

# Monthly Newsletter

DECEMBER 2024



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## A VERY THOUGHTFUL GIFT!

The practice team received a very generous gift from a patient who wanted to show their thanks.

*"Once again we are indebted to the staff of MBS for their quick reactions and empathetic care, especially Dr Blythe and the girls in the Treatment room.*

*Not least of all, the staff on reception/triage for their efficient and courteous manner despite the thousands of calls they have"*

We are so grateful for this beautiful gift and appreciate the kind gesture.



# CHRISTMAS CLOSURE



The practice will be closed on: Wednesday 25th December 2024, Thursday 26th December 2024 and Wednesday 1st January 2025

For any medical attention required during these closure dates, please contact  
Out of Hours on 028 2566 3500.

Please ensure all medications are ordered in a timely manner. Patients should allow 3 working days for their prescriptions to be delivered to their nominated pharmacy.

**From all at Meadowbridge Surgery, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!  
Thank you for your ongoing support.**



## Private Healthcare Services

### Providing Clarification on Private Consultations, Procedures and NHS follow up Guidance

This guidance is intended to provide clarification regarding pre and/or post treatment support within Primary Care by General Practitioners around private patient consultations.

Individuals choosing to seek healthcare privately are effectively stepping outside of the health and social care (HSC) system. In these circumstances, there is no obligation on GPs to provide pre and/or post treatment support. Therefore, it remains important for individuals wishing to avail of private healthcare to ensure that all pre and post treatment support costs are included in the overall package of care procured from the private healthcare provider.



As part of your decision to procure private healthcare in a private capacity, it is recommended that patients ensure all pre and post treatment costs are included in their overall package, understand that they may have to pay privately for any ongoing treatment or medications which are recommended.

In line with normal practice, individuals procuring healthcare privately will continue to be able to access emergency care where necessary. In circumstances where a patient is receiving care in the Independent Sector as an HSC patient, pre and post treatment care will be provided by the HSC as normal.

To recap, a GP is under no obligation to provide an HSC prescription to a patient based on the recommendation of a private practitioner.

GPs may contemplate a request from a private consultant to provide pre and/or post treatment support within Primary Care if it is considered to be clinically appropriate, falls within their area of competence, does not breach the terms of their GMS contract, and is in keeping with the General Medical Council (GMC) standards on prescribing and Good Medical Practice but this is generally the exception rather than the rule.

## Vaccination Clinics

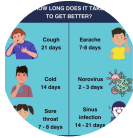
The Autumn Covid clinics have now come to an end. There will be no more vaccine offered to patients at the surgery. Eligible patients who still wish to receive their vaccine can go to their local pharmacy.

Flu vaccinations are still being offered at the surgery. Eligible patients can still book and receive an Influenza vaccination up to 31st March 2025. Contact the surgery any morning after 9.30am to book an appointment.

RSV, Shingles and Pneumococcal vaccinations are still being offered to eligible patients. For more information on who is eligible, go to our website [www.meadowbridgesurgery.co.uk](http://www.meadowbridgesurgery.co.uk)














## Public Health



### HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET BETTER?



|  |  |
|--|--|
|  <p><b>Cough</b><br/>21 days</p>            | <p><b>Earache</b><br/>7-8 days</p>                |
|  <p><b>Cold</b><br/>14 days</p>            | <p><b>Norovirus</b><br/>2 - 3 days</p>           |
|  <p><b>Sore throat</b><br/>7 - 8 days</p> | <p><b>Sinus infection</b><br/>14 - 21 days</p>  |





# NOVEMBER STATISTICS

An outlook of work output throughout the month of November by all practice staff.

