

BELFORD MEDICAL PRACTICE



FEBRUARY 2023

NEWSLETTER

PRACTICE NEWS

We are delighted to announce that Dr. Rachel Wilkinson who has been in the practice as a GP Registrar is now a fully qualified GP and will be with us until March. She currently works two days a week at Belford

We will have a new GP Registrar starting in February Dr Alice Hartley

Some of you will already have met our new Practice Nurse Helen. Helen works two days a week at both Belford and Seahouses.

Ayla Rogerson has completed her apprenticeship and is now a full member of the Practice team.

Valerie Bird joined the team last May as a receptionist at both sites.

Sam Eungblut has joined the practice as a receptionist and will work at Belford and Seahouses.

Emma Coyle is our new Dispenser and is working at Belford whilst she completes her training.

We have a new phlebotomist called Jenna who some of you might already have met.

New Arrivals:

Dr Caitlin Longster gave birth to a baby boy in September 2022

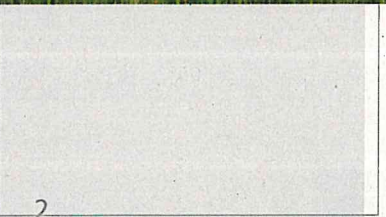
Our Medicines Manager Shannon gave birth to a baby girl in November 2022

Dr Mike Cannon (our locum) and his wife have welcomed a baby boy in January 2023. Mike will be with us as locum until September.

DISPENSARY

At the moment we are short of qualified staff in our dispensary at Belford as Shannon is on maternity leave and another staff member left last September. We currently have Emma who is doing her dispensary training but at the moment staff from Seahouses are coming up to Belford to cover. This is just to make patients aware that there will be other staff at Seahouses surgery apart from Lindsay and Tracey. Ayla will be down there on a Monday, Sam on a Tuesday and Valerie on a Friday.





RESEARCH

As many of you know, we have been involved with health research for several years. This has mainly been in cooperation with universities around the country, from Southampton to London, Oxford and Cambridge, and Newcastle. The research teams are trying to answer important issues about healthcare, and are looking for help from the practice and more importantly, from you.

Recently, we have asked people about getting involved with research about diabetes, heart disease, how to best diagnose irregular heart beats, providing health checks for autistic people, and looking at ways of keeping brain function as good as possible.

We are always grateful for your involvement in research, but please remember that if we ask and you are not interested, that is absolutely fine and it will not affect how we look after you.

Many thanks to the many people who have responded to our requests. If anyone would like to know more about any research projects we are undertaking I will be able to give more details if you contact me.

Dr Moss

Defibrillators

There are defibrillators for emergency use in various locations in the immediate area. Please click on the link to find out where the nearest one is to your location. <https://www.defibfinder.uk/>

Patient Contact Details

Please could we ask patients to contact the surgery if any of your contact details have changed. This includes address, phone numbers or email. This is important to keep your records up to date.

Health Visitor Baby Clinics

These are held at the Belford Surgery every 2nd and 4th Tuesdays between 1-3pm. Parents can bring their babies to be weighed and to speak to the Health Visitor about any concerns they may have or to seek advice. At the moment the clinic is under review in terms of numbers of babies attending and we could be under threat of losing this local clinic.

TEACHING

Students and GP Registrars

As many of you know, Belford surgery is a teaching practice. Many of you have supported and facilitated the students in their learning journey and taken the time to see or speak to one or more of them.

Below is a little summary about the different level of trainees we have:

For someone to qualify as a doctor it usually takes 5 years of university, followed by foundation training as junior doctors for 2 years. Following this, most doctors will decide which specialty they want to pursue. In the case of general practice, this usually means a minimum of another 3 or 4 years before a doctor is trained to be a fully fledged GP.

At the practice we have medical students in their 3rd year of university, which is their first year in a clinical setting. During this time they will get experience in a variety of areas such as surgery, paediatrics, accident and emergency, but also in primary care. For this they join us once a week to learn about conditions they commonly encounter in a GP practice, but more importantly they also learn about speaking with patients: taking a history and examining patients, talking on the telephone, and starting to learn clinical skills such as checking urine samples, vaccinating or taking bloods.

