

Holbrook Surgery Patient Participation Group [PPG] HOLBROOK SURGERY NEWSLETTER

24th Edition

June 2026



One of the main aims of our Patient Participation Group is to support the Surgery in providing and promoting information about self-care. In this edition, we include an item which has been produced especially for us by Horsham Wellbeing Hub. The Hub offers advice and support on how to make small changes to improve your health and wellbeing. The GPs are very keen to encourage patients to make use of these services.

Trusted Online Health Advice from Dr Anisha Patel

Holbrook patients may find it helpful to explore dranisha.co.uk, the health website created by **Dr Anisha Patel**, one of Holbrook Surgery's own GPs. Dr Anisha is a GP with a special interest in women's health. In 2018, she was unexpectedly diagnosed with stage 3 bowel cancer while working as a doctor and raising a young family. Experiencing healthcare as both doctor and a patient led her to create the *Doctors Get Cancer Too* platform, sharing clear, evidence-based health information and personal insight.

Her website includes short, easy-to-read articles and videos covering:

- Women's health and menopause
- Cancer awareness and screening
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Practical everyday health tips

Her openness about survivorship, recovery and the emotional impact of illness has helped many patients feel less alone and more empowered to seek help early.

👉 Visit: www.dranisha.co.uk or follow her on Instagram [doctorsgetcancertoo](https://www.instagram.com/doctorsgetcancertoo)

Surgery Update NHS funding has been obtained to extend the surgery building to provide three additional consulting rooms. Currently space is very limited, and this is to accommodate existing staff. Planning permission has yet to be obtained.

PPG Committee News Two members of our Committee have recently stood down. Micheal Wilson, who joined fairly recently, and Barbara Blamires, who was a founding member and played a key role in setting up the Committee. We shall greatly miss their contribution.

PPG Chairs meet our local MP, John Milne Our Chair, Nick Longdon, regularly meets with the Chairs of the other Horsham PPGs. They recently met with John Milne. He is very interested in local health issues and is particularly keen to see Horsham Hospital providing more services to avoid local people having to travel. He has had various meetings with Horsham GPs and the managers of the new NHS Surrey and Sussex Integrated Care Board.

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Discover Horsham Wellbeing Service

Thinking about making healthier changes but don't where to begin? Horsham Wellbeing Service is here to help. Delivered by your local council and other providers, we offer free and confidential support to adults who live or work in your local area. Our trained Wellbeing Advisors provide practical, evidence-based advice to help you improve your physical health.

What we can help with

- Weight management and healthy eating through 1-to-1 support or 12-week programmes.
- Getting more active with free 10-week activity courses, referral programmes and weekly guided walks.
- Stopping smoking, with weekly support from specialist advisors and free nicotine replacement therapy.
- Reducing alcohol intake, with up to six support sessions with a specialist advisor.
- Managing health conditions such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure through lifestyle advice during 1-to-1 appointments.

How we support you

Choose the type of support that works best for you:

- **Face-to-face appointments** at our wellbeing hub in Swan Walk, Horsham
- **Telephone or video call sessions** if you prefer remote support
- **In person group sessions** for our workshops, activity and weight management programmes

Our team will ensure you are suitable for our services, but should you require more specialised help, we can also connect you with other local services.

Getting started is easy

1. Think about what changes you'd like to make.
2. Visit our website, call our team, or drop into the wellbeing hub for more information.
3. Self-refer online or book an appointment in person or by phone.

Trusted local information

While Horsham Wellbeing Service **does not provide medical advice**, we can help signpost you to the right services when needed.

Contact us

Call: 01403 215111

Email: info@horshamdistrictwellbeing.org.uk

Webpage: www.horsham.westsussexwellbeing.org.uk

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Endometriosis – What You Need to Know

Following a recent Horsham Women's Health Hub event focusing on **endometriosis**, Holbrook PPG would like to share some important messages for patients. Endometriosis is a long-term condition where tissue similar to the lining of the womb grows outside the womb. Symptoms can vary widely and may include painful or heavy periods, pelvic pain, pain during sex, bowel or bladder symptoms, and fatigue. Symptoms are sometimes dismissed as "normal period pain", which can lead to delays in diagnosis and treatment.