MEADOWBRIDGE SURGERY | 2024



**1,274**  
Treatment Room  
Appointments





**3,988**  
Online Prescriptions  
Ordered



**5,815**  
Patients registered  
for Online Services

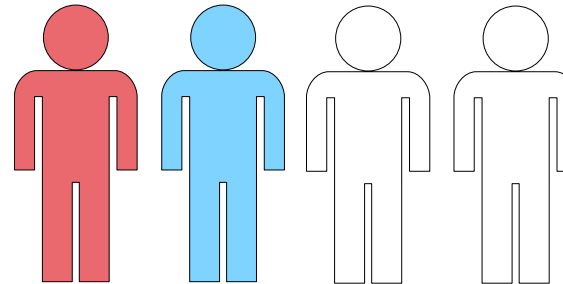
## DAILY TRIAGE AREAS

**45**  
  
Patient Home  
Visits by a GP

**3,623**  
  
Face to Face  
Appointments

**722**  
  
Triage call back to  
Patients

## APPOINTMENTS BOOKED AND NOT ATTENDED



**165**  
These are appointments  
that have been wasted  
and could have been  
offered to another patient.

## ADMINISTRATION TASKS

**2,222**  
  
Hospital letters  
actioned by Practice staff

**5,436**  
  
Prescriptions  
Issued

**18,188**  
  
General Admin  
Tasks by Clinical and Admin Team

**2,557**  
  
Patient Results  
Reviewed



## HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure is very common, especially in older adults. There are usually no symptoms, so you may not realise you have it. High blood pressure does not usually cause any symptoms. Many people have it without realising it. Rarely, high blood pressure can cause symptoms such as: headaches, blurred vision or chest pain but the only way to find out if you have high blood pressure is to get your blood pressure checked.

A blood pressure test involves inflating a band (cuff) around your upper arm and measuring the pressure in your blood vessels. Blood pressure readings are given as 2 numbers, with the 1st number higher than the 2nd (for example, 130/80). If your blood pressure is too high, it puts extra strain on your blood vessels, heart and other organs, such as your brain, kidneys and eyes. If it's not treated, it can increase your risk of serious conditions such as: heart disease, heart attacks, strokes, heart failure, kidney disease or vascular dementia

Healthy lifestyle changes can help lower your blood pressure. Try to have a healthy, balanced diet, exercise regularly (aim to do at least 150 minutes of exercise a week) and lose weight if you're overweight. There are lots of different medicines for high blood pressure. The medicine recommended for you depends on things like how high your blood pressure is, your age and your ethnicity. Most blood pressure medicines are taken as tablets once a day. You may need to take more than 1 medicine to keep your blood pressure under control. You can get more information and advice about high blood pressure from:

- [Blood Pressure UK](#)
- [British Heart Foundation: high blood pressure](#)



