East Quay Medical Centre

East Quay, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 4GP

Telephone: 01278 444666
Prescriptions: 01278 446006
www.eastquaymedicalcentre.com
We are on Facebook: East Quay Medical Centre@Bridgwater NHS

Information Booklet

Please contact reception to register for on-line services
to allow you to:

- Order your repeat prescriptions
- Access your test results
- View your medical record

Cancel any appointments you no longer need by clicking on the link in your reminder or visiting https://eastquaymedicalcentre.com/cancel-appointment/

Dr Alexandra Glendinning - Dr Sophie Wood – Dr Jennifer Powell
Dr Sally Silsby – Dr Tim Horlock - Dr Nick Jestico – Dr Jess Dungworth
Dr Coral Stark

Practice Manager: Rachel Stark

Don’t ‘Google it’, instead look at the websites the GPs trust:
www.nhs.uk
www.patient.co.uk

Welcome to East Quay Medical Centre

East Quay Medical Centre is an innovative and forward thinking practice. We constantly strive to provide up-to-date appropriate services for our patients.

Since 1st April 2015 the NHS has formally adopted the personal list system. Now all patients are allocated a named GP - we have ALWAYS done this so there is no change for our patients and we really value the continuity of care this enables us to offer.

We have been a GP training practice since 1979. We usually have up to seven doctors training to become GPs. They stay for up to 18 months to gain experience in primary care.

In 2009 we opened East Quay Vision, the new optometrists at East Quay Medical Centre. This offers NHS and private eye testing, fashionable and classic frames, contact lenses for all and a dry eye clinic. We also see and treat patients with acute eye problems - as a CCG service (ACES) this is free to patients. We offer a private glaucoma monitoring service to save hospital appointments. We also screen patients for glaucoma and hope to develop more services in the future. Visit www.eastquayvision.co.uk or call 01278 440 440.

Patient's Charter

We aim to provide patients with the best quality care available. Our charter is a statement of what you can expect from the practice and what we feel we can expect from you in return.

1. You will be greeted in a polite manner at all times by the doctors, nurses and other members of the practice team.
2. The surgery will be clean and comfortable as far as facilities allow.
3. You will be referred to secondary care services acceptable to you when the doctor thinks this is necessary.
4. You have the right to confidentiality at all times.
5. The doctors aim to see patients within 45 minutes of their appointment time. If there is likely to be an additional delay, however, you will be told the reason by the receptionists.
6. You can expect to be given an urgent appointment with a doctor where you have a medically urgent need - although probably not your registered GP – Nurse Practitioner, or practice nurse within one working day.
7. You may have a copy of this booklet which contains information on the services we provide for our patients.
8. You are able to see your medical records subject to the limitations of the law.
9. Complaints will be dealt with by the practice manager or her deputy.

With these rights come responsibilities

1. To treat all practice staff with the same courtesy you expect of them.
2. Ensure that you attend your appointment on time.
3. If you need to cancel your appointment, give as much notice as possible and always let the practice know (remember you can do this online at our website or on the appointment reminder)
4. Requests for help or advice on non-urgent matters should be made during surgery hours.
5. Do not request a home visit if you are fit to travel to the surgery. Home visits are made at the doctors' discretion.
6. You should work with the practice to keep yourself as healthy as possible by following advice from the doctors and staff.
7. You should not expect a prescription at every consultation.
8. If you feel you will need longer than a single appointment, please ask for a double appointment.
9. Tell us if you change your address, e-mail address or telephone number.
10. After leaving hospital, ensure the doctor receives the discharge note given to you by hospital staff as soon as possible.
11. We try not to keep you waiting, but emergencies do arise and have to be given priority. We hope that in such an event you will understand and we are always happy to make a further appointment if this is more convenient.
12. Do not fail to attend your appointment. If you are unable to attend please let us know.- remember you can do this online on our website.

Please also read more about 'You and your general practice' here
https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/you-and-your-general-practice/

The Practice Team

THE DOCTORS

We are a group practice with two male and six female GP partners.
Dr Alexandra Glendinning
Dr Sophie Wood
Dr Jennifer Powell
Dr Sally Silsby
Dr Tim Horlock
Dr Nick Jestico
Dr Jess Dungworth
Dr Coral Stark

We also have list holding salaried GPs:
Dr Natashja Kasianczuk
Dr Sophie Harries
Dr Mujitaba Shaukat

PRACTICE MANAGER

Rachel Stark, Practice Manager, is responsible for all aspects of running the Medical Centre.

SURGEON

We currently have visiting surgeons who perform vasectomies on-site patients registered with a GP in Somerset.

GP RETAINERS, GP RETURNERS, GP REGISTRARS, F2 DOCTORS MEDICAL STUDENTS AND NURSE STUDENTS

We are an approved GP and Nurse training practice. Doctors who wish to specialise in family medicine join the practice for periods of up to 18 months. We also provide placements to doctors who have already worked in practices before but who have had some time out (for example working in a hospital) and want to return to working in a practice again. All of these are fully qualified doctors and are with us to gain additional experience.

We also host foundation doctors and medical students. All are supervised by one of our GPs. We like to encourage more doctors to become GPs as a way to secure the future of General Practice. We are also a training practice for student nurses via Plymouth University

NURSE PRACITITONERS

We have four Nurse Practitioners. Two work with the GPs in the on-call urgent care team, one undertakes holistic reviews for patients who are frail, vulnerable or have complex needs and one provides a hypertension management service.

PRACTICE NURSES

Our team of practice nurses are available for routine consultations, by appointment, Monday to Friday. They carry out a wide range of services such as dressings, vaccinations, cervical smears, treatment room and also run many of the health clinics – including running the long term condition management services.

We also have a nurse-run minor illness service which offers fast access to advice on minor illnesses. The nurses have had extensive training and are supported by a GP every day who they can ask for further opinions if needed.

HEALTH CARE ASSISTANTS
Our health care assistants undertake a number of procedures including blood tests, ECGs, blood pressure readings, audiograms, some injections and dressings.

