



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/woodbridgeppg/>

[The Woodbridge Practice Website is at https://woodbridgepractice.co.uk/](https://woodbridgepractice.co.uk/)

<p>Practice Opening Times Core times Monday - Friday: 8:00am to 6:30pm Extended hours appointments are also bookable at Reception during normal opening hours Bank Holidays: Closed - When surgery is closed ring 111 Except in Emergencies ring 999</p> <p>Thornaby - 01642 762636                      Ingleby Barwick - 01642 765789</p>
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## Patient Participation – Autumn/Winter Newsletter 2025

Welcome to the Autumn/Winter newsletter, we hope you find the contents of interest.

### Booking an Appointment (In emergencies please call 999)

Booking a GP appointment has changed, instead of waiting on the phone line at 8.00am, patients now have the choice to book an online consultation form (e -consult) through the practice website [Appointments « Woodbridge Practice](#) or they can still ring the practice if they prefer – Thornaby: 01642 762636 or Ingleby Barwick: 01642 765789, or in person at Reception from 8:00am

Our Practice still provides a staffed reception from 8.00am at both Ingleby Barwick and Thornaby.

**Ingleby Practice** are also opening the Reception area a few minutes before 8:00am for people to sit in and wait now the colder weather is upon us. If you are wanting an appointment you will still have to take a "queue" ticket out of the machine at the entrance. Patients with a pre-booked appointment should use the self check-in machine. Also a reminder that if you park in the adjacent car park, you'll need to enter your car registration.

### e-consult forms

The e-consult forms are designed to help you and the practice team get to the heart of your problem more quickly. You may also prefer to complete this form if you have an embarrassing

medical problem. The way you fill it in makes a real difference. When you provide clear, thoughtful information, it not only helps the practice decide whether something is urgent, but also ensures you are directed to the right person in the wider primary care team. This might be a GP - but it could just as easily be a nurse, a pharmacist, a physiotherapist, or another professional who can meet your needs sooner. Please see the poster at the end of this newsletter for a “Who to See” guide.

### **Practical tips when completing the form:**

- Be specific about **when** symptoms started, **how** they’ve changed, and **what** makes them better or worse.
- Write in **your own words** - you don’t need medical jargon.
- Share **what matters most to you** - even if it doesn’t feel medically urgent.
- Don’t be afraid to say what you’re hoping for. The team can then explain whether it’s the right step.
- Include relevant details such as medicines, allergies, and long-term conditions.

Further information can be found at <https://patient.info/news.../ideas-concerns-and-expectations>

You can also use the form for Administrative requests such as to ask the practice for sick notes, test results, doctor's letters and other paperwork etc. Please make sure you use the e-consult form on our Doctor’s website and click on the boxes as needed.

### **What happens after you submit**

Many patients wonder whether their form just “disappears into the system.” In reality, there’s a structured process behind the scenes:

1. **Triage** - A member of the team reviews your form, looking for urgent red flags and assessing the best next step.
2. **Allocation** - Your request is sent to the most appropriate person: GP, nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist, or another member of the primary care team.
3. **Response** - You’ll hear back from the practice. It might be a phone call, a face-to-face appointment, a prescription, or advice without an appointment. Timing depends on urgency, but significant concerns are always prioritised.

If however your symptoms change or worsen while waiting, you should always contact the practice again or call NHS 111 and in an emergency 999.

Remember if you are not confident online or you simply prefer to, you can still call in at Reception or ring in for an appointment (during normal opening hours) including requesting an out of hours appointment which may be delivered from a different Doctor’s Practice. The

out of hours service provides the usual range of clinicians from GP to nurse practitioner appointments and other services.

Please support the practice team who work in a very busy and challenging environment, especially whilst the new system is embedded.

## JESS'S RULE

You may have seen in the news recently that Patients with a reoccurring illness will be diagnosed sooner through a new life-saving patient safety initiative called Jess's Rule that is being rolled out across the NHS in England.

Jess's Rule is named in memory of Jessica Brady, who died of cancer in December 2020 at the age of 27, and will help avoid tragic, preventable deaths as GPs are supported to catch potentially deadly illnesses sooner.

Woodbridge Practice already applied a version of '3 strikes and rethink' in their routine practice, but Jess's Rule formalises this instinctive approach, providing a consistent structure to support reflection and timely action for patients.

## APPOINTMENTS ACTIVITY:

The Practice thanks those patients who attend their appointments and take the time to cancel if no longer needed. However below is a table of clinical appointments offered, appointments not attended and therefore the number of lost clinical hours, across both Ingleby Barwick and Thornaby.

<b>2025</b>	<b>Appointments not attended nor cancelled</b>	<b>No. Of lost clinical hours</b>
June	183	37
July	175	35
August	127	25
September	165	33

**Please telephone or go online to cancel your appointment if it is no longer needed.**

## WINTER PLANNING

Along with other local Practices Woodbridge has joined up to a Respiratory Clinic for the winter months, this helps to ensure that those patients with severe/acute respiratory problems and are most likely to be affected by the colder weather are seen as quickly as possible. The Receptionist will use the specialist criteria when making these appointments.