# Meadowbridge

# SURGERY



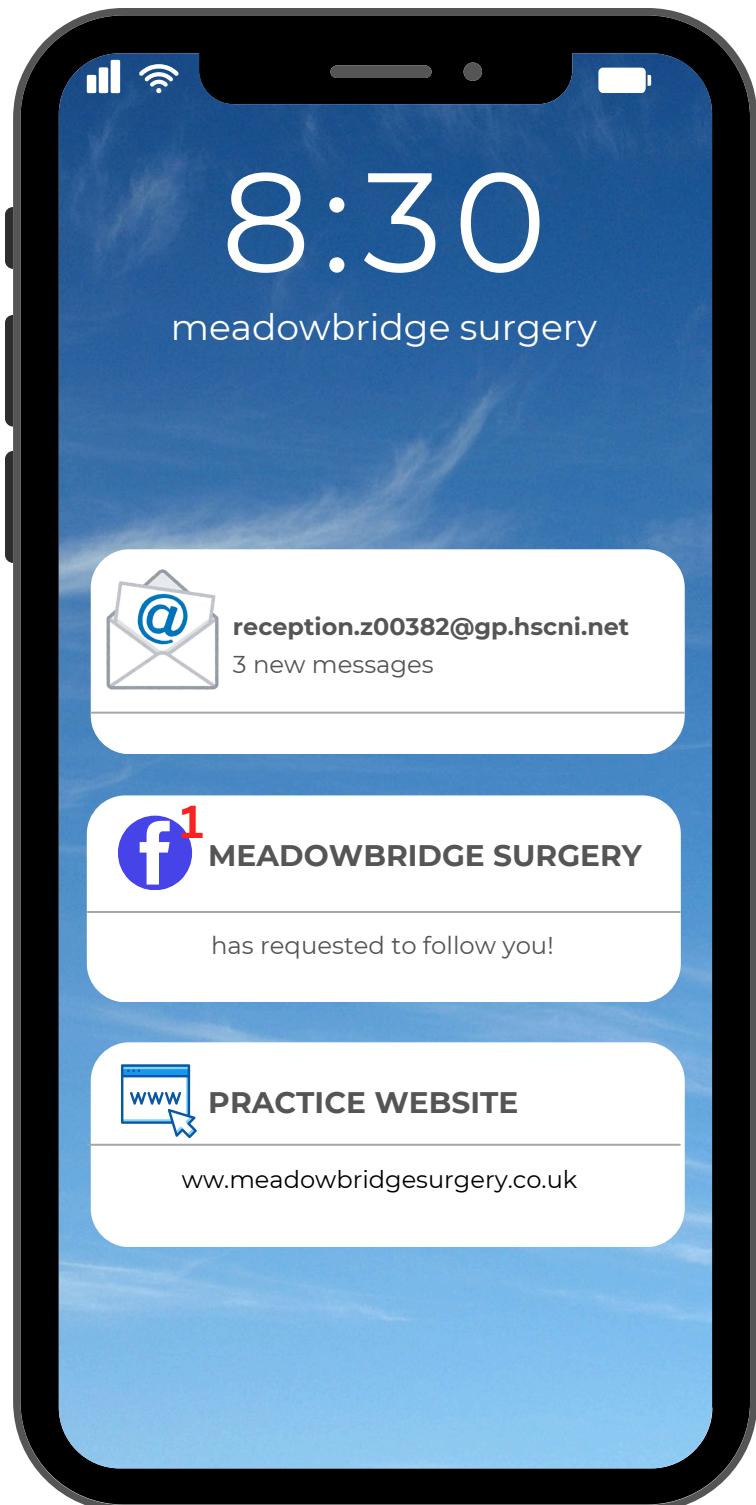
# stay up to date

Follow us on our Facebook page, keep an eye on our practice website and sign up to receive this newsletter to your email each month

**54** new patients registered to our monthly newsletter in November, receiving updates straight to their email. In the month of November,

**645** new users viewed our website.

**543** patients now follow us on Facebook.





# ORGAN DONATION

Wednesday 11 December is Organ Donation Discussion Day – an opportunity for everyone to consider their decision around organ and tissue donation, and to share this with loved ones..

Families will always be consulted if organ donation is a possibility, so it is important to leave them certain about what you want. The best way to do this is by recording your decision on the [NHS Organ Donor Register](#) and having a conversation. Only 50% of families agree to donation going ahead if they don't know what their loved one wanted, but this rises to 90% when their decision is known.

Each organ donor could save up to nine lives, so have a life-saving conversation today!

For facts on organ donation, tips on how to start a conversation, or to register a decision, visit [www.organdonationni.info](http://www.organdonationni.info).

A pink rectangular poster with the NHS logo in the top right corner. The text is in a dark purple font. It features a small pink heart and a small white heart. The main title is 'Organ Donation, the gift of life'. Below it is the text 'You could save up to nine lives. Add your name and decision to the NHS Organ Donor Register.' At the bottom is the website address 'www.organdonationni.info'.

**NHS**

**Organ Donation, the gift of life**

You could save up to nine lives. Add your name and decision to the NHS Organ Donor Register.

[www.organdonationni.info](http://www.organdonationni.info)

# WHEN ANTIBIOTICS ARE NEEDED

Antibiotics are needed for serious bacterial infections including:

- Sepsis
- Pneumonia
- Urinary tract infections
- Sexually transmitted infections like gonorrhoea
- Meningococcal meningitis

If you're worried, speak to a doctor who will be able to advise you on the best treatment for your symptoms.