SELF CARE AND PHARMACY CARE
Avoiding contacting the practice for minor illnesses that you can manage yourself or manage with the support of a pharmacist means that we can increase our availability for more serious conditions and can expand the range of services we offer.
You do not usually need to contact the practice for a simple cough and other minor ailments. If you need advice on minor ailments, log on to www.nhs.uk or www.patient.co.uk - these are the websites the GPs trust.
In Somerset there is also a new service called the Community Pharmacy Referral Scheme which refers you to a pharmacy for an appointment about your minor illness. This works in a similar way to the service our Practice Nurses run and we recommend its use to patients who are appropriate for the service. If we offer it to you, please accept as it means we can focus our resources on patients that only we can help. Read more about the Pharmacy First service here:
https://nhssomerset.nhs.uk/my-health/pharmacy-first/

RECEPTIONISTS AND OTHER ADMINISTRATION STAFF
Our receptionists will arrange appointments and answer your queries in complete confidence. Where possible, it is helpful to offer the receptionists an indication of your problem when making an appointment. This information will help ensure that you are given the correct type of appointment with the correct medical professional.

LINKED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS
We have a number of health care professionals linked to our practice. For example our First Contact Physiotherapists who see adult patients with new musculoskeletal problems. We also have Health and Wellbeing Coaches who support people to make positive lifestyle changes too.

OPTOMETRISTS
East Quay Vision - 01278 440440
In 2009 the GPs set up an Optometrists Practice. East Quay Vision offers NHS and private sight tests to all patients – not just those registered at East Quay. They also have a wider range of frames, sunglasses and contact lenses. They also offer the NHS acute community eye care service (ACES) for patients with a new eye problem – this service is free to patients. Private glaucoma monitoring is also provided at the practice. The Service is now Led by Optometrists Gareth Dunn and Coraley Dunn. Find out more at www.eastquayvision.co.uk

Service Information

OPENING HOURS

Our opening hours are Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.30pm.

Appointments can be made at the surgery or by telephoning 01278 444666 between 8.00am and 6.30pm.
You can also request here - but please do not use this for any urgent medical need.
https://accurx.nhs.uk/patient-initiated/L85035/flow/routine-care

If you work away all week, please ask at reception for more information on our evening and Saturday appointments.

WHEN THE SURGERY IS CLOSED

When the surgery is closed, please contact NHS111 for urgent medical attention outside of surgery hours. The service will either provide telephone advice or pass your information to an appropriate healthcare professional who may arrange to see you in a treatment centre or at your home if appropriate.

ACCESS TO RECORDS

You can view your GP health record using the NHS App or by logging into your NHS account on the NHS website. You can create an account if you do not already have one.

To view your GP record online, you must be registered with a GP surgery and aged 16 or over.

You can view your health record and nominate someone you trust to access it on your behalf. See PROXY ACCESS.

If you want a family member to be able to speak on your behalf, order medications or book appointments, we need your consent. Please tell reception and we will record the consent. It is important that you tell us if this changes and you no longer consent to this.

ADVOCATES

We aim to provide a service tailored to you and get you the help you need. However sometimes it is helpful for a patient to have an advocate if difficulties occur. An advocate is a person who speaks up for you, acts on your behalf and, where required, puts forward your case for you .

They are:

- independent of Social Services and the NHS
- not a member of your family or one of your friends

An advocate’s role includes arguing your case when you need them to, and making sure health and social care services follow the correct procedures. They are independent, so they represent your wishes without giving their personal opinion and without representing the views of the NHS or local authority. An advocate might help you get information or go with you to meetings or interviews to support you. Your

advocate can also write letters on your behalf, or speak for you in situations where you don't feel able to speak for yourself.
Find out more here: https://www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/help-from-social-services-and-charities/someone-to-speak-up-for-you-advocate/

APPOINTMENTS
We really value face to face appointments at our practice and feel these provide the best care. You can opt for a phone call if you do not need to be examined and your problem can be dealt with on the telephone.

When you call, our receptionists will ask you to provide a very brief indication of the problem so that they can find the best appointment for you in our new system. Please do provide a brief reason – it means you get the best appointment.

If you are unable to attend your appointment, we need you to contact the surgery to cancel your appointment. You can do this by clicking the link on your reminder, or online at https://eastquaymedicalcentre.com/cancel-appointment/ or by calling on 01278 444666.

Please attend your appointment on time, if you are late you may not be seen. If you are not seen you will not be able to rearrange your appointment until the next available routine appointment-except in the event of an medical emergency that requires immediate attention.

CAR PARKING
We have a car park for patients calling at the surgery. There is considerable pressure on parking spaces at busy times, so please avoid leaving your car for longer than is strictly necessary. A limited bus service operates to and from the medical centre.

When using the car park you do so at your own risk. Note our CCTV does not cover the car park.

CARERS
A carer is someone who provides help or support to a partner, relative, child, friend or neighbour who could not manage without their help due to physical or mental illness, disability, frailty or addition. There are thousands of unpaid carers in Somerset. Anyone can become a carer - children, parents, daughters, sons, spouses, partners and friends. Many people don't think of themselves as carers; they just look after someone close to them. Caring often just happens to you, as you find that someone close to you gradually needs more help.

It is important that we know if you are a carer so that we can make sure you receive information, services and the help that is available. If you are a carer, or have a carer, please do tell us.

CERTIFICATES – FIT/SICK NOTES
Illnesses that last seven days or less do not need a medical certificate from the doctor. Self-certificate (SC2) forms are available from your employer or online at

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ask-your-employer-for-statutory-sick-pay. Find out more here https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/getting-a-fit-note/

If you are ill for seven days or more (including Saturday and Sunday) and you intend to claim sickness benefit, you will need to speak to your doctor or another authorised Health Professional for a medical certificate. You can request an ongoing sick note here: https://accurx.nhs.uk/patient-initiated/L85035/flow/fit-note

The new 'Fit note' also changes the rules about returning to work before your sick note runs out. Log on to www.direct.gov.uk for more information.

We do not provide private sick/fit notes.

CHAPERONES

If you are worried about an intimate examination and would like an impartial observer (a 'chaperone') present these are available at the practice. Occasionally the doctor or nurse will request a chaperone themselves if they feel this is appropriate.

