



PPG Newsletter



Welcome to this Summer Newsletter

Do please remember members of the Patient Participation Group (PPG) are available to help patients – details can be found on the surgery website.

The **Annual General Meeting** was held on the 1st July when Chairman Linda Mason welcomed patients from all three surgeries to the meeting in Buxted on one of the hottest days of the year. Dr. Perry and Practice Director, Charlotte Luck led a Question and Answer session after the formal proceedings.

Charlotte gave a very informative and interesting presentation, outlining progress in several different areas, especially the new triage system which was still being 'tweaked' to improve it. A brief summary of her presentation is below for you all to read.

A Year of Positive Change

Since launching our new Total Triage system in April 2024, we've made important improvements in the way we deliver care at Buxted, East Hoathly, and Manor Oak Surgeries.

We're Listening and Learning

Since the launch of Total Triage in April 2024, we've been making ongoing improvements to how we allocate appointments. A key development was the introduction of a dedicated triaging GP in May 2025. This role has allowed us to expand appointment availability and resolve more medical requests without needing formal appointments.

We're continuing to refine our system. One upcoming change is to shift from limiting forms by number to limiting them by time. This change will be phased in gradually to ensure the system can handle requests efficiently.

While we could allow routine appointments to be booked anytime, our priority is clinical need—not first-come, first-served. Triage allows us to prioritise more urgent needs and direct patients to the right care at the right time.

We understand it's frustrating when forms close after reaching safe working limits. However, forms are often reopened later in the day. We recommend submitting your request as close to 8am as possible. If you're unable to complete the form online, you can call reception or ask someone to submit it on your behalf.

Our team remains committed to improving your care. Over the past year, we've seen better call handling and appointment access. While progress has been significant, we're working hard to reduce wait times further.

What's Changed – and How It's Helping You

Here are some of the improvements we've made:

- 📞 **Faster Call Response:** Calls to reception have dropped from over 102,000 to under 61,000 a reduction of more than 40%.
- 📺 **Fewer Callers in Queue:** Peak callers dropped from 80 to 21 at any one time. Midweek, it's often fewer than 15.
- ★ **Better Use of Appointments:** Over 2,000 patient requests were resolved without needing a formal appointment.
- 📅 **More Appointments:** A 9% increase in total appointments and completed requests in the past 12 months.
- 🕒 **Improved Access:** Routine appointments are usually available within 14 days.
- ★ **Less Time Waiting:** Patients spent 8,500 fewer hours on hold in the past year.
- 👤 **Continuity of Care:** More patients see the same clinician, improving care quality.
- 👥 **Staff Stability:** Only 3 reception team members have left since June 2024 (2 of these 3 retired).
- 🕒 **Longer Consultations:** GP appointments are now 15 minutes for safer, less rushed care.

How You Can Help

- ✓ **Attend your appointments or let us know if you can't.** We had over 329 hours of missed face-to-face appointments last year.
- 📱 **Use the NHS App to gather advice, order prescriptions, and view test results.** If you need help using the NHS App, please ask one of our reception team who can help get you started and show you how you can use it.
- 👤 **Be kind to our staff.** Everyone is doing their best within limited resources.
- 📍 **Visit your pharmacist for minor ailments** they can treat many conditions without seeing a GP.

We're proud of the progress we've made and grateful for your continued support. We continue to travel on our improvement journey.

Charlotte Luck - Practice Director

PPG SURGERY DISPLAY BOARDS - There are PPG display boards in every surgery giving up-to-date information on current issues. **alcohol awareness, drinking in the workplace** and next month will highlight the importance of **recognising the signs of sepsis**. Thanks to PPG Committee member Sue Ovens for her hard work in putting the information up. If you are interested in any of these important topics, please feel free to help yourself to any leaflets you may find useful.

PPG Email Address Update

We have changed the PPG email address to better support our communication needs as our patient database continues to grow.

Our previous email account was not suitable for handling the increasing number of contacts (now over 300) or for efficiently carrying out mail merges for newsletters and other communications.