1. Don't Delay – Speak to Your GP Early

If you have symptoms that may suggest endometriosis, **do not delay** in speaking to your GP. Referral waiting times can be long, so early discussion is important. NHS guidance encourages patients to seek medical advice if symptoms are affecting daily life. If your symptoms match those described on trusted websites (see below), ask to see a **GP with a special interest in women's health**.

2. Investigations – What to Expect

After discussing your symptoms and having a physical examination, an **ultrasound scan is usually the first investigation**. However, it is important to know that:

- A **normal ultrasound does not rule out endometriosis**
- Symptoms should always be taken seriously, even if scans are clear

This approach is supported by national guidance, which recognises that endometriosis can be difficult to detect on imaging alone.

3. Ask for the Right Referral

If your GP agrees to refer you, ask to be referred to a **specialist endometriosis centre**. These centres have expertise in diagnosing and managing more complex cases.

Local specialist centres include:

- **Dr Andrew Kent**, Royal Surrey Hospital, Guildford
- **Sussex Endometriosis Centre**, Princess Royal Hospital, Haywards Heath (a newer centre with positive early feedback)
- **CEMIG (Centre for Endometriosis and minimally invasive Gynaecology)**, Ashford & St Peter's Hospitals in Chertsey – particularly specialised in neuropelvicology

4. Recommended resources:

- [NHS Endometriosis information](#)
- [RCOG patient information on endometriosis](#)
- [Endometriosis UK](#) – leading charity providing support and education
- [NICE guideline NG73](#) – national standards for diagnosis and management

A Final Message

Painful periods and pelvic pain are **not something you should have to live with**. If symptoms are affecting your quality of life, trust your instincts, seek help early, and ask about specialist referral options. We hope this information helps patients feel more confident to start conversations and access the right care.

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Progress in Pharmacy First Initiative – Did you know that you can access this service online?

We have mentioned the Pharmacy First initiative before in our Newsletters as it is designed to take pressure off GP Surgeries and provide patients with faster treatment for a range of conditions. A recent survey undertaken by Healthwatch showed that around 30% of patients were unlikely to use the Pharmacy First service. Patients who did not use the service gave two major reasons: The first was that they were reluctant to ask to speak to the pharmacist in a busy pharmacy and delay other patients being served, the other was the potential lack of privacy, even though a private area was usually available.

Both problems can be overcome by using an on-line system.

Many Pharmacies offer this service, and it is possible to either go on your own pharmacy website or to use the link to www.mylocalsurgery.co.uk This takes you through a series of questions and allows you make an appointment for a video consultation with a pharmacist. Where appropriate, the pharmacist can prescribe a treatment which will be despatched to you. If you are entitled to free prescriptions this will still apply to those made by a pharmacist.

As a reminder, the conditions for which a pharmacist can prescribe medication are:

- impetigo (aged 1 year and over)
- infected insect bites (aged 1 year and over)
- earache (aged 1 to 17 years)
- sore throat (aged 5 years and over)
- sinusitis (aged 12 years and over)
- urinary tract infections (UTIs) (women aged 16 to 64 years)
- shingles (aged 18 years and over)

Is English not your first language? Are you deaf/hearing impaired and use sign language?

Did you know that you can have an interpreter with you during medical appointments? The NHS can provide free interpreting and translation services for any patient who needs language support or is deaf/hearing impaired.

This NHS service works by providing professional interpreters [phone, video, face-to-face, BSL] to bridge language and cultural gaps, ensuring patients can communicate their needs and understand their care without having to rely on family members, especially children. All communications are highly confidential and uses trained interpreters to reduce the risk of misinterpretation.

Tell the surgery, hospital reception, or healthcare professional you need an interpreter as soon as you book an appointment

Types of support

- Telephone/Video: Common for quick access
- Face-to-Face: For complex discussions, sensitive news, or where telephone/video is not suitable
- British Sign Language [BSL] This is available but requires significant advance booking [often 10 days]

The interpreter's role is to translate both ways, ensuring clear communication between you and the clinician, maintaining confidentiality.

Your rights - You have the right to professional interpretation. This must be arranged and extra time allowed for appointments.

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