

Whitemoor Newsletter



Contact details: 01773 880099
www.whitemoormedicalcentre-belper.co.uk

GP Closures – should we be worried?

We all know that money is tight in the NHS and that there is a real challenge to make sure there are enough clinical staff to meet the growing demand from patients. But we don't have to worry about our GP surgeries closing down do we?

Wrong!

GP surgery closures across the UK have reached an all-time high, affecting an estimated half a million patients last year, research has found. An investigation by the medical website Pulse found 138 doctors' premises shut their doors in 2018, compared with 18 in 2013.

The national picture: What do GPs say?

Prof Helen Stokes-Lampard, chair of the Royal College of GPs, said the figures were sad but unsurprising. "GPs and our teams are working to our absolute limits to provide safe, high-quality care, while general practice is under intense pressure, and this is resulting in some GPs leaving the profession, and in other cases forcing them to close their surgery doors," she said

"In some areas, practice closures are the result of surgeries merging or joining federations in order to pool their resources and provide additional services in the best interests of their patient population."

Stokes-Lampard said it was heartbreaking for everyone when surgeries closed, but especially for patients, many of whom had to travel long distances to a new surgery and get to know new teams, something that was particularly difficult for more vulnerable people

What about Belper?

Dr Heather Kinsella, senior partner at Whitemoor Medical said *"Of course the national picture is really worrying and we know that, due to a combination of increasing demand and decreasing net resources, patients can sometimes struggle to get an appointment within the timescales they want here at Whitemoor. We are lucky that we have a great team of receptionists, nurses and doctors here who work flat out every day to help as many patients as possible. As long as that continues, and patients work with us to use our services with consideration for each other then we should be here for a good few years yet!"*

So the message is yes the future is challenging but don't panic just yet!

However there are few things patients can do to help keep the practice secure far into the future,

- *If you have a minor illness like a cough, a cold, stomach upset or a short term headache make sure you see a pharmacist for help before you make a doctor's appointment.*
- *Use our online econsult service before making an appointment – then we can make sure you see the right person for the right help sooner.*
- *If you can't attend an appointment you have booked don't just not show up - let us know in advance so we can use it for another patient.*

Patient Feedback: Help shape your practice!

Most of the feedback we receive from patients is really positive but we know there are some things we could get better at. Help us do this by joining our independent Patient Participation Group (PPG). They meet once every couple of months and GPs and practice managers are always present to discuss and try and resolve general service issues for patients.

New members are always welcome – so just ask at reception for more details!

Merry Christmas



May we wish all our patients a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

From The whole team at Whitemoor Medical Centre

Health News: 3 tips to stay well this winter

Cold weather can make some health problems worse and even lead to serious complications, especially if you are 65 or older, or if you have a long-term health condition.

Here are the top 3 tips for keeping well this winter

1. Get advice from your local pharmacist if you feel unwell

Don't wait for a GP appointment - see a pharmacist as soon as you feel unwell, even if it's just a cough or a cold. Pharmacists can give you treatment & advice for a range of minor illnesses and no appointment is needed you can just walk in and get help!

2. Use NHS 111

If you need medical advice when a pharmacy is closed, call: [111](https://111.nhs.uk) or go to 111.nhs.uk

3. Get a flu jab from your GP

Flu can lead to serious illnesses, such as pneumonia and bronchitis, and even death in vulnerable people. You are more at risk if you are older, have a long-term condition, or are pregnant.

All these groups are eligible for a free flu jab from their GP – but hurry up because stocks of vaccine are going down fast

PS. If you're 65 or over, you are also eligible for the [pneumococcal vaccine](#), which will help protect you from pneumonia.

Reminders

Out of Hours cover:

If you need help when the surgery is closed

- Call 111
- Derby Walk in Centre, Osmaston Road – 8am-7.30pm
- Ripley Hospital Minor Injuries Unit – 8am-10pm
- Call 999 in an emergency

Remember pharmacists can help with minor ailments

Derbyshire Community Transport is available for anyone needing transport to & from the surgery who struggles with the bus. Call 01773 746652

PPG News

Before the end of January we expect a significant announcement by the Derbyshire County Council related to health care facilities in Belper. This announcement was expected on 28 November, but has been postponed due to the general election.

The Belper Primary Care Network (PCN) is now making progress. The four GP practices involved (Whitemoor, Riversdale, Appletree and Arthur) are considering staffing cover for illness and other absence based on practice cooperation. This should reduce the need for locum cover and save cost.

PPG members were again an integral part of the practice winter flu campaign – helping out with all the extra patient traffic during the special flu clinics. Although these will finish in early December you can still get a jab – just walk in and ask at reception!

If you have any comments or suggestions for the newsletter please let us know.