



Welcome to the latest edition of our Practice Newsletter.

As we welcome the festive season and approach the end of an eventful year, we hope 2024 has been a good one for you and that 2025 brings you joy, prosperity, and good health.



For those who read our last newsletter you may recall Dr Paul Frisby's article discussing the collective action we support alongside our colleagues across England. We're dedicated to maintaining the high standards of care you deserve, even in the face of challenges.

Having been a patient at Arlington Road Medical Practice for over 10 years before joining the team, I know first-hand how well-cared-for our patients feel. Working behind the scenes, I see the incredible effort that goes into providing this care. Unfortunately, the reality is that some services, like our phlebotomy service, could be funded better, so we often operate at a loss. For the past 16 months, we've been reviewing our services carefully to strike the right balance: continuing to deliver exceptional care while being transparent about services we've had to pause due to funding shortfalls.

A Big Thank You to Our Amazing Team and Community

This year hasn't been without its challenges, but it has highlighted the strength, resilience, and kindness of our team, our Patient Participation Group (PPG), and our Partners. Your support means everything to us. Our PPG has played a vital role in helping us understand your needs and has guided us on how best to communicate changes.

We're proud to share some positive achievements:

- **Friends and Family Survey:** Our feedback has reached its **highest level ever**, with 97% of you rating our services as "Good" or "Very Good."
- **Veteran Accreditation:** We're honoured to have become a **Veteran-Accredited Practice this year. Eastbourne and Meads have the third-largest veteran community in East Sussex, and** we're committed to supporting those who have served.
- Our **staff and clinical team retention** is at its best levels in **over 7 years**, reflecting the strength of our practice values and commitment to continuity of care. We believe that having a consistent and dedicated team is essential to providing the best possible experience for our patients, and we're proud to maintain a supportive environment where our team members thrive.

Quality of Outcomes (QOF): We have once again demonstrated another high level of outcomes, achieving an overall score in 2023-24 in the top quartile in the country. This reflects our continued focus on ensuring patients receive consistent, evidence-based care for long-term conditions.

Thank You for Your Support

We also want to express our heartfelt thanks for your kind feedback and generosity. Our strong sense of community and "family feel" are at the heart of what we do, and they're what make Arlington Road Medical Practice so special.



We wish you a joyful festive season and a happy, healthy New Year!

Warm wishes,

Mike Leigh, Business Manager and The Team at ARMP

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Practice Christmas Opening Hours

Tuesday 24th - open as usual until 6.00pm
Wednesday 25th - Thursday 26th inc - Closed
Wednesday 1st January - Closed

We will be open at our usual times on all other **weekdays** over the Christmas period.

To contact the Out of Hours GP Service, for urgent problems that will not wait until we are next open, please call NHS 111 by dialling 111 on your telephone keypad.

Please remember to order your prescriptions in plenty of time before we close for Christmas

We take this opportunity to wish all of our patients a Merry Christmas and a Happy & Healthier New Year!

Pharmacy Christmas Opening Hours

Arlington Road Pharmacy will be closed on the following dates over the Christmas and New Year period...

Wednesday 25th - Thursday 26th
December inclusive

Monday 1st January
open 14:00-17:00 only

On all other days they will be open at their usual opening hours which are...

Mon - Fri: 8.30am–6.30pm
Saturday: 09.00am-1.00pm
Sunday: Closed

 **Day Lewis Pharmacy**

Prescription Requests

Please remember to order your prescriptions that will be due around Christmas in plenty of time. Also ensure you have enough of all of your medications to cover the Christmas Period.

1 in 4 calls to the GP Out of Hours Service is for medication – please save this service for genuine urgent treatment and advice that you cannot plan for.



Thank you

A big thank you to all patients who have sent Christmas cards, gifts and good wishes to the team. Your kindness is greatly appreciated.



Collective Action - Phlebotomy Services

Many of you will have already seen the letter regarding phlebotomy services that was sent out recently by SMS. For those who may not have received this, the content of the letter is below...

