



### Welcome to the Winter edition of the Vale Of Evesham PCN Newsletter

These newsletters are released quarterly to keep practice staff and patients up to date on the progress and events in the Vale of Evesham Primary Care Network (PCN). The Vale of Evesham PCN covers a population of approximately 62,000 patients, geographically covering Evesham, Bredon, Broadway, Inkberrow and its local rural areas.

The PCN management team includes our two Clinical Directors – Dr Neill Bramble, Dr Chethan Reddy, Operations Manager – Joe Icke, Deputy Operations Manager—Kirsty-Anne Taylor & Senior Administrator – Nikki Porter.

For more information about the Vale of Evesham PCN please visit our website: [www.valeofeveshampcn.co.uk](http://www.valeofeveshampcn.co.uk) or access via the QR code:



Information included in this edition of the newsletter is based around Winter care and includes:

- PCN services on offer and introducing staff
- which medical service best suits my needs
- keeping warm this winter
- flu and covid vaccinations
- Handiapp
- CPCS
- update on Your Health bus which was mentioned in the Autumn newsletter.

All of us at the PCN wish all of our patients a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2024!

## PCN services

To meet the needs of our changing population, our 7 GP practices are working collaboratively with community, mental health, social care, pharmacy, hospital and voluntary services in the area. The services that we have to offer are:

**Social prescribing and lifestyle advice:-** partnered with Onside Advocacy to provide lifestyle advice, social prescribing and wellbeing coaching to support patients in living a fulfilling, healthy lifestyle with a holistic approach that goes beyond medicine.

**First Contact Physiotherapy:-** carrying out thorough physical assessments, prescribing exercise, suggesting lifestyle changes and access medical investigations such as x-rays or MRI scans, Referring to specialists such as orthopaedics.

**First Contact Mental Health:-** Primary Care, Wellbeing Team and Mental Health services providing advice and support, assessments, treatment, education and problem solving approaches to our patients.

**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS):-** support children and young people between the ages of 5-18 years with their emotional wellbeing and mental health.

**Care Co-ordinators:-** They will work closely with the GPs and other primary care professionals within the PCN to identify and manage a caseload of identified patients, making sure that appropriate support is made available to them and their carers, and ensuring that their changing needs are addressed.

## Meet the staff



**Dr Chethan Reddy—Clinical Director—**Chethan Reddy is a GP partner at Merstow Green Medical Practice and has worked in the Evesham area since 2013. He qualified in India and moved to the UK, initially training in Paediatrics and later completing his GP training in South Worcester in 2007. He represented The Vale (EBBI) in the South Worcester Alliance Board and was involved in the creation of Neighbourhood teams as part of the transformation programme. He has been leading the Neighbourhood team since 2018 and the Care Home project working with NT and practices.



