

Painswick Surgery Patient Group (PPG)
Extended bulletin for eMail readers
March 2026



The Patient Group has seen some changes recently including the death of Chris West, a loyal member, in January. Together with one resignation from the group two vacancies have occurred and we hope that with one person having already applied to join it should mean the group will be just one short of its maximum membership, 12. We have a vacancy therefore and invite applications to painswickppg@gmail.com. We would be particularly interested in people with special interests in support for ex-military patients and/or carers. The minutes of our meetings are on the Practice's website [here](#) should you want more insight.

Digital Healthcare

The Group has recently been devoting some concentrated attention to digital developments in healthcare as it's one of three priorities for change from Wes Streeting and the Dept. of Health. At our last meeting we had a specialist speaker from Gloucs NHS who is responsible for GP's digital progress. It seems that our Practice is doing better than many in adopting new digital procedures including uses of the recently installed integrated telephone system. Prior to the meeting I invited comments on digital developments from all recipients of this newsletter and received a few. The most notable outcome from this was that eConsult has apparently become widely accepted (if a little begrudged!) provoking little comment now. Follow-up online responses to face-to-face consultations were given approval and the efficiency of email and text communications received some praise. The only significant concern expressed was for older patients who find digital approaches intimidating and difficult. The Practice and the Patient Group are very aware of this and we must emphasise that there are always traditional, non-digital alternatives. However, you will continue to be encouraged down the digital route, for efficiency reasons, and we will be doing what we can to help.

Gloucs NHS has put a short, easy to watch video giving insights into County-wide digital developments on YouTube [here](#).

NHS App

This is central to the government's vision and is becoming more and more useful over time. Patient Group member Neena Buntwal has been leading on offering support in accessing and using the App starting with Friday Club members. We are also offering an open invitation for others who need help in the Painswick Library 2.30 - 4.00pm on Friday 27th March. Just drop in.

Digital threats

If the threat of scams that we hear of all the time worries you then [The Little Book of Big Scams](#) is available online (click on the title). The key advice: Stop - take a moment to think before parting with your information or money; Challenge – Could it be fake – only criminals will try to rush you; Protect – contact your bank immediately if you think you have fallen victim to a scam.

Recent meeting – worries!

It has been evident for some time that GP practices are in many cases hanging on by their fingertips. As usual, at its February meeting the NotesPatient Group heard a report from the Practice's senior partner Dr Rhys Evans. It became clear from Dr Evans' comments that the considerable media attention to Wes Streeting's announcements last year raised expectations and have resulted in a significant increase in patients approaching the Surgery with minor ailments or worries that, in a time of considerable stress in the NHS, they could either treat themselves or show some forbearance over. The patient group would like to put out a plea therefore, that everyone can show support for our precious NHS by not expecting every minor ailment, or ongoing discomfort, to receive attention from hard pressed doctors. So hold back on eConsult unless really necessary. If that route is taken too readily, and too often, it will just reduce the chances of getting a face-to-face consultation. It is even possible that current pressures may become a threat to the safety of both doctors and patients as decisions are potentially having to be taken without adequate time to ensure thoroughness, which would mean that the very future of the Practice could be at stake.

On a more positive note

It is good to report that people seem to be responding to our pleas not to waste appointment times by failing to show up. The record for January showed a significant improvement. Also, of 146 recent responses to the Friends and Family test 76% marked their interactions with the Surgery as

Very Good, with 1% Very Poor. And the number one word in the feedback was 'efficient'.

Consulting rooms in the Surgery are being upgraded to meet Infection Prevention and Control standards and you wouldn't believe the number of criteria required by the NHS for the selection of new basins!

Add to our mailing list

Pleas like the above will be more effective if more people hear them but there is a limit to the information we can put out in the Beacon – hence these newsletters. So may we encourage you to encourage others to sign-up with a simple email request to join our mailing list sent to painswickppg@gmail.com

News from Gloucestershire NHS

Firstly, major changes announced last year are underway meaning that whereas our County has been both a general administrative district (the County Council) and with the same boundaries the NHS administration, now the NHS administration is being largely merged at a strategic level with Bristol, South Gloucs and North Somerset. This is called our Integrated Care Service Cluster. So, though a much reduced Gloucestershire NHS will continue to exist, redundancies are underway and with confusion at the national planning level it will not be known which responsibilities go where until later in March at best.

Urgent Dental Care appointments

There are currently 140 urgent care appointments available in Gloucestershire on average each week, and patients can access these by contacting NHS 111. They will then be triaged by dental nurses in the local urgent dental care team.

Pharmacy First

Treatments available direct from your Pharmacy have now been expanded to include contraception.

An **Update on Maternity Care** locally, including the suspension of home birthing is available [here](#)

The noted health charity the Kings Fund has examined **Gloucs approaches to vaccine delivery** during the pandemic - and it seems we can be proud of the emphasis on local effective delivery routes being better than many others – see [here](#)

David Perry, Patient Group Chair