Dear Patients

In our Autumn Newsletter, our Senior Partner, Dr Paul Frisby, highlighted the collective action being undertaken by Practices across the country to address ongoing challenges.

We would like to inform you of a change to how we manage blood tests requested by external healthcare professionals, eg. hospital and other clinics. Historically we have carried out blood tests requested by other healthcare professionals, however, it has become increasingly unsustainable for the Practice to continue providing this service while it remains subsidised from our own resources. This decision has not been taken lightly.

We appreciate your understanding as we adapt to these pressures and ensure that our services remain viable and focused on providing the best possible care to our patients.

We will continue to carry out blood tests that have been requested by one of our own clinicians, but any requests from clinicians outside of Arlington Road Medical Practice will need to be booked into one of the secondary care services listed below:-

The Eastbourne Hospital Phlebotomy Department

The Bexhill Community Diagnostic Centre

You can either book online at: https://swiftqueue.co.uk/east_sussex_phlebotomy.php or telephone: 0300 131 5560.

Please note these clinics DO NOT operate a walk-in service, you must pre-book an appointment.

Thank you for your understanding.

The Partners – Arlington Road Medical Practice

The decision has raised some questions from our patients who have until now been able to have their hospital requested blood tests carried out at the Practice. You may find the following FAQ's helpful:

Q. Why was this decision made?

A. In our Autumn newsletter, Dr Paul Frisby explained our collective action alongside other GP practices. This action specifically impacts the phlebotomy service. As of week commencing 8th December, GP practices across Eastbourne will no longer subsidise blood test requests from other healthcare professionals. This service has incurred significant costs for practices, and we have not received appropriate funding to cover these expenses.

Q. What if I have a shared care agreement and my hospital is outside Sussex?

A. We will make an exception in cases where a shared care agreement exists with a hospital outside Sussex. These agreements formalise cooperation between primary and secondary care, and we will continue to honour them.

Q. What about patients undergoing chemotherapy?

A. We understand this is a difficult situation. Whilst we expect secondary care providers to arrange blood tests for chemotherapy patients, if this has not been arranged and it is particularly difficult for the patient to attend the hospital for the blood test, then we will book an appointment here at the Practice.

Q. Have secondary care providers been informed?

A. Yes, letters have been sent to local MPs, the Integrated Care Board (ICB), and Secondary Care Providers to inform them of the collective action on Phlebotomy Services across Eastbourne.

Q. How can patients make a complaint?

A. Please direct any complaints to your local MP and the Integrated Care Board.

Sussex Health & Care

NHS Sussex

Sackville House

Brooks Close

Lewes

BN7 2FZ

sxicb.contactus@nhs.net

We need patients and NHS England to understand the impact of under-resourcing Primary Care Services.

Q. What happens if I already have an appointment booked at Arlington Road Medical Practice?

A. In this scenario, the appointments will be honoured.

Flu & Covid-19 Vaccinations

Flu

During the winter, flu circulates in the community, and this winter will be no exception.

- If you've been invited for a flu vaccination and haven't yet booked your appointment, then please call SDHC on 01323 402530 to book an appointment.
- If your school-aged child has a long-term condition and has been invited for a flu vaccination and they have missed having their vaccination at school, you can make an appointment for them to receive their vaccination in the surgery.
- If you have a child aged two or three on 31st August 2024 (those born between 01.09.20 -31.08.2022), they are eligible for a free flu vaccination. Children can suffer complications as a result of flu, and your child gets the best protection from flu if they're vaccinated. Please call the surgery to make an appointment if you not already done so.



Covid-19

The following groups are eligible for an Autumn Booster, if you fall into one of these categories and have not yet booked your Covid-19 Booster, please call SDHC on 01323 402530 to book an appointment.

- Adults aged 65 years and over
- Residents in a care home for older adults
- Individuals aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical at risk group ([as defined in tables 3 or 4 in the Covid-19 chapter of the Green Book](#))
- Frontline NHS and social care workers, and those working in care homes for older people.

Trainee Doctor Rotation

We welcomed 3 more trainee doctors to the team at the beginning of December:

Dr Alex Valceanu (Dr Alex) (ST3) will be with us until March 2026.

