

## Welcome!

We wanted to give a warm, Better Health MCR welcome to our newest practice, Brooklands Medical Practice!

We're working hard to make the practice the best it can be for patients and look forward to working together to bring about positive changes.

We would also like to thank Dr. Harrison and the previous GP partners for their dedication and service to the practice and its patients.



## Keeping well this winter

As the days get shorter and the weather turns colder, it's that time of year when coughs, colds and other winter bugs start to make their rounds.

We want to help you stay as healthy and comfortable as possible through the colder months. Here are a few simple steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones to keep you as well as possible:

### 1. Keep up to date with your vaccinations

As the temperature drops, there is always a rise of common winter illnesses, like flu or COVID-19. Having your flu and/or COVID-19 vaccine is one of the best ways to reduce your risk of getting these illnesses, or keep your symptoms mild.

If you're eligible, want to find out if you can have these vaccines, or are unsure about the vaccine and would like to speak to someone about them, contact your GP practice for more information. We're always here to help.

### 2. Keep warm

Cold weather can really affect your health, and makes it easier for you to get poorly. Especially if you're older or have long-term conditions.

Try to keep your home warm, at least 18°C if you can. Layer up with jumpers and blankets, and have hot drinks regularly to keep yourself toasty. Staying active (even a short walk or a bit of movement around the house) can keep your body temperature up and make a big difference to your health and mood during the darker days.



### 3. Look after yourself (and others)

If you're feeling under the weather, make sure to rest and drink plenty of fluids.

If you start to get a sore throat, cough, or cold, your local pharmacist is a great first stop for advice and treatment. They're highly trained and can help with most minor illnesses, often without the need for a GP appointment. If your symptoms don't improve, or you're worried, get in touch with us. We're always here to help.

Remember, to check in on neighbours, friends, or relatives who might be struggling. It can make a big difference!

### 4. Know where to get help

We know winter can be a difficult time. The colder weather, and rising costs can all take a toll, not just on your health, but on your wellbeing too. The good news is that there's lots of help out there!

If you're struggling to keep warm, worried about bills, or finding it hard to get out and about, there are local services and organisations that can offer advice and practical support. Whether it's help with heating, food, or just someone to talk to, you don't have to face things alone.

Manchester Local Care Organisation have put together a winter booklet of support per area. Find yours below:

**[For Robert Darbishire Practice and Whitswood Practice patients, click here](#)**

**[For Brooklands Medical Practice patients, click here](#)**

If you're worried about your health or wellbeing, or you're not sure where to turn, please get in touch with us. Our team are here to listen and to help you find the right support.

If you need medical help when we're closed, contact NHS 111 by calling 111 on your telephone, or visiting [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk). In an emergency, always call 999.

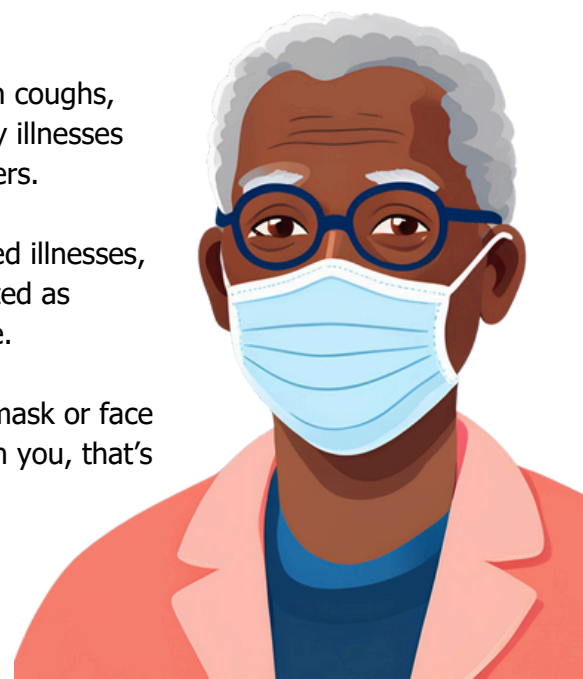
## Protect yourself, wear a mask

As the temperature drops, we often see more people coming down with coughs, colds, and other winter bugs. It's completely normal, especially as many illnesses spread more easily when we spend more time indoors and close to others.

This year, we've noticed a higher than usual number of breathing-related illnesses, such as flu and respiratory infections. To help keep everyone as protected as possible, we're taking a few extra steps to keep you safe at the practice.