## BEWISE IMMUNISE – Vaccination Criteria

### RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) Eligibility

- All adults turning 75 years old on or after 1st September 2024
- A one-off catch-up campaign for those already aged 75 to 79 years old on 1st September 2024

### Winter COVID Eligibility:

- Adults aged 75 years and over.
- Residents in a care home for older adults.
- Individuals aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group.

### Flu Vaccines

- Everyone aged 65 years and over.
- Individuals under 65 with certain medical conditions, including children and babies over 6 months of age.
- All pregnant women.

### Children Flu Nasal Spray

- All children aged 2 and 3 years (provided they were aged 2 or 3 on 31st August 2024)

**Double vaccines:** Patients (who qualify) can have the flu and COVID together but not the RSV. Patients need a 24 hour gap from the flu or COVID before they can have the RSV.

If you have received a text or a letter, please book your flu vaccine at Woodbridge Practice phone Thornaby: 01642 762636 Ingleby Barwick: 01642 765789 during normal opening hours and after 10.30am

(If you've had a flu jab elsewhere please advise the practice so that your records can be updated, thanks)

## FIT NOTE (formerly known as a sick note)

### Is there a difference between a fit note and a sick note?

Sick note is the older term for a fit note. Since 2010, the official term for this document has been fit note, although sick note is still commonly used.

### How to get a fit note

You can get a fit note by contacting your GP surgery either online, over the phone, or in-person. A healthcare professional may issue the fit note after assessing you. If you are in hospital, a fit note can be issued to you before you are discharged.

## What is a fit note?

When being unwell affects your ability to work, your employer may need a fit note as confirmation. Issued by a doctor or other healthcare professional, it outlines the nature of your absence and tells your workplace that you are unfit or fit - but may need reasonable adjustments - for work. There is a new team that works with patient's getting them back into work. A referral will be made by the clinician if they think you would benefit from this service. You will be issued either a physical copy or a digital copy depending on how you are assessed. For further information you may want to follow this link : <https://patient.info/.../what-is-a-fit-note-and-when-do...>

## MEDICATION

- Polite reminder – repeat prescription requests are **not** taken over the phone, please use the online service or the NHS App or complete the forms available at Reception. Please order in good time if you are going away on holiday, there is a 'bespoke box' on the website where you can explain why you wish to order medication earlier than your normal repeat date
- If your usual pharmacy does not have the medication in stock please take your prescription to a different pharmacy before returning to the Doctor to prescribe an alternative
- **Prescribing over-the-counter medicines in nurseries and schools**  
GPs are often asked to prescribe over-the-counter medication to satisfy nurseries and schools. This is a misuse of GP time, and is not necessary. Non-prescription or over-the-counter medication does not need a GP signature or authorisation in order for a school, nursery or childminder to give it. Click this link for more information: [Prescribing over-the-counter medicines in nurseries and schools \(bma.org.uk\)](https://www.bma.org.uk/prescribing-over-the-counter-medicines-in-nurseries-and-schools)
- **Emergency Medication Requests** : The Practice has been experiencing an increased demand for 'urgent' prescriptions. Unfortunately, they are not able to accommodate this unless the medication is listed on the Emergency Medication List which has been approved by the GPs, therefore, they must follow this guidance, please follow this link for examples and exceptions [Prescriptions « Woodbridge Practice](#) Please note that medications available 'over the counter at Pharmacies' should be purchased until a prescription is available
- Please order repeat prescriptions in good time before the Christmas/New Year Bank Holidays as the Practice will be closed

**Don't forget to stock up early for over the counter medications to combat colds, coughs and flu during the winter months**

### **Keep warm and get help with heating**

Keeping warm over the winter months can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression.

Heat your home to a temperature that's comfortable for you. If you can, this should be at least 18°C in the rooms that you regularly use, such as your living room and bedroom. This is particularly important if you have a health condition. It's best to keep your bedroom windows closed at night.

Make sure you're getting all the help that you're entitled to. There are grants, benefits and advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills.

Find out more about ways to save energy in your home from [www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency](http://www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency), or call the government helpline on 0800 444 202.

You can also find out more from GOV.UK about benefits and financial support if you're on a low income at [www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/low-income](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/low-income).

### **Look in on vulnerable neighbours and relatives**

Remember that other people, such as older neighbours, friends and family members, may need some extra help over the winter. There's a lot you can do to help people who need support. Icy pavements and roads can be very slippery, and cold weather can stop people from going out.

Keep in touch with your friends, neighbours and family and ask if they need any practical help, or if they're feeling unwell. Make sure they're stocked up with enough food supplies for a few days, in case they cannot go out. If they do need to go out in the cold, encourage them to wear shoes with a good grip and a scarf around the mouth to protect them from cold air, and to reduce their risk of chest infections.