The chaperones will be on your side of the curtain with the doctor or nurse. They are not medically qualified but are familiar with the procedures involved in a routine intimate examination so that they can check that the examination is appropriate.

The chaperone will be sensitive and respectful of your dignity and confidentiality. They will be prepared to reassure you if they see signs of distress or discomfort. If they have any concerns during or after the examination they will raise this promptly.

Please tell the receptionist you wish to have a chaperone present when you book your appointment so we can ensure one is available. If you decide you want a chaperone when the consultation has already started, please tell the doctor or nurse before the examination starts. There may be a slight delay before one can be available and, if one is not available, or if you or your doctor is unhappy with the choice of chaperone, a further appointment may be made when a chaperone is available

CHILDREN'S HEALTH

When your child is unwell, you can get quick advice for minor conditions from your local pharmacy, the NHS 111 service, or the HandiApp symptom checker.
https://nhssomerset.nhs.uk/my-health/parent-zone/
For more serious concerns, contact your GP, or call 999/visit A&E immediately if you believe it is an emergency.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

If you are unhappy with the service we provide, please tell us. We have a full in-house complaints procedure as part of the NHS system for dealing with complaints. We make our complaints procedure as easy to access as possible. You can obtain information about this by contacting reception or asking any member of the team. You can complain by writing a letter, e-mailing in, using the contact us page on the website or telephoning in. The Practice Manager Rachel Stark will deal with your complaint.

If you wish to make a complaint but want assistance to do so and don't feel able to seek that from us, please contact the Complaints Advocacy Service at NHS Complaints, Advocacy Birmingham, Voice Ability, 3rd Floor, Cobalt Square, 83 Hagley Road, Birmingham B16 8QG.

If you have raised a complaint with us but are unhappy with how we have responded please contact the Health Service Ombudsman on 0345 015 4033 or https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/

We also like to receive compliments! If you are impressed with any aspect of our service or a particular member of staff please let us know by letter, telephone or by popping in to see Rachel, the Practice Manager.

CONFIDENTIALITY
You can be assured that anything you discuss with any member of the surgery staff, whether doctor, nurse or receptionist, will remain confidential. Even if you are under 16, nothing will be said to anyone, including parents, other family members, care workers or teachers, without your permission. The only reason why we might want to consider passing on confidential information without your permission would be to protect either you or someone else from serious harm. In this situation, we would always try to discuss this with you first.

If you have any worries or queries about confidentiality, please ask a member of staff.

If you would like to discuss matters of a confidential nature, either with our receptionists or a member of the dispensary team, we have a side room available in reception for this purpose.

DATA PROTECTION
In order to provide the right level of care, we are required to hold personal information about you on our computer systems and in paper records to help us to look after your health needs, and your doctor is responsible for their accuracy and safe-keeping. Please help to keep your record up to date by informing us of any changes to your circumstances.

Doctors and staff in the practice have access to your medical records to enable them to do their jobs. From time to time information may be shared with others involved in your care if it is necessary. Anyone with access to your record is properly trained in confidentiality issues and is governed by both legal and contractual duty to keep your details private.

All information about you is held securely and appropriate safeguards are in place to prevent accidental loss.

In some circumstances we may be required by law to release your details to statutory or other official bodies, for example if a court order is presented, or in the case of public health issues. In other circumstance you may be required to give written consent before information is released – such as for medical reports for insurance, solicitors etc.

To ensure your privacy, we will not disclose information unless we are sure that we are talking to you. Information will not be disclosed to family, friends or spouses unless we have prior written consent, and we do not, leave messages with others.

You have a right to see your records if you wish. Please ask at reception if you would like further details about our patient information leaflet. An appointment may be required. In some circumstances a fee may be payable.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

As aligned with the current legislation, we believe that every patient should be treated as an individual and with respect and dignity. As such, the services we provide will be fair and meet the needs of everyone, whatever their background or circumstances.

At East Quay we will ensure that whenever you receive healthcare or medical treatment from us we will uphold your right to be treated fairly and not to be discriminated against, regardless of any 'protected characteristics'. Within health and social care service provision, the 'protected characteristics' are currently:

- race
- sex
- gender reassignment status
- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership status
- pregnancy and maternity

This also includes people who are at risk of discrimination by association or perception. This could include, for example, a carer who cares for a disabled person.

We are very aware that whilst we aim to structure policies, systems and procedures, as well as provide individualised care to ensure we do not discriminate and instead support equality, we are also aware that we are not experts in all of the protected characteristics. As such, we encourage you to tell us if we could improve any aspect of our care, access or systems as we may not be aware of a barrier that you feel exists. You – or your carers – can do this by speaking with your GP, or can contact the Practice Manager, Rachel Stark, either by phone, in writing or by coming in to the surgery.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY TEST

The NHS has adopted the 'Friends and Family' test. This is a simple question which we ask you to answer each time you have an appointment. Please note, this isn't about us wanting more patients – it is purely a tool to see how we are doing and what you think of our service. We collate the results on a monthly basis and use this to see what we are doing well, where we need to improve and what is important to you. Please fill one in each time you visit. You can also do this online – it is really easy – here: https://eastquaymedicalcentre.com/friends-and-family-test/

HOME VISITS

Our GP Practice is keen to ensure that we make the best use of our clinical staff, allowing them to provide the most appropriate care to those most in need of it. For the vast majority of patients, attending an appointment at the Practice is the best option for them and for the Practice staff.

Home visits are reserved only for those patients who, in a doctor's opinion, are unfit to travel to the surgery. This is because we have access here at the surgery to specialist equipment and investigations and this is where we are able to provide you with the best care.

Where home visits may be appropriate and worthwhile:

- Terminally ill patients: we have no problems seeing those who are at most clinical need
- Truly bedbound patients: we have no problems seeing those who are confined to bed
- So poorly, the patient would be harmed if moved: we have no problems seeing those who are at most clinical need.

If you do think you need a home visit, please call the surgery before 10.00am. You will be asked to leave your telephone number so that the doctor will contact you and assess your problem.

If we visit you at home and feel that your request was inappropriate, we may inform you so that you use our services more appropriately in the future. Please do not be offended, as we have a duty to use our resources effectively for the safety and benefit of all patients.