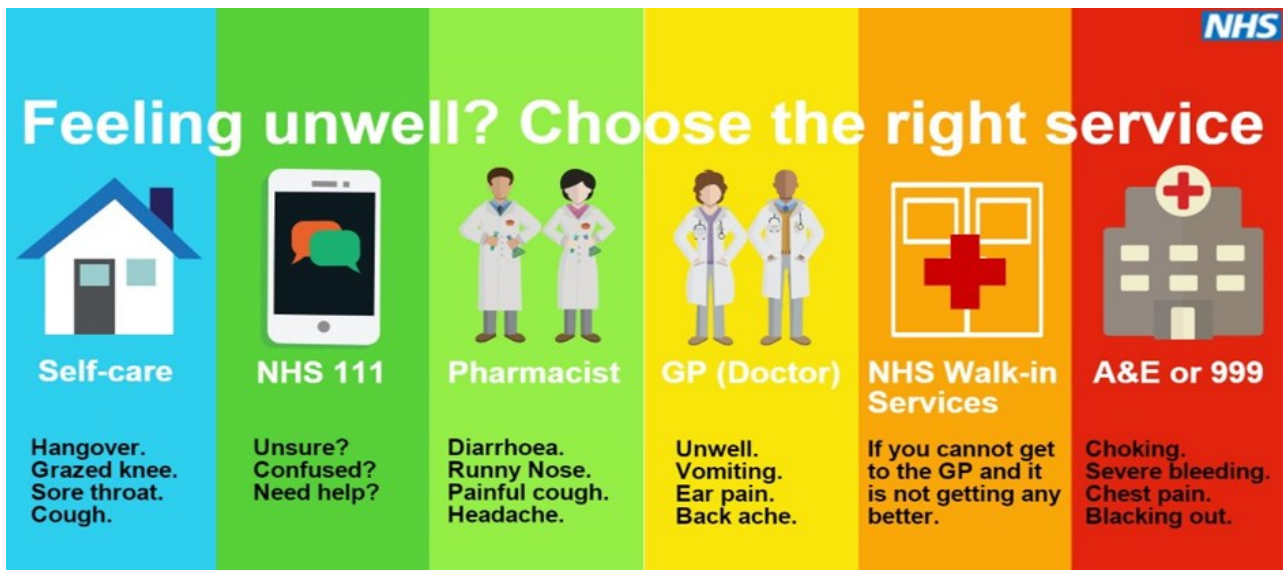
**Dr Neill Bramble—Clinical Director—**Dr Bramble has been a GP in Evesham since 2015 and is a partner at Riverside Surgery. He trained in Birmingham before completing his GP training in South Worcester. Prior to this he was a Medical Officer in the British Army and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result, Dr Bramble enjoys working as part of a diverse and skilled team and is determined to develop the PCN to benefit patient care and the staff working within it. He takes specific responsibility for the social prescribing element of the service.



**Joe Icke—Operations Manager—**Joe has worked in Primary Care for a number of years as a Practice Manager and served with the Royal Air Force prior to that. His role within the PCN is to co-ordinate the smooth running of an increasingly diverse team of clinical staff and staff allied to Healthcare. He holds Budgetary responsibilities for the PCN and uses his experience within healthcare, to help develop additional services to the benefit of patients.

## Which medical service best suits my needs?

It is very important that patients are aware of who to contact for what treatments, please find below the information that you need. Knowing who to contact allows you to get the best level of care for your ailments or injuries as quickly as possible and also frees up services such as A&E, Minor injuries and GP practices if they are not required.



### Keeping warm this winter

**Heat the home:** Heat your home to at least 18°C (65°F), if you can, you might prefer your living room to be slightly warmer. Remember to keep your window closed on winter nights as breathing in cold air can be bad for your health because it increases the risk of chest infections.

**Be smart and energy efficient:** To ensure that heat doesn't escape your home, fit draught proofing to seal any gaps around windows and doors making sure you have loft insulation if necessary. If you have cavity walls, make sure they are insulated too. Don't forget to draw curtains at dusk and to make sure your radiators are not obstructed by furniture or curtains. For more [tips on how to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating and keep up with energy bills, visit: www.gov.uk/phe/keep-warm](https://www.gov.uk/phe/keep-warm). Check your heating and cooking appliances are safe by contacting a [Gas Safe registered engineer](#).

**Dress warm:** Wear lots of thin layers – clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres are particularly good at helping to maintain body heat and several layers trap warm air better than one bulky layer. Also wear good-fitting slippers and shoes with a grip to avoid slipping.

**Move a little or a lot:** Exercise is good for you all year round, not only will moving more keep you healthy, it can keep you warm over the colder winter months. If possible, try to move around least once an hour. Remember to speak to your GP before starting any exercise plans to ensure they are tailored for your needs and abilities.

**Pharmacy first:** If you do start to feel unwell over the winter months, even if it's just a cough or a cold, it's important to get help from your pharmacist before it gets more serious. Pharmacists are fully qualified to advise you on the best course of action – this can be the best and quickest way to help you recover and get back to normal. If you can't go yourself, you could always ask someone **else to go for you**.