Our new email address is: sxicb-esx.buxtedehmo.ppg@nhs.net

This NHS-based email account benefits from the technical support of an NHS IT department, which was not available with our previous Outlook address. Please be assured that no one at the Practice will be involved in managing the account. All communications will remain confidential within the PPG Committee.

To comply with GDPR regulations, access to the database and email account is currently restricted to:

- **Linda Mason**, Chair
- **Jean-Mary Crozier**, Deputy Chair
- **Martin Ensom**, Data Controller (day-to-day management)

As a reminder, these individuals are volunteers who sit on the Patient Participation Group (PPG) Committee. In the future, additional access may be granted to other PPG members to help with managing the PPG's email account.

If you have already provided us with your email address, you will receive a message informing you of the change. Apart from adding the new email address to your safe sender list (to prevent messages from going to your junk folder), you likely do not need to take any further action beyond noting the new address. We will also publicise the new email widely and hope more patients will sign up soon.

If you have any questions, please do get in touch using our new address:-

sxicb-esx.buxtedehmo.ppg@nhs.net

Thank you for your continued support.

PPG Committee Members; Linda Mason – Chair, Jean-Mary Crozier – Vice-Chair, Ann Bonner, Bob Ruthven, Gina Cuthbertson, Martin Ensom, Peter Lister, Stephanie Newman, Sue Ovens.

Fundraising

The PPG Committee is going to be asking for your support.

The surgeries need some equipment which would enable them to make the lives of patients better and the staff more efficient. Jean-Mary Crozier, Peter Lister and Ann Bonner will be writing to you soon to ask for your help with this new initiative. Please do what you can to help.

Facebook and Suggestion boxes.

If you would like to hear more from the Group then follow us on Facebook or please let us have your email address. Slips are available at each surgery for you to use and then post in the suggestion box. Please also drop us a note on any suggestions or issue you might have and place them in the suggestion boxes, which are emptied regularly.

AUTUMN FLU AND COVID CLINICS

Saturday 4 October 2025 – **Buxted** – morning

Thursday 8 October 2025 – **East Hoathly** – all day

Saturday 18 October 2025 – **Manor Oak** – morning

Tuesday 11 November 2025 – **Buxted** – evening

Thursday 13 November 2025 – **Manor Oak** – evening

TO BOOK

If you have registered your mobile number with us, (and you are eligible) you will shortly receive a text from the surgery inviting you to book in. Alternatively you can call the surgery's dedicated vaccination line on 01435 811560

WHY SHOULD I GET VACCINATED?

Protection from Serious Illness

Both influenza (flu) and COVID-19 can lead to severe disease, hospitalization, or even death - especially in:

Older adults, people with chronic conditions (e.g COPD, diabetes, heart disease), Pregnant individuals, people with weakened immune systems

Reduces Spread to Others

Vaccination helps reduce transmission to vulnerable people (like the elderly, babies, or immunocompromised family/friends) - even if you feel well

Helps the NHS & Healthcare Services

Vaccinated individuals are less likely to require hospital care, easing pressure on healthcare systems, especially during winter when services are already stretched

Updated Protection Each Year

Flu viruses change each year, so annual vaccination is needed. COVID variants also evolve; updated boosters provide better protection against new strains

Fewer Missed Work/School Days

Even mild illness can mean time off work, school, or caring responsibilities. Vaccination helps keep you active and involved in daily life

CHANGES TO COVID VACCINATION ELIGIBILITY

This year the eligibility requirements for COVID vaccination have changed; the eligible groups are adults aged 75 years and over, residents in care homes for older adults, and individuals who are immunosuppressed aged 6 months and over

Am I eligible for the flu jab?

From October 2025:

- those aged 65 years and over
- those aged 18 years to under 65 years in clinical risk groups
- those in long-stay residential care homes
- carers in receipt of carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person
- close contacts of immunocompromised individuals
- frontline workers in a social care setting without an employer led occupational health scheme

From 1 September 2025:

pregnant women, all children aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2025 and all children in clinical risk groups aged from 6 months to less than 18 years