Our final year students usually join us for a block of 3 weeks at a time. The first block is during the autumn, then they return again in spring once they have passed their final exams. These students are by now prepared to be junior doctors, and they are a lot more skilled at taking a history, examining someone, and making a diagnosis and treatment plan. They will still either work alongside a GP or nurse practitioner or discuss every case with one of the clinicians and any action plan or treatment is checked by the clinician.

Our GP registrars are fully qualified doctors, but they have decided to train in general practice as a specialty. Some of them are at Belford for their first post and will need to learn how things work out in the community, others are finishing their training and are simply gaining more experience. Our registrars are working independently, but often will check in with one of the senior clinicians and routinely discuss cases and have some supervised surgeries.

MEDICATION

So far in January we have destroyed £441.30 worth of medication. Please remember to only order what you need.

MISSED APPOINTMENTS

In January 2023 there were 25 patients who did not attend their appointments. That is equal to 397 minutes of clinicians time and 104 telephone appointments. If you cannot attend an appointment please contact the surgery

HANDS-FACE-SPACE

Please continue to observe social distancing measures in order to prevent the spread of Covid 19. For up to date guidance please see the Government website .

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

For local guidance please see the Northumberland County Council website:

<https://www.northumberland.ca/en/county-government/covid-19-updates.aspx#>

CURRENT OPERATING PROCEDURES

Current Opening Times

Belford Surgery

01668 213738

8.30-6.00 Monday to Friday

Prescription Ordering

9am-2pm

Blood/X-ray Results

9am-2pm

Seahouses Surgery

01665 720917

Monday and Tuesday

8.30-6.00

Thursday

8.30-5.30

Friday

8.30-12.30

Wednesday

Closed

Prescription Ordering

9am-2pm

Blood/X-Ray Results

9am-2pm

Website:

www.belfordmedicalpractice.nhs.uk

Facebook Page:

Belford Medical Practice

Appointments

The surgery now uses a telephone triage system. This means that patients will initially be phoned by a Doctor or Nurse Practitioner and if they need to be seen the Clinician will organise a surgery time with the patient for a face to face consultation. This does have an advantage in that patients with urgent medical symptoms can be seen straightaway. Other patients are usually seen either that day or the day after or if appropriate, triaged to another team member such as the first contact Physio.

During the Covid pandemic the surgery continued to see patients face to face when needed following telephone triage. We are in fact busier than ever with telephone calls and face to face appointments, our last figures showing that clinical contact has increased compared to pre-pandemic levels. These figures do not include covid or flu vaccination numbers or additional appointments with staff such as physio, mental health, social prescribing and pharmacist. These provide additional options for patients on top of our background figures.

Annual Reviews

We are still carrying out annual reviews and will be contacting patients in the month of their birth to attend for their annual health review.

Access to the Surgery

Face coverings are optional in the waiting area but should be worn when seeing the clinician. There is a hand sanitiser on the right as you come through the door which we ask you to use. Social distancing seating is provided.

Collecting Prescriptions

When you enter the surgery please make your way into the booth to the left, this will take you to the dispensary window and you will be able to collect your medication form there.

Home Visits

Home visits by the GP's and District Nurses are still being undertaken as necessary. Doctors still wear face masks and where necessary gloves and aprons. If you feel you need a home visit we would ask you to contact the surgery as soon as possible in the morning so that you can be added to the visiting list for that day (before 11am). You will be asked your name and address and the reason for the visit. As usual the request will be triaged by the GP's.

Telephone System

You will hear a message at the start and will be offered three options. Select Number one if requiring a prescription or results, select number two if requiring an appointment and select number three for all other enquiries. Requests for prescriptions and results are only available between the hours of 9-2. If you select this option out with those times then you will hear a message and the phone line will cut off.