When you come in for an appointment, we kindly ask that you wear a mask or face covering to help reduce the spread of germs. If you don't have one with you, that's no problem — you can pick one up from our reception when you arrive.

You won't be alone. Our team are also wearing masks (and personal protection equipment when necessary) to keep you safe.





## Patient participation group roundup

We're passionate about making sure your voices are heard, and that we're making decisions that benefit you as patients. To do just that, we host our patient participation group meeting (PPG) every three months, so you have the opportunity to have your say.

In September, we hosted our latest PPG meeting for The Robert Darbishire Practice and The Whitswood Practice. This meeting was to discuss the results of the latest national GP surveys for each practice, and suggesting improvements in the categories we scored slightly lower than we'd like. In particular, these subjects were: patient involvement, mental wellbeing and confidence & trust.

The PPG shared:

### **Patient involvement** how much involvement they have within their care

For them, involvement looks like giving suggestions, feeling heard and having discussions with clinicians. As a whole, the group find the amount of involvement they have very hit and miss, and say it depends on which medical professional they're seeing.

At the meeting, we discussed ways to improve patient involvement. The PPG members suggested:

- more honesty, (e.g., if a clinician is not familiar with something, to tell the patient and refer them into someone who does)
- better explanations (not just saying no but explaining why, and fully explaining options/decisions to the patient to make sure they understand)
- really listening to what the patient is saying
- Open discussions (suggesting treatment instead of telling patients what they can and can't do)
- better continuity of care (being treated by the same medical professional for the same issue/condition)
- properly communicating the next steps
- more face-to-face appointments



## **Mental wellbeing** how much the medical professional considered their mental wellbeing

Overall, the PPG were generally satisfied with the way their mental wellbeing is considered, especially when speaking with their usual GP's and since the introduction of mental health practitioners.

They did share great ways to improve how the practice can further take into consideration the mental wellbeing of patients, and suggested:

- Treating people as individuals (everyone is different and so are their symptoms)
- Not making assumptions on the way patients are presenting
- Leave out personal experiences and focus on giving practical advice
- Make people feel seen and heard (really listen to patients and acknowledge what they're saying)
- Take your time (if there's a serious issue to talk about, don't rush into it and be sensitive with what you're saying)

## **Confidence & trust** how much confidence and trust they had in the last clinician they saw/spoke to

The group shared that overall, they do have confidence and trust in the practice and the clinicians that work there. Some members shared that past experiences have led them to decrease trust in their GP, and that they have more trust in the practice than the NHS overall.

To improve, they suggested:

- Researching conditions outside of the appointment instead of in the appointment
- Referring to others (if you're unsure of the condition, refer the patient to someone who is more knowledgeable on it)
- More honesty
- To complete actions on time (trust has been lost when patients have been promised something and it hasn't been done, e.g., a secondary referral)
- Not rushing appointments
- Keeping up to date with the latest training

If you're a patient at Brooklands Medical Practice and have already signed up to be a PPG member, don't worry, we're in the process of getting everything sorted and will be hosting a meeting soon!

If you're not yet a PPG member at any practice, and would like to make a difference, sign up to your practices patient participation group by visiting your practice website.



# Meet the team - Bex - Central Administrator

## Introduce yourself and the role!

Hi, My name is Rebecca and I am one of the central administrators.

I'm 33, from Liverpool and I'm autistic! Outside of work I enjoy reading, gaming, and spending time with animals.

## What made you decide to become a central administrator?

I started as a receptionist, but I really enjoy the repetitive processes that are involved in admin roles and how all the systems work together.

## What does a typical day at work look like for you?

Saying I spend all day sending texts and letters doesn't sound like a lot but when you have lots of patients to deal with it all adds up. My average day would include sending over 500 text messages and letters and that's just before lunchtime!

If you ever receive a text or a letter saying that you need a blood test or to speak to a doctor or nurse, chances are I've been the person to send it. If you have a cervical screening, I'll be the person to code and file your results. If there's any problems with your registrations, I'll probably be the person working in the background to get it all sorted for you

## What is one thing you would like patients to know about your role?

There's so much work behind the scenes that needs to be done so make sure everything goes as smoothly as possible; your records might tell you if you are due a review but there's someone who has to run the search and make sure you get the message from us!



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