HOSPITAL PRE-ADMISSION FORMS

Prior to any hospital operation or procedure, the hospital will send you a form to be completed by your surgery. This form asks for details of your present medication etc. A GP appointment is not required – the receptionists are able to print off the information needed from your medical record. You can often access the information on the NHS app too.

INTERPRETER

If you require an interpreter to attend with you when you see your Doctor please notify the receptionist when booking the appointment and she/he will arrange this for you.

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND REPORTS

The National Health Service provides most healthcare to the majority of people free of charge, but there are exceptions. GPs are self-employed and are contracted to provide NHS general medical services for their patients.

Sometimes, GPs are asked to provide additional services which fall outside their contract and in these circumstances, they are entitled to make a reasonable charge for providing them.

At a time when the NHS is facing the biggest financial pressures ever, we cannot use NHS resources to fund private reports and so on. Examples of these are:
• Insurance and life assurance policy reports
• HGV licence medicals
• PSV licence medicals
You are able to view any report written about you, within the limitations of the law, but you need to tell us that you wish to see it. Some of these reports are now subject to VAT. Ask at reception for more information.

MEDICAL RECORDS
Your medical records typically contain information from almost all consultations and contacts you have had with health professionals in the practice and information sent to the practice about you from others, such as hospital letters.
The information they contain usually includes:
- Why you saw a health professional;
- Details of clinical findings and diagnoses, investigations, tests and scans;
- Any options or recommendations for care and treatment, including evidence that you agreed;
- Details of actions health professionals have taken and the outcomes.
Please contact the Practice Manager for the Data Privacy Notice.

NAMED ACCOUNTABLE GP
Since 2015 all patients have been allocated a named, accountable GP. However, we have always had a personal list system so you will have a registered GP who is responsible for your care. We encourage you to see this GP for all routine health issues.

NEW PATIENTS
If you want to register at East Quay Medical Centre, please either visit https://eastquaymedicalcentre.com/register-at-the-practice/ or collect a new patient form from reception, complete it and return to the practice. If, for any reason, your registration is not accepted or if we need further information to process it, we will contact you. As a new patient, you will be assigned a named GP and we will text or write to you to confirm who this is. You can also find this on prescriptions or on letters we send you.

NHS CONTRACTS
We hold our contract for NHS Services with NHS England, Wynford House, Lufton Way, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 8HR. We are also members of the Somerset Integrated Care Board (ICB) which commissions and oversees all NHS care in Somerset.

PATIENT GROUP
In 2004 we formed a patient group that helps us to highlight and 'troubleshoot' problems and informs of the development of new services and resources. We meet every six to eight weeks in the morning and afternoon. We welcome new members. If you would like to join, or know more, please contact Rachel Stark, Practice Manager.

PATIENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Our premises have been designed to meet all current requirements as established under the Disability Discrimination Act.

- Designated disabled parking bays are located close to the surgery entrance.
- There is level access to the building.
- The surgery has wide doors to allow for wheelchair access and there is good access for the disabled to all of our consultation rooms.
- There is an accessible toilet on the ground floor.
- A wheelchair is available for use during the course of your visit if required.

If you feel improvements can be made please let Rachel Stark, Practice Manager, know.

PROXY ACCESS
You may find it helpful if a trusted family member, carer, or close friend is able to access your online medical record on your behalf. This is known as 'proxy access' and can be used for tasks such as ordering repeat prescriptions, booking appointments, and more.

If you do not want someone else to have access to your GP health record, you can:
- Refuse to give consent when asked
- Withdraw consent at any time, even if you previously agreed

To remove or prevent proxy access, please contact the practice.

Children under 16
To enable proxy access for a patient 11 years or older, we may need to speak to the child directly to ensure they understand what access to the their records may entail.

Before granting you access, we may need to check:

- ID for you and the child, for example passports
- documents that help to prove you have parental responsibility, for example a birth certificate
- with anyone else that shares parental responsibility with you
- for safeguarding issues
- that the child consents to your access (agrees to it) or lacks capacity to consent, if they are aged 11 or over
- You can have proxy access for more than 1 child, and a child can have more than 1 proxy acting on their behalf.

Children's rights, capacity and consent
Children have the same legal rights over their personal health information as adults. This means we must speak directly with the child to obtain their consent before allowing someone else to access their online GP record—if the child is able to understand and make an informed decision. This is known as having capacity.

Children 11 or over are usually considered to have the capacity to consent to or refuse access, unless they have a medical condition or learning disability that affects their ability to understand.

If you believe your child may not fully understand what it means to give you access to their online GP services, please let us know.

In these cases, a GP will make a decision based on the best interests of the child. This will usually mean giving access to a parent or legal guardian to act on the child's behalf.

REFERRALS
We may want to refer you to another service. There are various ways we may do this – you may self refer, we may write a referral letter or fill in a referral form (online or on paper) or we may add a referral electronically. The clinician who refers you will explain what you need to do. Most referrals go through the e-referrals service. Read more here: https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/hospitals/book-an-appointment/

The easiest and quickest way to find out the length of waiting time is via the NHS: https://www.myplannedcare.nhs.uk/ that was launched to enable patients to see how long the average wait time for treatment is at hospitals across England. This is to help manage patient expectations when being referred for treatment. When your referral is received by the hospital from us, the Consultant's team read it and prioritise how soon you are seen. Please DO NOT contact the practice, we have no influence over this, it's the Consultant's view. We do find it difficult to manage calls from patients asking us but unfortunately we have no idea where you are on the hospitals waiting list. To access the website information go to then choose the hospital where you have been referred and you can then view the average waiting times.

RESEARCH
East Quay is an active research practice and linked to the NIHR and the Medical Research Council's General Practice Framework. These are national and local groups of general practices interested in research. If the practice takes part in a study we might like to pass on your name, address and age, as recorded on our practice computer. If we do, the information will remain confidential and be used only to select a sample of patients whom we would then contact to ask whether they would consider helping with some research. If we contacted you, you would be free to refuse to help without your medical care being affected.
To choose the best sample, it is important that we are able to pass on everyone's details. However, you are free to refuse permission for us to pass on your details; if you wish to do so, please see your doctor.