Remember never share antibiotics or keep for later use. Your pharmacist can safely dispose of any unwanted or out-of-date medicines.

For more information on antibiotics visit [www.nhs.uk/conditions/antibiotics](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/antibiotics)



Become an Antibiotic Guardian and protect yourself, your family and friends against the spread of antibiotic resistance.

Join us at [www.antibioticguardian.com](http://www.antibioticguardian.com)

09/23

## Taking ANTIBIOTICS when you don't need them puts you and your family at risk



Taking antibiotics encourages harmful bacteria that live inside you to become resistant. This means that antibiotics may not work when you really need them, putting you and your family at risk of a more severe or longer illness.

**Take your doctor or pharmacist's advice.**

Keep  Working



No one likes being sick and it's especially upsetting when your child is ill.

# REMEMBER IF YOU'RE FEELING UNWELL ANTIBIOTICS AREN'T ALWAYS NEEDED

## How to look after yourself and your family:

If you or your child are feeling unwell, have a cold or flu and you haven't been prescribed antibiotics, here are some effective self-care ways to help you feel better:

- **Ask your pharmacist to recommend medicines to help with symptoms or pain. They can also provide advice on treating minor health concerns and healthy living.**
- Get plenty of rest.
- Make sure you or your child drink enough to avoid feeling thirsty.
- Fever is a sign the body is fighting the infection and usually gets better by itself in most cases. You can use paracetamol if you or your child are uncomfortable as a result of a fever.
- Make sure to use a tissue for your nose and wash your hands frequently to avoid spreading your infection to family and friends.

## How long should my symptoms last for?

Here are a few guidelines to help you judge how long some common illnesses and symptoms should last for:

| Common illnesses               | Most people are better by |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Earache (middle ear infection) | 8 days                    |
| Sore throat                    | 7–8 days                  |
| Sinusitis (adults only)        | 14–21 days                |
| Cold                           | 14 days                   |
| Cough or bronchitis            | 21 days                   |

If you're not starting to improve by these guide times, contact your GP.

## These symptoms are possible signs of serious illness and should be assessed urgently:

1. If your skin is very cold or has a strange colour, or you develop an unusual rash.
2. If you feel confused or have slurred speech or are very drowsy.
3. If you have difficulty breathing. Signs can include:
  - breathing quickly
  - turning blue around the lips and the skin below the mouth
  - skin between or above the ribs getting sucked or pulled in with every breath.
4. If you develop a severe headache and are sick.
5. If you develop chest pain.
6. If you have difficulty swallowing or are drooling.
7. If you cough up blood.
8. If you are feeling a lot worse.

**If you or your child has any of these symptoms, are getting worse or are sicker than you would expect (even if your/their temperature falls), trust your instincts and seek medical advice urgently from your GP.**

**If a child under the age of 5 has any of symptoms 1–3, go to the Emergency Department immediately or call 999.**



# Living well Stay well



**Don't let your protection fade! Winter is coming and so are the respiratory illnesses that circulate during this time of the year.**

The message from the Public Health Agency (PHA) is don't let your protection fade and get your flu and COVID-19 vaccines if eligible. Health Minister Mike Nesbitt said: "Vaccination provides vital protection for those at highest risk of suffering serious illness and hospitalisation from influenza and COVID-19.

"It also provides protection for staff who we rely on to provide crucial healthcare to our population across frontline health and social care services.

"As we approach the winter season, I would urge everyone who falls into an eligible group to take up the offer of free vaccination when invited." Further details on the winter vaccination programme can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/wintervaccine](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/wintervaccine)

Community pharmacies across Northern Ireland are offering advice and support on a wide range of winter illnesses to help us stay well during the colder months.

The Living Well initiative is offered in over 500 pharmacies across Northern Ireland and provides information and advice on public health issues. The latest Living Well campaign highlights actions you can take to protect your health over the winter months and the support available to you through your community pharmacy.

