fields could redeploy into and I volunteered to participate. Once the ball was rolling things developed quickly and barely more than two weeks after I heard about the new role I was out and seeing patients in their own homes.

Once up and running, I visited shielding patients for routine nursing care that I would normally see in the GP Practice. I received my allocation in the morning and packed my bag before setting off on my bicycle. One of the greatest challenges was getting used to the change of setting; I had to be organised enough to know what I would need for each visit that day so it was packed and ready, alongside additional equipment in case I came across an emergency. I also had to be 'weather prepared' as a warm sunny day could suddenly evolve into blustering showers, and I had nowhere to shelter. Small things became essentials: having a bum-bag to store my PPE, always keeping at least two pens handy (usually one tucked in my hair) and having alcohol hand sanitiser attached to my belt. I got to see new parts of Islington, meet interesting people – many of whom hadn't seen another person since the lockdown began – and feel overwhelmed by the gratitude paid to our NHS: once even being applauded as I left a patient's house!

The scheme has now wound down due to the end of the government advice on shielding, but I found it personally reassuring to know how quickly a program such as this could be set up in the midst of a global pandemic, and how professional and kind I found everyone new that I worked with.

### **General Practice is open, but you can help us and the NHS this winter**

Winter is always a busy time for the NHS and this year we are busier than ever due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to ensure we can help those patients most in need **please consider carefully if you really need to contact the surgery** as there are other options available to you

- **NHS online – [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) you can check symptoms and get advice**
- **Self-help using over the counter medication to see if they can help for a few days before contacting the doctor**
- **Speak to your local pharmacist – they are experienced medical professionals who can help with a majority of minor ailments**

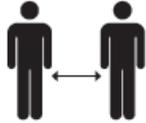
**Thank you for your continued help and support**

# PROTECT YOURSELF, FRIENDS AND FAMILY

## STAY SAFE



Wash your hands regularly



Keep 2 metres away from people you don't live with



Wear a face covering in indoor public spaces where you can't safely social distance

## LOOK OUT FOR SYMPTOMS



New, continuous cough



High temperature



Loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

## GOT SYMPTOMS? STAY AT HOME AND GET TESTED

Request a test online at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://nhs.uk/coronavirus) **OR CALL 119**  
TO KEEP YOURSELF AND YOUR LOVED ONES SAFE



## We're here to help

If you are struggling because of coronavirus, the 'We are Islington' helpline can help. As well as helping you access essential supplies like food and medicine, we are here if you are feeling lonely, isolated, or anxious or if you just need a friendly chat. We can also offer advice and support with finances and benefits.

Call **020 7527 8222** or email [weareislington@islington.gov.uk](mailto:weareislington@islington.gov.uk), 7 days a week, 9am-5pm. For British Sign Language (BSL), you can use Signvideo. You can find more information at [www.islington.gov.uk/bsllive](http://www.islington.gov.uk/bsllive)

### Support if you are worried about paying your rent or being evicted

We know that many residents are struggling financially due to the crisis, but local advice and support is available. If you are struggling to pay your rent and are concerned about being evicted, please call **020 7527 6053** or email [advice.housing@islington.gov.uk](mailto:advice.housing@islington.gov.uk)

### Support if you are out of work

If you need help with one-to-one coaching, mentoring, or support to find work or training, our iWork service can help. Call **020 7527 2706**, email [iwork@islington.gov.uk](mailto:iwork@islington.gov.uk) or visit [www.islington.gov.uk/employment](http://www.islington.gov.uk/employment)

### Could you support and empower the community?

As the coronavirus crisis continues, more and more people are struggling financially, socially and mentally. Sign up to be a COVID-19 Health Champion - free training on how to keep your community informed with the latest information and guidance about coronavirus, and keep an eye out for people who need support. Find out more at [www.islington.gov.uk/covidchampions](http://www.islington.gov.uk/covidchampions)

If you have spare time and would like to get involved, local community groups are short of volunteers at the moment and would love to hear from you. Find out more at [www.islington.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.islington.gov.uk/coronavirus). Or you could make a donation at [www.islingtongiving.uk/covid-crisis-and-recovery](http://www.islingtongiving.uk/covid-crisis-and-recovery) or call **020 7288 6941**.

Between us, we have already raised £400,000 which is being used to help support the most vulnerable in our community.