SELF REFERRAL
Most referrals to other specialists will require you seeing or speaking with a GP. However, there are a number of local services, listed below, that you are able to make self referrals to access their service:

Somerset NHS Talking Therapies (IAPT)
Free NHS psychological support for people aged 18+ registered with a Somerset GP, helping with anxiety, depression and stress. You can refer yourself without seeing a GP. https://www.somersetft.nhs.uk/somerset-talking-therapies/

Somerset-Wide Integrated Sexual Health Service (SWISH)
Free confidential sexual health and contraception services including STI testing and treatment, offered regardless of age or identity. Clinics are available in Taunton, Bridgwater and across Somerset.
0300 1245 010 https://www.swishservices.co.uk/

I'm pregnant…what next?
If you are pregnant, your antenatal (pregnancy) care should start as soon as possible to ensure you and your baby are well and have the checks and care you need. https://www.somersetft.nhs.uk/maternity-new/maternity/antenatal-care/im-pregnant-what-next/

Somerset NHS Physiotherapy
The service is available to you if you are over the age of 8 and presenting with a musculoskeletal condition. For those presenting with any conditions regarding your nervous system or breathing, please speak with your GP who will be able to refer you to the right service.
01935 384358 https://www.somersetft.nhs.uk/musculoskeletal-physiotherapy-service/

Somerset NHS Podiatry Service
This service provides assessment and treatment for foot and lower limb conditions, focusing on patients with high-risk clinical needs or painful foot conditions.
0300 124 5661 https://www.somersetft.nhs.uk/podiatry/

Healthy weight
Gaining weight is often a gradual process and is influenced by the environment we live in, the behaviour of people around us and our own choices. Having a healthier body weight can help reduce and manage the risk of a number of health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer. https://healthysomerset.co.uk/starting-well/healthy-weight/

Somerset Acute Community Eyecare Scheme (ACES)
ACES is a free service available to all patients registered with a Somerset GP. The service provides patients experiencing recently occurring medical eye conditions with appropriate treatment closer to home. The service is provided by local optometrists with the specialist knowledge and skills to carry out this work at a locally approved optician. https://nhssomerset.nhs.uk/my-health/my-local-health-services/somerset-acute-eyecare-scheme-aces/

Care and support for adults
Social care support for adults and children is arranged by Somerset County Council. https://www.somerset.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/

Somerset Carers
The Carers Hub is a searchable database filled with information for Carers.
https://somersetcarers.org/carers-hub/

Smoke Free Somerset
Smoke free Somerset is your free local stop-smoking service which is provided by Somerset's Public Health team. Our treatment programmes focus on supporting behaviour change. https://smokefreesomerset.org.uk/

Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service (SDAS)
SDAS provides free, confidential support for anyone in Somerset who is struggling with drug or alcohol use.
0300 303 8788 https://www.turning-point.co.uk/services/somerset

Somerset Domestic Abuse Support (SIDAS)
SIDAS provides support to men, women, and children in Somerset who are experiencing domestic abuse.
0800 69 49 999 https://somersetdomesticabuse.org.uk/

Children and Young People's Therapy Service
We work with children and young people aged up to 19 years old who have difficulties ranging from speech and language problems and difficulty with concentration and attention, to disabilities and health conditions that slow physical development. https://www.somersetft.nhs.uk/children-and-young-peoples-therapy-service/

Young Somerset
The largest youth work charity in Somerset, providing mental health support, education, and social opportunities for young people.
01278 722100 https://www.youngsomerset.org.uk/

Somerset Suicide Bereavement Support
A specialised service offering support to those in Somerset who have been bereaved by suicide.
0300 330 5463 https://www.mindinsomerset.org.uk/our-services/somerset-suicide-bereavement-support-service/

NHS stop smoking services help you quit – Quit smoking
Local stop smoking services are free, friendly and can massively boost your chances of quitting for good.
0300 123 1044 https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/nhs-stop-smoking-services-help-you-quit/

NUPAS (national unplanned pregnancy advisory service)
We offer abortion treatments and free pregnancy testing, sexually transmitted infection screening and a fully comprehensive contraceptive service.
0333 004 6666 https://www.nupas.co.uk/

MSI Reproductive Choices UK – Your Choice, Our Support
You don't need a GP referral to access NHS funded abortion care. We've been helping people with their reproductive health options for over 40 years. We provide NHS-funded and self-funded abortion and vasectomy care through our network of local clinics all over England. You can give us a call whenever you need us. Our advice line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
0345 300 8090 https://www.msichoices.org.uk/

Find a psychological therapies service in England
You can refer yourself directly to a psychological therapies service (IAPT) without seeing your GP. These services offer therapies, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), for common problems including: stress, anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and phobias
https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/services-near-you/

NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme
The Healthier You: NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme (NHS DPP) identifies those at diabetes high risk and refers them onto a behaviour change programme. https://www.england.nhs.uk/diabetes/diabetes-prevention/

SPECIMENS

You cannot bring specimens in for testing unless this has been specifically requested by a Doctor or Nurse at East Quay Medical Centre. If you bring a sample in without being asked, this will be discarded without being tested.

All specimens must be provided in a suitable container and marked clearly with name, date of birth, date provided and reason for the specimen.

Failure to do so may mean that the test will need to be repeated – Please note that when bringing in a sample to the surgery, only samples in the correct container can be accepted.

SUMMARY CARE RECORD (SCR)

We also participate in the Summary Care Record (SCR). If you haven't opted out, it means your medications and allergies will be updated on a national database each time we make a change. The local hospitals use this system so they can log on to your record to check your latest medication. If you want to opt out of this service, or have previously opted out and want to opt in, please write to the practice manager.

TEXT MESSAGING

We use text messaging as a routine way to inform patients of key information, call patients in for routine care and immunisations or advise you of services we think may be helpful for you.

We also use this to send test results and other key messages from your GP. If you are unhappy for us to do this, please contact us to let you know.

TRANSPORT
Read about transport here: https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/hospitals/going-into-hospital/how-to-organise-transport-to-and-from-hospital/

Slinky is a flexible bus service operating across 6 regional areas in Somerset.
To use the Slinky, you will need to register and become a member. You must be over the age of 16 to register. Parents, guardians or carers once registered can book for their dependents. Passengers under the age of 5 need to be accompanied by an adult.

