



# THE APPLES MEDICAL CENTRE

COVID-19 information available on our website

## Patient Participation Group *Note from the Chair*

The Apples Patient Participation Group (PPG) / Sherborne Apples Forum is a voluntary group, established by patients of the Apples Medical Practice as a link with the clinicians and staff to represent the interests of all patients. This newsletter provides topical information and help.

Do look at the Practice website, especially for information regarding eConsults; a quick and safe way to get help and advice from your GP.

See <https://www.sherborneapples.co.uk/> for full information including Covid-19 updates.

The PPG had its first face to face meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> September and it was great to be together again and also welcome some new members – a huge welcome in fact as we “reset” the PPG to reflect the new environment.

Minutes will appear on the web site in due course and we have a larger group that sits as “virtual” members, but not attending meetings. Also, a draft “Activity Plan” was presented to engage PPG members and ensure we do deliver improvements in communication between patients and The Practice. It will be debated at our next PPG Meeting in December 2021.

Covid vaccinations in Dorset (to mid-September) now exceed 1,153,984 - how good is that, and huge congratulations to all those concerned, including the volunteers who manned the car parks and logistics. The Sherborne Group Primary Care Network (PCN = Apples, The Grove, and Yetminster surgeries) provided the staff and support.

Although we were all delighted to hear that the Minor injuries Unit (MIU) at the Yeatman Hospital reopened on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 – it is not working as it was with a walk-in service. Patients (or would be) are to phone for an appointment to 111. This is not acceptable, so we must continue with The Grove and Friends of Yeatman Hospital to lobby for a better service.

The new Health & Care Bill, -applicable from April 2022 - changes the way the NHS works and moves to an Integrated Care System (ICS), which should stimulate health integration, i.e. bringing the NHS, local government, and local partners together. These local ICS should set up health and care partnerships at the discretion of local areas. The definition of local areas will be important. Will it be the same as a current PCN for example? At present Our Dorset has a well-developed ICS with an independent Chair. We will say more about this topic later when the detail is known.

In the meantime, your PPG attends the North Dorset PPG Chairs meeting, and The Grove PPG with other relevant groups from time to time.

For those who are not connected to the web we are still trying to find ways of communicating so any ideas please, how to achieve this, apart from a delivered hard copy, would be welcome.

*In the meantime, stay healthy*

Website: <https://www.sherborneapples.co.uk>

Facebook: The Apples Medical Centre

Instagram: [sherborneapples](#)

*Bruce Duncan, PPG Chair*

## Annual Flu Vaccines

Annual flu vaccines have been halted due to national distribution issues and we are unable to proceed with our clinics in October as planned. We are still awaiting to hear back and will confirm new clinic dates to you as soon as is possible. **Your flu vaccine is very important. We didn't have much flu circulating last year so are expecting many more cases this winter. It can be just as deadly as Covid so please take up the offer of a flu vaccine.** If you are an eligible patient and we have your mobile phone numbers, we will invite you via text message.

If you do not fall into one of the government's "vulnerable groups" to receive a free annual flu vaccine, you are able to privately purchase one at a high street pharmacy.

Symptoms which distinguish flu from the common cold include muscle aches which will often prevent you from getting out of bed, a high fever and severe coughing. First line of treatment against flu is over-the-counter-pain-medication and plenty of fluids. If you feel you are not improving, you should see your GP.



## The Covid Booster Programme rolls out Oct'2021

The Covid Booster Programme is set to begin on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Appointment invites have already gone out to the first group of eligible patients. Please make every effort to attend the appointment time given, on time, to ensure efficiency and avoid wasting any vaccine. **Note that you will not be able to have your booster vaccine any earlier than exactly 26 weeks after your second Covid vaccine** (unless you are considered critically extremely vulnerable).

Please wait to be contacted, do not call the surgery as we are not able to book you an appointment; we thank you for working with us to keep phone lines clear for those in need of medical assistance.

You can continue to order lateral flow tests here: <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests> and we urge you to stay vigilant with regards to hygiene and social distancing.

## Coughs and Colds

Coughs and Colds are far more common during the chillier months of the year. Fortunately, while a cold may make you feel miserable for a few days, it usually isn't related to anything more serious.

**The common cold virus cannot be treated using antibiotics, so you don't need to see your GP. You should only contact your doctor if your symptoms persist for several days with no improvement.**

If you have caught a cold, you can help prevent it spreading by following NHS guidelines. Use a tissue to catch a sneeze or cough, bin the tissue and then wash your hands to kill any remaining viruses. If you develop a fever which doesn't respond to paracetamol, or if you have trouble breathing, you should see immediate medical attention.

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## New NHS Digital Data Collection

The General Practice Data for Planning and Research (GPDPR) Programme has been **postponed, without an indefinite start date.**

The Programme will not be started until there is the ability to delete data for patients who choose to opt-out, the national backlog of opt-outs has been cleared, a Trusted Research Environment has been developed and implemented, and a full engagement and communication campaign has been run.

## Mental Health

As the nights draw in, some people may experience a low mood and increased anxiety. A healthy diet complemented by vitamin D supplements can help to combat this. Try to incorporate exercise into your daily routine; this can help to boost your serotonin levels. Set realistic goals, measure results, and try training with friends or groups who can keep you motivated for longer.

Aim for 7-8 hours' sleep per night, as poor-quality-sleep reduces our cognitive abilities and causes fatigue. If you feel depressed, contact your GP for further help.



## Dates for the Diary

Thursday 14th October 2021	Protected Learning CLOSED from 1:30 – 4:30pm
Thursday 14th October 2021	Prescriptions can be collected before 1pm and between 4:30 – 5:15pm. Please ring to arrange time for CD collections
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	Protected Learning CLOSED from 3:30 – 6:30pm
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	Prescriptions can be collected between 8:30am – 3pm today ONLY
Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> December 2021	CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY CLOSURE ALL DAY
Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> December 2021	CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY CLOSURE ALL DAY

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Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021

NEW YEAR BANK HOLIDAY CLOSURE ALL DAY

If you require medical assistance during surgery closures, **phone 111 or 999** in the case of an emergency

*We encourage you all to step outdoors and enjoy the chemistry of colour this Autumn, stay safe*

*The Apples Team*



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