The 'Stay Well this Winter' campaign is running in Living Well community pharmacies during December 2024 and January 2025. This campaign aims to help the public prepare for the winter months by encouraging them to plan ahead, take positive steps towards better health by advising them on how to care for themselves, and to visit their pharmacy for advice if needed.

Andrew Cheung, Principal Pharmaceutical Officer (Public Health) at the PHA, said: "Winter conditions can be seriously bad for our health, particularly for the more vulnerable members of our community. The 'Stay Well' campaign begins on the 1st December, and your pharmacist can provide advice on the steps you can take to prepare for the winter period, such as getting the free flu and COVID-19 vaccines if eligible, ordering repeat prescriptions ahead of the Christmas and New Year period, as well as providing advice on keeping warm and active." To learn more, pick up a free Stay Well this Winter leaflet in your local participating community pharmacy or speak to a member of the pharmacy team to help get the advice you require. For more information go to [www.pha.site/Staywellthiswinter](http://www.pha.site/Staywellthiswinter) on how you can look after yourself and those close to you this winter.

# Waiting Times Summary Report

September 2024 / October 2024

Prepared & Issued by Strategic Planning, Performance and ICT – 04.11.2024

## **Treatment (Inpatient and Day Case) – Average Treatment Waiting Times for an Inpatient and/or Day Case Procedure**

There is now a regional waiting times website called My Waiting Times NI.

Average Treatment Waiting Times can be accessed on the following web address: [online.hscni.net/my-waiting-times-ni/nhsct/nt-treatments/](https://online.hscni.net/my-waiting-times-ni/nhsct/nt-treatments/)

This can also be accessed by clicking here:

[Northern HSC Trust - Treatments - DOH/HSCNI Strategic Planning and Performance Group \(SPPG\)](#)

This contains all updated average Treatment Waiting Times for an Inpatient and/or Day Case Procedure.

## Allied Health Professions (AHPs) – Average Waiting Times for AHPs in weeks (at month end)

|   | Sep-24               |        |         | Oct-24               |        |         |
|---|----------------------|--------|---------|----------------------|--------|---------|
|   | Average Wait (Weeks) |        |         | Average Wait (Weeks) |        |         |
| AHP SERVICE   | EMERGENCY            | URGENT | ROUTINE | EMERGENCY            | URGENT | ROUTINE |
| NUTRITION & DIETETIC PAEDIATRIC SERVICE             | –                    | 11     | 30      | –                    | 10     | 31      |
| NUTRITION AND DIETETICS SERVICE                     | –                    | 7      | 22      | –                    | 6      | 23      |
| CHILDRENS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICE              | –                    | –      | 60      | –                    | –      | 60      |
| OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY COMMUNITY ADULTS SERVICE       | 2                    | 5      | 17      | 4                    | 5      | 18      |
| OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY HOSPITAL OUTPATIENT SERVICE    | –                    | 10     | 39      | –                    | 15     | 39      |
| OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY WHEELCHAIRS SERVICE            | –                    | 1      | 8       | –                    | 4      | 6       |
| ORTHOPTIC VISUAL FIELDS SERVICE                     | –                    | –      | <1      | –                    | –      | 3       |
| ORTHOPTICS SERVICE                                  | –                    | 3      | 3       | –                    | 3      | 3       |
| PAEDIATRIC PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICE                    | –                    | 2      | 3       | –                    | 1      | 3       |
| PHYSIOTHERAPY DOMICILIARY SERVICE                   | –                    | 2      | 5       | –                    | 1      | 5       |
| PHYSIOTHERAPY LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICE           | –                    | 1      | 2       | –                    | <1     | 3       |
| PHYSIOTHERAPY LYMPHOEDEMA SERVICE                   | –                    | 4      | 10      | –                    | 3      | 9       |
| PHYSIOTHERAPY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE                 | –                    | –      | –       | –                    | –      | –       |
| PHYSIOTHERAPY MSK SERVICE                           | –                    | 4      | 25      | –                    | 3      | 25      |
| PHYSIOTHERAPY NEUROLOGY OUTPATIENTS SERVICE         | –                    | 4      | 9       | –                    | 3      | 10      |
| PHYSIOTHERAPY PELVIC HEALTH SERVICE                 | –                    | 4      | 30      | –                    | 4      | 29      |
| PODIATRY SERVICE                                    | –                    | 4      | 5       | –                    | 2      | 5       |
| SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY                         | –                    | 8      | 22      | –                    | 19     | 22      |
| SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY ADULT COMMUNITY SERVICE | –                    | 4      | 23      | –                    | 3      | 23      |