It can be used for many things. It can take you to health appointments or exercise classes, help you visit family and friends, go shopping, or attend social events. You can also use it to connect to other public transport options. Find out more here: https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/slinky-services/

UPDATING CONTACT DETAILS
Please let us know as soon as possible if you change your address, telephone number or name. It is important that we have up to date contact details in case we need to contact you.

VIDEO RECORDING
As a training practice there are times when you may be asked to allow your consultation with a doctor to be recorded. This is done discreetly for training purposes only. The tapes are confidential and will be destroyed after use. They are required as part of a GP's training programme and assessment. We hope that you will feel able to allow your consultation to be recorded, but you may of course refuse either before, during or after a consultation is recorded, in which case any material will be deleted immediately.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – PUBLICATION SCHEME
The Freedom of Information Act 2000 obliges the practice to produce a Publication Scheme. A Publication Scheme is a guide to the 'classes' of information the practice intends to routinely make available. Ask our Practice Manager for information.

ZERO TOLERANCE
As a Practice we are very aware that visiting your GP can, at times, be stressful and concerning for patients. Delays in obtaining appointments and delays in surgery times, due to unforeseen emergency appointments, can also add to these concerns.

We always strive to meet patient expectation and deliver the highest standards of healthcare. For the vast majority of our patients we achieve this, despite the finite resources and steadily increasing demand for services that exists today within the NHS.

Our staff come to work to care for others, and it is important for all members of the public and our staff to be treated with respect.

In line with the rest of the NHS and to ensure this is fully observed we have instigated a Dignity at Work and Zero Tolerance policy, whereby aggressive or violent behaviour towards our staff will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Any patient who verbally abuses a member of practice staff will be sent a letter from the Practice confirming that this behaviour will not be tolerated. Any future violation of this policy may result in removal from the Practice patient list. The Police will be called in all cases of violence. This will mean that you are removed from routine NHS care and enter the Violent Patient Scheme.

The Practice feels sure you will understand that proper behaviour is absolutely necessary for our staff and patients and that non observance will not be accepted.

BRIDGWATER BAY PRIMARY CARE NETWORK

The Bridgwater Bay Health Federation has formed a co-operative organisation in Bridgwater and the surrounding area in 2007. It is now Bridgwater Bay Primary Care Network and consists of 9 practices in the area and together we have a history of leading clinical service development. We want services in the area to protect what is best about general practice in the town, to assure patients continue to benefit from good patient care. We also want to move from an illness-based service towards a focus on health and independence and see disease prevention and health promotion as a fundamental tool in achieving sustainable improved health and lifestyles in the town.

SOMERSET PRIMARY HEALTHCARE LIMITED/GP SUPPORT UNIT

The practice, along with all other GP practices in Somerset, is a shareholder in Somerset Primary Healthcare Ltd (SPH), also known as the GP Support Unit. This was set up in 2014 to enables practices to work together as one organisation where new services cannot be managed in single practices.

Prescriptions

If your GP has authorised repeat prescriptions for you, please set up the NHS app so you can order online. Please ask at reception for your personal log in details. We really recommend this service as it is now available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is really easy to use.
If you can't use this service, you can order in these alternative ways:
1) By placing the tear-off portion of your last prescription in the prescription box in reception
2) By posting the tear-off portion of your last prescription to the surgery
3) By telephoning the prescription desk on 01278 446006 weekdays only between 10.30am and 5.30pm.
Note that this line is very busy - especially on Mondays and Tuesday morning.

Electronic Prescription Service
Most prescriptions are now signed, sent and processed electronically. You have 2 choices for how this works.

1. You can choose a pharmacy or dispenser to dispense all your prescriptions. When you get a prescription, it will be sent electronically to the dispenser you have chosen. You can collect your medicines or appliances without having to hand in a paper prescription. To do this, tell us when ordering which pharmacy you would like the prescription to go to. We will record this on our computer and all future prescriptions will be marked for that pharmacy until you tell us otherwise.
2. You can decide each time you are issued a prescription where you would like it to be dispensed. When you are issued a prescription, you will be given a paper copy that you can take to any pharmacy or other dispenser in England. The paper copy will contain a unique barcode that will be scanned to download your prescription from the secure NHS database.

You can change or cancel your choice of dispenser at any time. Simply speak to your GP or pharmacist before you order your next prescription.

You should allow time for the update to take place to avoid your next prescription being sent to the wrong place.

Paper prescriptions will continue to be available in special circumstances, but almost all prescriptions will be processed electronically. These prescriptions can be collected from the reception desk.

We recommend you leave 7 working days between ordering and collecting your medication. If you do this, when you come to collect your items they will be ready for you.

Medication Reviews
At the bottom of your slip is a 'review date'. This is when the GP needs to review your on-going medication. This will often mean arranging the routine blood tests you need around your medication review date and then your GP can update your review, sometimes they can do this without an appointment, other times you need an appointment with your GP or the Nurse. Please follow the GP or Nurse advice on

organising your medication review - especially if you have a long-term condition such as asthma or diabetes.

Reducing Waste
We try to reduce the waste of medicines. We would like everyone in the community to help play their part. Every pound spent on medicines which are not taken is a pound less which is available to provide NHS treatment for you, your family and friends.

- It is estimated at least 10% of prescribed medicines are wasted
- Once collected from the Pharmacy, medicines cannot be recycled
- Doctors don't mind if you decide, for whatever reason, you don't want to take a medicine; they would far rather know and not issue unwanted medication that ends up wasted
- Medicines should be returned to a Pharmacy for safe destruction if no longer needed
- This destruction involves incineration and the NHS also has to pay for this so adding to the bill for waste.

What can you do to help?
- Tell your doctor if you do not want to take a medicine any longer (or please fill in and return the slip to indicate any medication on your repeat slip which you no longer require)
- Don't hoard or order more medication than you need. If you do have a surplus of some medicines, please use them up before ordering more
- Ask your Pharmacist for advice
- Take any unwanted medicines back to the Pharmacy for disposal

What to do with old medicines
Return the medication to the pharmacy you got it from. Do not put it in your household bin or flush it down the toilet or bring it to us.