Dr Asad Manzoor (ST2) and Dr Jane Jeater (ST2) will be with us until the beginning of April 2025 .

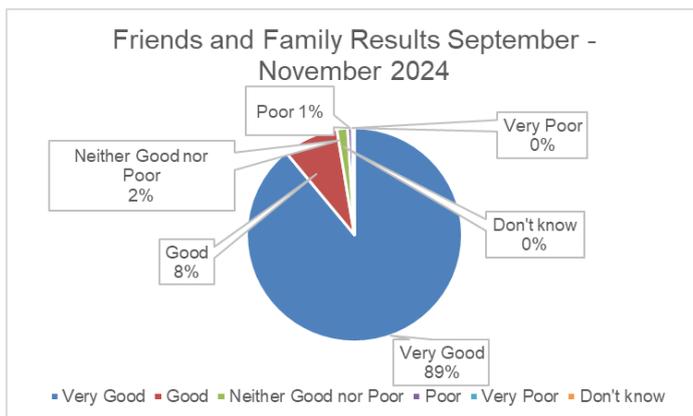
Dr Sameer Pasha (Dr Sam) who joined us in August for four months is now staying with the Practice for a further four months.

Drs Raquel Lightbourne-Regan (ST2), Dr Ebrima Darboe (ST3) and Dr Olawale Olaniyi (Dr Wale), continue with their current placements with us.



Friends and Family Feedback

Thank you to everyone who has completed a Friends and Family Test (FFT) Survey recently. Patients who are signed up to receive appointment reminders will receive an SMS following their appointment giving them the opportunity to complete the survey. Alternatively, this can be completed online via our [website](#), or we have paper copies of the survey at reception which can be posted in our Friends and Family Box in Waiting Area A.



The FFT is a valuable tool to enable us to see when we are getting things right and equally highlights areas where improvement is needed. We read all of your comments every month and take your suggestions seriously. The high percentage of positive comments are greatly uplifting for the team.

To give you an idea of how representative the survey is, it was completed voluntarily by 994 patients in 3 months. You can complete the survey at any time via our [website](#), patients who have opted for appointment reminders, will receive a text message after their appointment giving them the opportunity to complete the survey.



MACMILLAN **Cake Sale**
CANCER SUPPORT



You may remember from our Autumn Newsletter we held a Macmillan Cake sale at the Practice on Friday 27th September. From sales made on the day in the Practice and online donations received on the Just Giving page we raised, we are delighted to announce we raised a total of £369! This is the highest total we have raised in the 3 years we have been holding the cake sale.

Thank you to everyone who baked, volunteered, ate cake and donated!



Recycling through Surgeries

We now have a Medi Tech Trust recycling bin in Waiting Area A where you can place your unopened, unwanted, unused surgical consumables such as bandages, catheters etc.

These items are often prescribed and used by district nurses etc and then when a patient no longer requires them, relatives are often told to dispose of them as the nursing teams do not collect, nor will they take them back and pharmacies will not take them back either. This leads to waste of these items. Medi Tech, a registered charity based in Hailsham will collect and send items to overseas hospitals where they can be immediately used.

Please note: to comply with UK legislation NO MEDICINES or SHARPS can be accepted, these must be returned to a pharmacy.

If you have larger unused medical equipment such as crutches, boots, supports etc, we are unable to accommodate these at the Practice but you can call 01323 44 22 11 and Medi Tech will arrange to collect them from you.



Emergency food for local people in crisis. A project seeded by the Trussell Trust. Registered Charity No. 1149902

The Surgery is a collection point for the Eastbourne Foodbank. If you would like to make a donation, please hand any items in at reception. To check which items are most needed by the Foodbank at the current time visit <https://eastbourne.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>.

We also have a collection at reception where you can make monetary donations to the food bank if you prefer.



The Team at Arlington Road once again sported their favourite festive sweater on Thursday 12th December to raise money for Save the Children.

Each staff member participating donated at least £2.00 and we raised a total of £66!