

# Monthly Patient Newsletter



## Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Mendip Vale Medical Group

As the festive season approaches, we want to take a moment to wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We are grateful for your continued trust and support throughout the year. Our team remains committed to providing you with the best care possible as we move into the new year.

Please remember to check our opening hours and plan for any prescriptions or appointments you may need.

### Christmas Opening Hours

- Monday 23rd December – Open 8am -6:30pm
- Tuesday 24th December – Open 8am -6:30pm
- Wednesday 25th December (Christmas day) – **Closed**
- Thursday 26th December (Boxing Day) – **Closed**
- Friday 27th December – Open 8am -6:30pm
- Monday 30th December – Open 8am -6:30pm
- Tuesday 31st December – Open 8am -6:30pm
- Wednesday 1st January – **Closed**

### What Does “Triage” Mean for Patients?

In GP practices, triage is used to prioritise appointments and ensure patients get the right care at the right time. When you contact your practice or submit an eConsult, we may ask questions to assess the urgency of your issue and decide whether you need same-day care, a routine appointment, or advice from another service. This helps ensure everyone gets the support they need efficiently.

In this newsletter you can expect:

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Christmas Opening Hours

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Keeping you connected with Healthcare Options

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Celebrating our Award winning PPG

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Mendip Vale Actions Report

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Collective Action and what it means for you

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Wellbeing Lifestyle Club

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# Keeping you Connected with Healthcare Options

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing high-quality care, over the past year we have been working on ways to enhance the services we offer and make improvements that directly benefit you as a patient. Committed to ensuring your access to healthcare remains convenient and reliable, here are some highlights and updates

## Healthcare Options Across Our Sites

To make healthcare more accessible, you can visit our other practice sites for a range of services. The integration was designed to increase the availability of appointments. So, if the timing of appointments at your regular surgery does not fit your schedule, you have the option to access appointments at either:

- Yatton Surgery,
- Langford Surgery,
- St Georges Surgery
- Sunnyside Surgery.

Just let them know your preference when you contact Mendip Vale.

By sharing resources across all our surgeries, we've created greater flexibility, to offer quicker access to see a GP and other healthcare professionals. As such, should you need to see a different GP or specialised clinician at another site, they have secure access to your medical history, ensuring a smooth consultation and more personalised care. Our collaboration across Bristol sites means you have access to a wide range of healthcare professionals, including GPs, APs, Nurses, Mental Health Nurses, Health Care Assistants, Physiotherapists, Social Prescribers and Health and Wellbeing Coaches.

Although Congresbury Surgery has remained closed during this period, we'd love to hear from you about your preferred alternative practice. Your feedback is invaluable in helping us ensure we meet your needs effectively. Let us know your thoughts by completing this quick survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/QMrXzGMGxV>

[Click here to complete the survey](https://forms.office.com/e/QMrXzGMGxV)



## Stay Connected with the NHS

Did you know that NHS App offers a simple way to manage your health? You can:

- Book and manage appointments
- Order repeat prescriptions
- View your medical records
- Access trusted health information

If you haven't downloaded the NHS App yet, now is a great time to give it a try! . For more information regarding the NHS go to [www.nhs.uk/nhs-app](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app)



## Telephone Updates

This year, we introduced a new telephone system designed to make contacting the practice quicker and more convenient. Now, when you call, you can choose to receive a call back instead of waiting in the phone queue. You can also request to check or cancel appointments via text message. This means you no longer have to stay on hold — simply request a call back when you're at the front of the queue. You can go about your day or rest if you're feeling unwell, without the frustration of waiting. With this system, the dreaded engaged tone is a thing of the past, and as a result, our call wait time has dropped significantly to an average of 3 minutes.

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## Tea and Tech Sessions Wrap Up for 2024

Over the past six weeks, a successful series of Tea and Tech sessions took place at St. Eydth's Church, thanks to the collaboration between North Bristol Advice Centre, St. Monica's Trust, and Mendip Vale.

These workshops aimed to help patients, become more confident in using the NHS App, eConsult, and their digital devices. Participants learned valuable skills, enhancing their ability to navigate healthcare services online. Nichola from North Bristol Advice Centre shared her thoughts:

*"It's been wonderful working with Mendip Vale providing Tea and Tech workshops in Sea Mills, supporting patients on how to use the NHS App, eConsult, and their devices."*

The 2024 sessions have now concluded, but we look forward to making plans to restart the workshops in the new year. Stay tuned for updates on upcoming events.

## Building developments at Coniston Medical Practice

Coniston Medical Practice is thrilled to announce the ongoing progress of our building work of the former pharmacy space which is currently being transformed into modern consultation rooms. This renovation will create additional and much needed space which will expand our capacity and help us better meet the growing needs of the community. This work is anticipated to be completed in the next few weeks, with further work of expansion in the planning for 2025.

We understand that building work can sometimes cause minor disruptions, and we appreciate your patience and understanding during this period. We are committed to keeping any inconvenience to a minimum and will provide regular updates on the progress of the project. These developments reflect our commitment to continually improving the services we provide. By investing in our facilities, we aim to create a space that is not only functional but also welcoming and accessible to all patients.



## Celebrating Our Award-Winning Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Many of these improvements have been guided by the invaluable input of our Patient Participation Group (PPG), who recently won the prestigious National Association for Patient Participation (NAPP) Award.

This national award recognises outstanding contributions by PPGs in improving patient care, fostering communication between patients and practices, and driving meaningful changes that enhance the overall patient experience. Their dedication and collaboration have played a key role in shaping the services we provide, ensuring they meet the needs of our community.

