

**Working together to maximise  
the health and wellbeing of  
individuals and our community**



**Weardale  
Practice**  
COMMUNITY HEALTH  
& WELLBEING

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# Patient Newsletter September

## Welcome to your first edition of The Weardale Practice Patient Newsletter!

Every month, we will be letting you know what is happening across Weardale, providing information and updates to help you make the most of your local health services, and much more besides.

This is your newsletter, so if there are regular features, focus on specific issues or new initiatives you'd like to read about, do please let us know.

### You Said, We Did

One of the most common comments we get from patients is that it's difficult to get an appointment at short notice.

Well, we've been working hard on a solution and so far **we have managed to free up an additional 45 GP appointments a week.**

**This has been achieved through expanding our triage system.**

**Here's how it works:**

- You call the surgery first thing in the morning, asking to be seen that day.
- A triage clinician will call you back - they are new, highly qualified members of staff, educated to provide advance nursing care and prescribe medicine.
- They will use their medical training to make a clinical assessment for you, and offer either an appointment with them, with a GP, or whatever course of action is most appropriate.
- Because our triage clinicians can deal with a range of common ailments from chest infections and rashes, to bites and burns - this leaves our GPs with more time for patients with more complex or long time conditions.
- To learn more about the new system, and new clinicians, you can pick up a guide at your practice or ask a member of staff for more information.

### News and Updates

**You may have already seen in the Weardale Gazette or from posters and flyers across the Dale that we have recently launched a new patient survey. We want to hear your thoughts.**

This survey is unique - the first of its kind in the region - and your opinions and ideas will be vital to creating the best possible, sustainable services for years to come.

Make sure you add your voice to the hundreds of responses we've had so far. Will you spare a few minutes and complete the survey at [bit.ly/wdpsurvey?](http://bit.ly/wdpsurvey?)

Paper versions of the survey are also available in all Practice locations, and we'll update you next time with the results, and the next steps.



**Weardale  
Practice**

## The NHS Friends & Family Test

Created to let patients share their feedback with practices, and highlight areas that need to be better, we regularly review the comments we receive.

**Most recently, 89% of patients said they would recommend The Weardale Practice to family and friends.**

We've had some great comments too, but do please keep talking to us so we can not just maintain, but improve the service we offer you.

Last month, **3.35%** of all appointments that were booked by patients were not attended. That's **121** wasted appointments, totalling over **20 hours** of time that could have been used.

If you're ever unable to attend an appointment you've booked, for whatever reason, please call the practice to let us know so the time can go to someone who needs it.



Why not sign up for our SMS text messaging service to receive appointment reminders amongst other useful services.

## How We're Doing

We'll also use these newsletters to let you know how we're doing as a practice, the feedback we're getting from patients, and where improvements can be made.

"Extremely happy with service provided."

"Good telephone follow up to arrange appointment. Welcoming, friendly staff."

"Always a prompt and helpful response which is much appreciated."



## Access Our Online Services

Want to book an appointment or order your repeat prescription? Online services are available for all of our patients, meaning you can access information anywhere, at anytime.

The system is easy to use, and is accessible with any computer, tablet or smartphone with an Internet connection. Please visit the practice to find out more information and get signed up.

## Follow Us On Facebook

The Weardale Practice is now on Facebook! Make sure to give us a follow in order to get the latest news straight to your News Feed, including health advice, practice opening times and much more.

Find us by searching Weardale Practice.

## Get Your Flu Vaccination

You can now make an appointment for your flu jab or ask at reception about our walk in clinics.

Flu vaccine is the best protection we have against an unpredictable, unpleasant, and in some cases, potentially life threatening illness. Vaccination significantly reduces your chance of getting flu.

To book an appointment, please speak to one of our receptionists, or alternatively call the surgery on 01388 528555 during practice opening hours.

## Drop in flu vaccine clinics

No Appointments required

**Stanhope** - every Monday evening in October between 5-6 pm

**Stanhope** - every Tuesday afternoon in October between 2-5 pm

**Wolsingham** - Tuesday 8th & 16th between 9 - 11 am

**St Johns Chapel** - Tuesdays 9, 16, 23 & 30th October between 4-5 pm

Dedicated kids nasal flu clinic (letter sent to healthy 2 & 3 year olds to be vaccinated in surgery) - Stanhope 15th October & Wolsingham 22nd October



## Inside The Weardale Practice

**A Fond Farewell...** to Rachel Gibson, who leaves us after 3 years as a Practice Nurse to take up an exciting new post as a Diabetic Specialist Nurse at the University Hospital of North Durham. A huge thank you to Rachel for all her hard work here, and best of luck for the future.

**A Warm Welcome...** to Susan Groves, who has recently joined us as a Treatment Room Nurse, and will soon complete her training to become the Practice's new Diabetic Nurse. Marie Myers has also joined us this month as a full time Practice Nurse. Marie will join the team in providing care, treatments and health education to our patients.

As ever, we want to hear from you about all aspects of the services we provide at The Weardale Practice, especially what you'd like to read about in future newsletters, so do please get in touch.

And don't forget - our patient survey is live now until 12 October. Make sure you take the opportunity to be part of creating the future you want for your local health services.

Thanks for reading!

**In Other News...** we're delighted to continue our long standing support for local charities by introducing the first of our two chosen causes for 2018.



**Hug in a Bag** was founded in Sunderland in 2006 by three breast cancer patients. Each 'Hug' costs around £60 to produce and contains gifts and information that have been developed to help patients share their thoughts, anxieties and concerns, and to feel love in times of fear.

In June, Lorraine Brooksbank, our administration team leader, and her friend Marianne Wallace took part in the Great North Swim, raising £168 and counting for Hug in a Bag. Well done Lorraine and Marianne!

Look out for more opportunities to support this great cause in the future, along with our second incredible local charity that we'll introduce you to in our next newsletters.