Make sure they get any prescription medicines before the holiday period starts and if bad weather is forecast.

If they need help over the holiday period when the GP surgery or pharmacy is closed or they're not sure what to do, go to <https://111.nhs.uk/> or call 111.

If you're worried about a relative or elderly neighbour, contact your local council or call the Age UK helpline on 0800 678 1602 (8am to 7pm every day). You can also contact Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council on 01642 393939 and explain the situation to them.

If you're concerned the person may have hypothermia, go to <https://111.nhs.uk/> or call 111.

## TELEPHONE IMPROVEMENTS

The Practice is working hard to make improvements to its telephone system and they are aware of a couple of mispronounced words on the current message, please bear with the Practice whilst this is ongoing.

## PHLEBOTOMY CLINIC TIMES

(Please note this service is **NOT** provided by Woodbridge Practice they are stand alone NHS clinics)

	INGLEBY BARWICK	THORNABY
Monday	0805 – 1220	0800 – 1230 1300 - 1500
Tuesday	0805 – 1220 1300 – 1450	0800 – 1230 1300 – 1500
Wednesday	0805 – 1215	0800 – 1230 1300 – 1500
Thursday	0805 – 1220 1300 – 1450	0800 – 1230 1300 – 1500
Friday	0805 – 1215	0800 – 1230 1300 - 1500

**Please note:** Last queue tickets will be issued prior to the actual closing time listed above and depending on the number of people already queuing. This is to ensure Clinics can close on time to allow for specimen collection times and staff lunch breaks.

## PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

If you are interested in joining the Patient Participation Group (PPG), please complete the form online on the Practice website (scroll down on the home page to the picture of the PPG group) or email us at [woodbridgeppg@gmail.com](mailto:woodbridgeppg@gmail.com) Our aims are to work with the practice to improvements from a patient's perspective and also to better understand the challenges The Practice faces. Just a friendly reminder though, this isn't a complaints forum, its run by patients for the patients

You can also find us on Facebook: Woodbridge PPG. Ask to join and answer the few questions, Admins are usually pretty quick to approve so long as new members have correctly answered the joining questions.

Our next meeting is on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at 10.00am. Please email us if you wish to attend [woodbridgeppg@gmail.com](mailto:woodbridgeppg@gmail.com)

**Compliments** If you would like us to pass on thanks or compliments to the Practice, please email us at: [woodbridgeppg@gmail.com](mailto:woodbridgeppg@gmail.com)

## WHO SHOULD I SEE?

It's not always clear who the best person is to deal with your problem or requirement. This quick guide might help. If you need further advice or clarification, please just ask for help at reception.



Health Care Assistant	Nurse Practitioner	Practice Nurse	Doctor	Advanced Paramedic
Hypertension review checks. Blood pressure	Chronic Disease Clinics: asthma, COPD, diabetes, heart disease, stroke / TIA, hypertension	Minor illnesses: coughs, colds, sore throats, chest infections etc.	Complex, multiple or on-going illnesses: Inc. breathing difficulties, severe headaches, vague symptoms, chest pain	Acute chest pain
Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) risk assessments initial & yearly	Men's health	Minor Injuries: falls, upper/lower limb Injuries, head injuries, lower limb Injuries (*depending on nurse)	Follow ups from initial assessment with Nurse Practitioner	Any new lumps
New patient checks	Cardiovascular disease risk assessments	Blood pressure problems	Sick notes	Testicular/penis pains or swelling
ECG (heart tracing)	Baby Clinics/ Vaccinations	Acute asthma & COPD problems	Onward referrals to specialist teams	Rashes
Flu, pneumonia, and shingles injections/ vaccinations	Smears tests & swabs	Sexual health advice	Complex contraception & coil fitting	Any acute paediatric issue
Repeat vitamin B12 injections	Travel vaccines	Skin problems (eczema and rashes)	Pregnancy-related problems	
Rheumatoid arthritis review	Contraception/pill	Water infections/ cystitis abdominal pain	Breast lumps	
Smoking cessation advice follow up	Flu, pneumonia, & shingles injections/ vaccinations	Basic women's health	Menopause	
Dressings, follow up dressing including 4 layer bandaging	First time vitamin B12 injections	Acute asthma & COPD problems	Women's health - gynaecological problems	
Suture & clip removal	Dressings - First time & follow up	Ear & eye infections	Men's health concerns	
Coil fits with GP	4 layer bandaging	Acute anxiety/ depression that cannot wait to see a GP	Medicals	
Minor operation with GP	Sexual health advice	Sick notes (but then need to be signed by GP)	Complex medication reviews anxiety & depression	
Lung health checks	Smoking cessation advice			
Breathing test (Spirometry)	ECG (Heart tracing)			
Well person checks	Ear syringing			
Weight management				