We are incredibly proud of their achievements and grateful for their ongoing support in helping us deliver better healthcare for everyone.

### **What is the PPG and how to Get involved?**

The Patient Participation Group (PPG) is a group of patients which meets every two months. It gets together to discuss and provide feedback on services patients receive from us. It also helps to spread the word about the changes coming to the surgery and makes sure patients are involved in important decisions. For more information on the PPG, please visit the Mendip Vale Website or ask a member of our team.

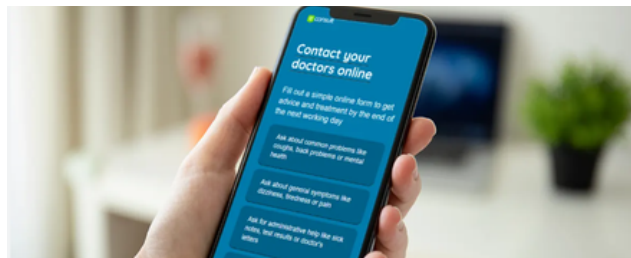
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## eConsult – Responding to your Feedback

*“Having to wait 3 days to be given permission to phone up and book an appointment is so very frustrating.”*

Waiting three working days to hear back after submitting an eConsult can feel frustrating however, during this time, your eConsult is actively being reviewed by our team. Once submitted, it is picked up by our Care Coordinating team, who work closely with a GP to assess your case. The GP evaluates your eConsult to determine the best course of action for your concern—this process is called triaging. Based on the GP's instructions, the Care Coordinator will contact you to arrange an appropriate appointment or service tailored to your needs. "Three working days" refers to the hours during which the surgery operates (Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 6:30 PM). If a patient submits an eConsult on a Friday, they can expect a response by the end of the day on Wednesday. As the surgery is closed on bank holidays, these days do not count toward the three-working-day schedule, which may result in a longer response time.

Routine appointments are designed for non-urgent issues that can wait for scheduling. However, if your concern is urgent and needs to be addressed on the same day, please call the practice directly to be placed on the urgent care appointment list. We're here to support you and ensure you receive the care you need.



*“Very easy and quick way to talk to an expert about a medical issue - excellent step forward”*

Thank you for your feedback! We're glad you found the process easy and efficient. Providing quick access to expert advice is exactly what we strive for, and it's great to hear that this system is working well for you.

*“Contacted late, I sent the message from my confirmation email saying I hadn't been contacted, the following morning the surgery contacted me and were very friendly and efficient.”*

Thank you for sharing your experience. We apologise for the initial delay in contacting you, but we're pleased to hear that our team responded promptly after your follow-up and that you found them friendly and efficient. While we strive to provide timely care, especially during the busy winter months, we truly value your patience and understanding. Your feedback is invaluable in helping us improve, and we're always committed to making things right whenever possible.



## Mendip Vale Actions Report following the Patient Satisfaction Survey

In collaboration with the North Somerset Patient Participation Group (PPG), we conducted a patient survey titled Tell Us What You Think between July 1st and August 1st, 2024. This survey was designed to gather patient feedback across Mendip Vale Medical Group (MVMG), including Bristol, South Gloucestershire, and North Somerset, to better understand how we can improve our services and how our patients perceive our surgery and staff. We had 949 patients provide us with their important feedback, which has now been generated into a report with the key findings and the actions to improve the service. You can read the report on the Mendip Vale website.

[Click here to read the report](#)





## Collective Action and what does it mean for you

Over the past few months, you may have heard updates about GP Collective Action and the changes it will introduce to GP Practices nationally. We would like to **reassure you that access to appointments at your MVMG Surgery will remain unchanged.**

As a practice, we have long upheld clear boundaries regarding the workload managed by our healthcare professionals, including the responsibility for starting medications or investigations initiated by secondary care remains with those providers. As a result, the impact of collective action on your access to our surgeries will be minimal. We want to reassure you that while these changes are significant to the roles within General Practices play, any notable changes affecting Mendip Vale, and our patients will be communicated to you.

### Why is collective action needed?

There are three main areas of concern for GP Practices:

**Patient Safety:** The numbers of patient consultations completed in a day means that surgeries are not practising as safely as they would like.

**Workforce:** The huge workload is making it difficult to recruit and retain staff, and levels of burnout are high

**Funding:** Practices are not being funded sufficiently to recruit more staff for the demand they are facing.

What this means for patients  
Changes that some patients may see across the country.

- Practices will return work to other healthcare providers where they should have completed that part of care. This includes referrals, fit notes, starting prescriptions, investigations, and responding to patient queries.
- Practices will not take over prescribing medications that were started by specialists, unless there is funding for this work.
- Practices will not provide monitoring checks for certain conditions, where this should be done by your hospital/specialist team.
- Practices will work towards clinicians having a safe workload. This means they will not see more patients than they can cope with. There will probably be longer waits for routine appointments. If you need urgent care, you may be directed to an urgent treatment centre or a pharmacy, depending on what is wrong.

### How you can help:

Many minor illnesses can be managed by community pharmacy. This short **video** will tell you about the Pharmacy First scheme.

Consider phoning NHS 111 to find the best place to get help with your symptoms.

Please be kind to our staff. They want to help you get the care you need and will do everything they can to do that.



# Every smile has a story,



WE WANT TO HEAR YOURS!

Have you been able to access NHS dental care?

If not, how has this affected  
your health?



We want to hear your feedback.

**Complete our survey:**

[www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/56MG7X/](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/56MG7X/)



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