Medication that can be bought over the counter
Somerset has made the following medicines of limited clinical value or for minor or self-limiting conditions NON FORMULARY.
- Hay fever preparations
- Pain killers for minor aches and pains
- Soluble pain killers (because of high salt content)
- Cough and cold remedies
- Nasal decongestants (and Sterimar)
- Tonic, vitamin, and health supplements eg vitamin D
- Treatments for non-serious constipation or diarrhoea
- Ear wax removers (a few drops of olive oil is just as good as anything on prescription)
- Threadworm tablets
- Lozenges, throat sprays, mouthwashes, gargles and toothpastes
- Indigestion remedies tablets and liquids for occasional use
- Slimming preparations (except within national
- guidelines)

- Creams, gels, oils and dressings for minor sprains, sports injuries and scars
- Creams for bruising, tattoos, varicose veins and scars
- Moisturisers, suncreams and bath additives for minor skin conditions
- Nappy rash / barrier creams
- Treatments for minor facial spots
- Hair removing creams
- Athletes' foot creams and powders
- Topical treatments for vaginal thrush
- Treatments for fungal skin, nail infections and dandruff
- Verruca and wart treatments
- Foods and toilet preparations except where clinically indicated.
- Homeopathic remedies
- Head lice lotions and shampoos (wet combing is recommended)

We have been advised to no longer prescribe these medicines.
You may seek healthcare advice from your community Pharmacy or practice, which may include a recommendation for you to self-care by
purchasing your own medicines.

Somerset spent almost £5 million last year on these medicines which is no longer affordable. All of these products, are the same strength that the GP
had been prescribing, and are readily available along with advice from pharmacies, as well as some shops and supermarkets (which are often open until late) . Some of them do not actually work very well, e.g. cough syrups. This money could be better spent on more serious conditions such as cancer, heart disease and mental health.

Menstrual Period Delay Medication
We no longer be offer a period delay service (e.g. prescriptions for norethisterone and medroxyprogesterone/provera).

This decision has been made due to:
- Ongoing pressures on NHS services,
- The availability of safe and convenient alternatives through online pharmacies and over-the-counter options, and
- This decision is supported by the ICB as they consider medication for this purpose to be a self care item and not for NHS prescription.

Patients who wish to delay their period can now access this medication directly from pharmacies or reputable online services, without the need for a GP appointment or NHS prescription.

We appreciate your understanding as we focus our NHS resources on essential medical care and priority health needs.

Prescriptions Charges and Exemptions
Extensive exemption and remission arrangements protect those likely to have difficulty in paying charges (NHS prescription and dental charges, optical and hospital travel costs).

The NHS prescription charge is a flat-rate amount which successive Governments have thought it reasonable to charge for those who can afford to pay for their medicines. Prescription prepayment certificates (PPCs) offer real savings for people who need extensive medication. If you will have to pay for four or more prescription items in three months, or more than 15 items in 12 months, you may find it cheaper to buy a prepayment certificate (PPC).

Telephone advice and order line 0300 330 1341
General Public - Buy or renew a prepayment certificate online https://buy-prescription-prepayment-certificate.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/start

NHS England - Help with Health Costs
To find out whether you can receive help with covering health costs, take a look at NHS website https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/ The practice is unfortunately unable to print copies of these guides for you and we do not hold copies of the claims forms that you require.

Important numbers that you may need to contact for help with health costs:

- Phone 0300 330 1348 for the dental services help line
- Phone 0300 330 1343 for the Low Income Scheme help line
- Phone 0300 330 1341 for queries about medical exemption certificates.
- Phone 0300 330 1341 for queries about PPCs.
- Phone 0300 330 1349 for the prescription services help line
- Phone 0300 330 1347 for queries about tax credit certificates
- Phone 0300 123 0849 to order a paper copy of the HC12, HC5 and HC1 (SC) forms
- For all other queries call 0300 330 1343

Questions about prescriptions
If you have questions about your medicine, your local pharmacists can answer these. They can also answer questions on medicines you can buy without a prescription.

The NHS.UK website has information on how your medicine works, how and when to take it, possible side effects and answers to your common questions.

Test Results

Test results go directly to the clinician or service that requested them. It is their responsibility to interpret the results and inform you of the outcome.

If your test or investigation was arranged by a hospital specialist, the results will be sent back to them—not your GP.

Once a doctor has reviewed your results, you can access them in the following ways:

- Via your NHS account (through the NHS website or NHS App)
- By calling us on 01278 454560 during opening times, and a member of our team will inform you of the results
- By text message or email, if you have given consent and it is appropriate to do so

Please note - Test results are usually available within 7–10 working days, but this can vary depending on the type of test.

Some specialist-requested tests, including X-rays, MRI scans, and other hospital-based investigations, may take up to 6 to 8 weeks to return to the surgery.

We do not contact every patient with the result of each test. Unless there is a reason for the doctor to contact you, your GP will ask for the result to be filed in your electronic notes. We recommend getting set up the NHS app so you can view your results 24/7 – this includes the comments the Doctor has made on your results. You can also telephone the reception for your results, as specified by the nurse or health care assistant, usually after seven to ten days. To protect your confidentiality we will not give your results to anyone other than you, unless you have already given your permission for us to do so.

We do strongly encourage you to access your results online if possible. If you look online, you will be able to see the results and the comments from the doctor who has checked your results (all results are seen by a doctor). If you want to be set up for this please e-mail, call or ask at reception.

Please be guided by the comment that the doctor has made. The doctor will have reviewed the result and applied their medical knowledge and their knowledge of you to tell you what is OK and what may need further tests or treatment. The doctor will take into account a number of things such as:

- What is an acceptable abnormality. It is rare that tests are completely normal and we do not want you to be worried unnecessarily. Whilst numbers are exact things, in terms of results, numbers outside the “normal range” are not always important.
- What is normal for you individually taking into account your previous results and the effects of any treatment you are taking or medical conditions you may have.
- How your result may be affected by any illness at the time of the result.

If your doctor has said your test results are normal, satisfactory or stable, you can be reassured. If you have further questions and have an appointment planned, please discuss this at this appointment.