Patient Contact Figures

Total contact Jan 2022 2068

Jan 2023 2209

Face to Face Jan 2022 1510

Jan 2023 1146

Telephone Jan 2022 494

Jan 2023 1063

ADDITIONAL STAFF

We are very fortunate at the practice to have access to additional staff to complement our core team of GP's, nurses and healthcare assistant and our administration team. You may have had letters, text messages or seen posts on Facebook offering appointments in addition to the regular service offered. This is a brief introduction to some of these staff members. All of which you can self-refer to, just ask at reception.

Rebecca Hall- Our recently appointed Health and Wellbeing coach. Rebecca offers face to face and telephone appointments to patients who would like to make some lifestyle changes and would like some support with this. This can be anything from help with diabetes care, weight loss, increasing exercise or helping with low mood in conjunction with other health care professionals.

Jannette Casson- Dementia lead social prescriber. Jan offers support to anyone diagnosed with dementia or their families.

Carol Gunn- Social prescriber. Carol supports patients with all manner of issues, from housing and benefits to loneliness and isolation. Appointments can be face to face or telephone.

Jack Lees and David Pearse- Clinical pharmacists. Jack and David see patients either face to face or via telephone to discuss any medication queries and conduct medication reviews, an essential part of ongoing care to ensure your medication is the most suitable for you and that it is working the way it should.

Judith Sefton- Mental Health Occupational therapist. Judith offers support and care with Mental health issues which may not be covered by talking matters. Appointments are face to face or telephone.

Miles Calum- First contact Physiotherapist. All musculoskeletal conditions and chronic pain.

Jenna Moffat- Care Coordinator. Myself! You may have had messages and letters from me covering everything from blood pressures to Asthma care. My role here at the practice is to tackle ill health and medical conditions before they cause symptoms leading to early diagnosis and better care outcomes. You may also see me working alongside our Health care assistant Sharon, taking bloods and conducting health checks and long-term condition reviews.

NURSE PRACTITIONER CARRY HORROCKS

I joined the Belford team in February 2021 on a locum basis to support our GP's on medical student training days. I was delighted in November 2022 to be offered a permanent 3 days a week position within the practice. I currently work Mondays, Thursday and Fridays. I have been an Advanced Nurse Practitioner for just over 9 years and work to support the GP role. I am able to assess, diagnose, refer and prescribe for patients. I have a broad interest in general practice and really enjoy the variety this role provides. I have a special interest in women's health, diabetes and mental health. For those patients I have met already, thank you for your warm welcome.



Keep warm and get help with heating

Keeping warm over the winter months can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression. Heat your home to a temperature that's comfortable for you. If you can, this should be at least 18°C in the rooms that you regularly use, such as your living room and bedroom. This is particularly important if you have a health condition. It's best to keep your bedroom windows closed at night. Check your heating and cooking appliances are safe. Contact a Gas Safe registered engineer to make sure they're working properly. You can find an engineer from the Gas Safe Register website at www.gassaferegister.co.uk

Make sure your home is fire safe. For fire safety advice specific to you and your home, visit the online home fire safety check website to complete a safety check for your home. www.safelines.co.uk/hfsc/

Make sure you're getting all the help that you're entitled to. There are grants, benefits and advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. Find out more about ways to save energy in your home from GOV.UK, at www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency or call the government helpline on 0800 444 202.

Look in on vulnerable neighbours and relatives

Remember that other people, such as older neighbours, friends and family members, may need some extra help over the winter. There's a lot you can do to help people who need support. Icy pavements and roads can be very slippery, and cold weather can stop people from going out.

Keep in touch with your friends, neighbours and family and ask if they need any practical help, or if they're feeling unwell. Make sure they're stocked up with enough food supplies for a few days, in case they cannot go out. If they do need to go out in the cold, encourage them to wear shoes with a good grip and a scarf around the mouth to protect them from cold air, and to reduce their risk of chest infections.

If they need help when the GP surgery or pharmacy is closed or they're not sure what to do, go to www.111.nhs.uk or call 111.

If you're worried about a relative or elderly neighbour, contact your local council on 01670536400 or call the Age UK helpline on [0800 678 1602](tel:08006781602) (8am to 7pm every day). You can also report your concerns through the Northumberland County Councils online form on their website.