## Flu and covid vaccinations

This year's vaccinations started earlier than planned as a precautionary measure taken to protect those most vulnerable from illness during the winter following the identification of Covid-19 variant BA.2.86.

We are strongly urging our patients that if you have not had a covid or flu vaccination that you have one at the earliest possibility especially if you fall in one of the following categories:

- ◆ Aged 65 years old or over (you need to be 65 years old by 31 March 2024)
- ◆ Aged 6 months to 64 years and are at increased risk
- ◆ Living in a care home for older adults
- ◆ A frontline or social care worker
- ◆ Aged 16 to 64 years old and are a carer
- ◆ Aged 12 to 64 years old and live with someone with a weakened immune system.



You can book an appointment by contacting your surgery or book an appointment online:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccination/getting-a-covid-19-vaccine/> or by using the QR code:

## HANDi app

HANDi app is an app that can be downloaded on your smartphone and if your child is unwell you can check their symptoms to get instant, NHS-approved medical advice.

It has been developed and approved by Paediatric Consultants and provides expert advice on how best to manage the most common childhood illnesses, including:

- \* Diarrhoea and vomiting
- \* High temperature
- \* 'Chesty baby' illnesses, such as bronchiolitis, asthma and croup
- \* 'Chesty child' illnesses such as wheezing and asthma
- \* Abdominal pain
- \* Common newborn problems.



The app is free and can be downloaded to any Apple or Android smartphone or tablet.

You can find out more and download the app by visiting the website: <https://www.hwics.org.uk/our-services/handi-app> or by using the QR code:

## CPCS

The NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) is a nationwide service to refer patients requiring low acuity advice, treatment and urgent repeat prescriptions. The service is aimed at reducing pressure on the primary and urgent care system, particularly Accident and Emergency and GP Out of Hours. The service supports the integration of community pharmacy into the urgent care system.

This means that when you contact your GP surgery, the receptionist will triage you to see which is the best service that you require. All of the receptionists have had the appropriate training to be able to do this. If your ailment or query can be dealt with by a pharmacist you will then be referred on to them and they will be able to help you. There are many pharmacies in your area that are signed up to this service and will be able to help you.

Conditions that the GP practice will refer you to the pharmacy for are: bites and stings, colds and flu like symptoms, congestion (blocked or runny nose, hay fever, excess mucus etc), ear wax, eyes (conjunctivitis, dry, runny or sore eyes), gastric and bowel issues (constipation, heartburn, indigestion, haemorrhoids, vomiting), gynae and thrush conditions, general muscular pain, strains and sprains, skin conditions (acne, athletes foot, dermatitis, rashes, warts and verruca), mouth and throat conditions (cold sore, ulcers, sore throat).

Conditions that won't be referred to the pharmacy are: children under 1 year old, immunosuppressed patients, severe symptoms, pregnant patients, symptoms/conditions that have lasted more than three weeks, people who have not responded to over the counter medication.

If a pharmacist feels you need to be seen by a GP after their consultation with you then they will contact your practice to ensure that you get seen.

## Health Inequalities

We are currently in the process of reaching out to patients who have difficulty engaging with Primary Care, for what ever reason, to ensure they are registered with a GP practice and getting the appropriate health care. A couple of the ways that we are doing this are:



### Your Health Bus update:

We introduced you to Your Health bus in the last newsletter. The service will go out to various, hard to reach locations to assist people with registering with a GP and giving basic health checks such as: blood pressure monitoring, annual health checks, blood tests and ECGs. Keep an eye out for the Your Health bus near you.

### Leaflets/posters in shops and community hubs:

We will soon be delivering leaflets and posters in a variety of languages to shops and community hubs in Evesham and surrounding areas for visitors and users of these shops to see and take away. The first leaflet will be about how to register with a GP and lists the 7 GP surgeries, a web address and a QR code to the government site for registering with a GP. We are in the process of developing other health literature that we can provide to the community about maternity services. Our aim is to reach out to as many people as possible so that they are aware of what health facilities are available to them.