- Includes all referral sources
- These are average current waiting times and the actual wait of an individual patient is likely to be longer



## Outpatients – Average Waiting Times for Outpatient Clinics

There is now a regional waiting times website called My Waiting Times NI.

Average Outpatient Waiting Times can be accessed on the following web address: [online.hscni.net/my-waiting-times-ni/nhsct/nhsct-outpatient/](https://online.hscni.net/my-waiting-times-ni/nhsct/nhsct-outpatient/)

This can also be accessed by clicking here:

[Northern HSC Trust - Outpatient - DOH/HSCNI Strategic Planning and Performance Group \(SPPG\) – formerly HSCB.](#)

This contains all updated average Waiting Times for Outpatient Specialities.

## Radiology - Average Waiting Times for Radiology in weeks (as at 31/10/24)

| Diagnostic Grouping        | Red Flag | Urgent | Routine |
|----------------------------|----------|--------|---------|
| Barium Studies/Fluoroscopy | 2        | 12     | 20      |
| Cardiac MRI                | -        | 5      | 141     |
| CT                         | 1        | 4      | 49      |
| CT Cardiac                 | -        | 8      | 45      |
| CT Colonoscopy             | 1        | 5      | 23      |
| Dexa Scan                  | -        | 3      | 6       |
| MRI                        | 2        | 6      | 55      |
| MRI with GA                | -        | 7      | 21      |
| Non-Obstetric Ultrasound   | 1        | 2      | 23      |
| Other Test                 | 2        | 5      | 3       |
| Plain Film                 | 1        | 2      | 3       |
| Radio Nuclide              | 3        | 8      | 25      |



# Annual Chronic Disease Reviews

These reviews will cover areas such as: increasing uptake of health screening and vaccination; mental health and emotional well-being support; blood pressure and cholesterol checks; building health literacy; improving social connections; providing nutritional advice; and providing opportunities to be more physically active.

***Why not book your annual review each year during your birthday month?***

# Pharmacy First

for help with everyday  
health conditions

## Pharmacy First for sore throat



Ask your pharmacist **FIRST**  
for free and confidential  
advice, test and treatment  
for **sore throat**



Health and  
Social Care





# THANK YOU!

**The surgery received the most beautiful gift from Whitehead Baptist Church.**

*"Thank you for all you do for our community. We really appreciate it. From the church across the road."*

We are all extremely grateful for such a thoughtful gift. This will be very much enjoyed by our practice team over the Christmas period.

Thank you!



# New Bereavement Support Website for Northern Ireland Bereaved NI



Language



Enter your search here



[Home](#) | [Care Before Death](#) | [Practical Support](#) | [Bereavement Support](#) | [Helplines](#) | [Video Wall](#) | [For Carers](#) | [For Professionals](#)

Welcome to the new Bereaved NI website, if you would like to provide feedback about the website please use the [Website Feedback Form](#)



The website provides accessible resources for people who are experiencing bereavement to ensure that they have information and support for each stage of their bereavement journey.

The site includes information on pre bereavement, adult bereavement, bereavement support for pregnancy and baby loss and resources for children and young people. Also included is information for people who have been bereaved by suicide and those who have suffered a sudden or traumatic loss, as well as practical support including financial and legal advice.