

Woodstock Bower Surgery News Letter March 2025



Welcome to Our Newsletter!

Dear Patients,

Welcome to the First edition of the Woodstock Bower Surgery newsletter. Here, we will share important updates on a Quarterly basis, health advice, and surgery news to keep you informed.

Practice Updates

- **New Services:** Smoking cessation service at Woodstock Bower – You may qualify for free vapes as long as you agree to quit smoking (We will test for this with our carbon monoxide monitor)
- **Flu & COVID-19 Vaccination dates:** these have not officially been announced yet but we will aim to start at the end of March 25 / Early April.
- **Online Services:** To save yourself from waiting in the telephone queues you can book appointments via the NHS app or via AccuRx for all none urgent Medical or admin queries.
- **Staff Updates:** The departure of Dr Singh in December 2024. Introduction of Dr Mithila Sooriyaarachchi (Long term Locum).

Pharmacy First Initiative

Under the Pharmacy First scheme, patients requesting appointments may be referred to a pharmacist for the assessment and management of certain minor conditions. This government-led initiative is designed to reduce pressures on GP services by ensuring that common ailments can be efficiently treated by qualified pharmacy professionals, thereby enhancing GP appointment availability for more complex cases.

If you feel that your concern was not fully addressed during your pharmacy consultation or if your symptoms persist, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will be happy to reassess your condition and arrange an appointment at the surgery if necessary.

GP Partner Update

Many of our patients may have met the two new Partners at Woodstock Bower as they have been serving the community since April 2023. The partners have been attending PPG meetings and some of you may have been introduced during clinics. For those of you who are unaware or would like to know more please read below:

Introduction to Atheeb Hussain (at Woodstock since January 2023) – *I am a GP Partner with a passion for delivering cutting-edge, research-driven healthcare. With a deep commitment to evidence-based medicine. I aim to bring Woodstock Bower Surgery out of the dark ages and into the modern era and to provide opportunities to our patients that they previously would not have received. I have a deep passion for preventative medicine, which many of you may have noticed during our consultations. I strive to offer holistic advice, incorporating lifestyle and exercise recommendations to support overall well-being. One of the initiatives I introduced at Woodstock Bower Surgery is the Swap to Stop smoking cessation scheme, along with the Very Brief Advice smoking cessation study.*

Over the years, you may have noticed several changes at the practice. Alongside Dr. Ali, I have been actively working to improve appointment availability and reduce telephone wait times. It has been a busy year, with many of these improvements driven by the schemes and courses we've participated in, including the GP Practice Improvement Programme, where we were recognised as excelling.

Introduction to Dr Shahbaz Ali (At Woodstock Bower since August 2022)- *As a GP Partner at Woodstock Bower Surgery, it has been a privilege to serve the community. I knew stepping into this role would be challenging, especially with the surgery struggling to manage patient demand. However, we have already introduced several improvements, and I hope you have begun to experience the benefits. I remain open-*

mindful and eager to listen to feedback, ensuring that any changes we make are always in your best interest.

One of the key initiatives I helped implement was the Accurx triage system, designed to make it easier for working patients to communicate with the surgery. This also led to a significant reduction in previously long and frustrating call waiting times. Additionally, I have focused on enhancing care for cardiovascular disease, a major concern within our patient demographic. I have also worked to improve inclusivity and access to healthcare for historically underserved groups, including the Roma, Slovak and Pakistani communities

Health & Wellbeing Tips

- **Managing Hay Fever This Season –**
 - ✓ **Check Pollen Forecasts** – Use weather apps or websites to track pollen levels and stay indoors when they're high.
 - ✓ **Keep Windows Closed** – At home and in the car, use air conditioning with a clean filter instead.
 - ✓ **Shower & Change Clothes** – Pollen sticks to hair, skin, and clothes, so wash up after being outside.
 - ✓ **Avoid Drying Clothes Outdoors** – Pollen can cling to laundry if left outside to dry.
- **Mental Health Support –for children& Young people: www.Kooth.com** is a free, confidential, and safe online mental health platform designed for young people. It provides access to professional counselling, self-help resources, and a supportive online community.
- **Key Features of Kooth:**
- **◆ Anonymous Support** – Users can access help without revealing their identity.
- **◆ Live Chat with Counselors** – Trained professionals are available for real-time conversations.
- **◆ Community Forums** – A safe space to share experiences and get peer support.
- **◆ Self-Help Articles & Journals** – Tools to track emotions and learn coping strategies.
- **◆ No Waiting Lists** – Instant access without long delays.
- Kooth is widely used by schools, universities, and healthcare providers to support mental well-being. It's available in the UK and designed for young people aged 11–25.



General Wellness: Mind & Body Balance

- ✓ **Sleep Well** – Aim for **7-9 hours** of quality sleep each night.
- ✓ **Manage Stress** – Practice mindfulness, meditation, or deep breathing to reduce stress levels.
- ✓ **Stay Socially Connected** – Good relationships support mental well-being.
- ✓ **Limit Screen Time** – Reduce phone and TV time, especially before bed.
- ✓ **Get Fresh Air** – Being outside helps boost mood, vitamin D, and overall health.
- ✓ **Set Realistic Goals** – Small, achievable steps help build lifelong healthy habits.

Patient Feedback & Involvement

We value your feedback! If you have any suggestions or would like to join our Patient Participation Group (PPG), please contact us via AccurX or telephone and we will add you to the group.