If your doctor wants you to book an appointment or have treatment, they will ask this on the comments on the results. Please follow these instructions. If the doctor wants you to have any tests or treatment urgently, they will tell you this. All other requests aren't urgent and should be the next available routine appointment. Hopefully this has been helpful. If you have further queries please discuss these with your GP or Nurse routinely.

For information on what your laboratory test results mean please visit Lab Tests Online. https://labtestsonline.org.uk/tests It does not give you access to your actual results, but will provide an explanation of what the tests are and what the results mean.

Services

BLOOD TESTS

A blood test is often done to check your health, or to find out why you're having certain symptoms. It involves having a small amount of your blood taken for testing. To have a blood test a Doctor needs to authorise this – either following a consultation or as part of your routine monitoring. We do blood tests at the surgery for bloods tests we have requested. If you need a blood test for hospital care, you need to attend Victoria Park Health and Wellbeing Hub who take bloods for the hospital.

CERVICAL SMEARS

Cervical screening, which used to be called a smear test, is a test to check the health of the cervix and help prevent cervical cancer.

All women aged 25 to 64 are invited for cervical screening every 5 years.
Everyone with a cervix should be offered screening.
Cervical screening is carried out by a practice nurse.

You'll receive an invitation through the NHS App, by text or by letter asking you to make an appointment. You can book an appointment as soon as you get an invitation. If you missed your last cervical screening, you do not need to wait for an invitation to book an appointment.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH

When your child is unwell, you can get quick advice for minor conditions from your local pharmacy, the NHS 111 service, or the HandiApp symptom checker.
https://nhssomerset.nhs.uk/my-health/parent-zone/
For more serious concerns, contact your GP, or call 999/visit A&E immediately if you believe it is an emergency.

CONTRACEPTION AND FAMILY PLANNING

We are happy to offer full family planning services including long-acting reversible contraception such as coils and implants and the contraceptive pill. We also offer pre-conceptual advice. Please book a routine GP appointment for contraception and family planning advice.

ECGs

An ECG (electrocardiogram) is a test that records the electrical activity of your heart, including the rate and rhythm. It's usually quick and painless. A doctor or nurse will ask you to book one when needed. ECGs take about 15 minutes and are available daily.

If you'd like someone else to be in the room with you (a chaperone). This could be someone you know, another nurse or a trained member of staff, please let our reception team know when you arrive for your appointment.

FIRST CONTACT PHYSIOTHERAPISTS
We also have First Contact Physiotherapists working in the surgery. They are here to see adults with new musculoskeletal pain or problems. The aim being that prompt assessment and treatment is successful to resolve the symptoms. If you are suitable for this service, reception will offer this to you when you call.

HEALTH COACHING
Our aim is to keep our patients fit and healthy. Prevention is far better than cure, and many conditions can be prevented or improved by a healthy lifestyle. We have Health Coaches, funded by the NHS and provided by SASP, working from the surgery. They offer one to one as well as group sessions – really listening to you and helping you make improvements in your health, wellbeing and lifestyle. Refer yourself here: https://www.sasp.co.uk/forms/view/hwc

IMMUNISATIONS
Our practice nursing team offers routine childhood and adult immunisations to protect you and your family.

Read more here: https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them/

It's important for all adults, children, and babies to be fully immunised. If you're unsure about your vaccination status, please contact the surgery for advice.

LONG TERM CONDITION MONITORING
Our aim is to keep our patients fit and healthy and this includes supporting patients with long term conditions such as asthma, COPD, hypertension and diabetes.

Our practice nurses support patients with asthma and COPD by reviewing inhaler technique, providing personalised action plans, and offering advice to help prevent flare-ups. Please ensure you book and attend your annual review.

We support patients with type 1 and type 2 diabetes by offering regular reviews, advice on blood sugar control, and guidance on managing medication and lifestyle changes. Please ensure you book and attend your annual review.

We advise patients with high blood pressure to buy a blood pressure monitor for home so that home readings can be done every year. These readings are more reliable than readings taken in the surgery. Please take the readings as prompted and return them to us and we will review these and confirm any further action needed in your annual review.

MATERNITY CARE
As soon as you know you are pregnant, you can self-refer to your local midwifery team. Your midwife will contact you to arrange your first appointment. This is usually between 8-10 weeks of pregnancy. A separate leaflet is available on maternity care; please ask at reception.

PATIENTS OVER 75 YEARS OF AGE

If you are 75 or over you are welcome to book for a health check. Please call reception and ask for a routine appointment with your own GP.

SCREENING
We take part in all NHS screening programmes offered by GP surgeries. Please read more here: https://www.nhs.uk/tests-and-treatments/nhs-screening/

TRAVEL VACCINATIONS
If you are planning to travel, ask for a travel form from reception and complete, returning it to the practice nurses at least 8 weeks before you travel. If you need vaccinations, please ensure your appointment is at least 6 weeks before travel.

We now only offer NHS travel advice and vaccinations. Some travel vaccinations are not included in the normal services provided under the NHS and are therefore deemed 'private' (chargeable). Due to Government changes with effect from 31st July 2019 our nurses will no longer be able to administer any private (chargeable) travel vaccinations. If private vaccinations are suggested the nurse will signpost you to an appropriate private provider to enable you to obtain these vaccines.

If you travel at short notice we may not be able to offer you an appointment and will refer you to other services.

WARFARIN MONITORING
Warfarin is a type of medicine called an anticoagulant. Some people call these blood thinners.It's used to treat and prevent blood clots, including in the veins (deep vein thrombosis) and the lungs (pulmonary embolism).

While you're taking warfarin, you'll need regular blood tests to measure how quickly your blood clots. This is called an international normalised ratio (INR) test. We host dedicated INR clinics every week at the practice.

EAST QUAY VISION 01278 440440 www.eastquayvision.co.uk
In 2009 we launched the new service within East Quay Medical Centre to offer both private and NHS eye examination, a selection of frames and contact lenses. We have developed new services such as our dry eye clinic. We also see and treat patients with acute eye problems and those who need screening for glaucoma – as Clinical Commissioning Group services, these are free to patients.
We believe in providing the best level of care and attention, individually tailored to you.