



HEATH LANE MEDICAL CENTRE AUTUMN 2026 NEWSLETTER



Hello and welcome to the latest
edition of Heath Lane Medical Centre's quarterly newsletter!
As always, we aim to keep you up to date with news and advice
from both within and outside of the practice.



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Retirement of Dr Susan Wall

It is with mixed emotions that I am writing to let patients know that after 23 years at Heath Lane Medical Centre, I will be retiring at the end of this month.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my career in Medicine, which has spanned 35 years and included working in both hospital medicine and general practice. I spent 10 years in Australia, working in hospital and then in general practice, where I gained a wealth of experience. I then returned to my home county of Cheshire and joined Heath Lane Medical Centre in 2003, where I have been fortunate enough to work ever since.

It has been an enormously rewarding career, although, as with any career in medicine, there have of course been challenging and stressful times along the way. Nevertheless, I have thoroughly enjoyed my work and feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to care for so many patients and to get to know them and their families over the years.

I will miss the patients enormously, as well as all the wonderful colleagues and staff I have had the pleasure of working alongside. Heath Lane has been a very important part of my life, and I will take away many happy memories of my time here.

Although I will be sad to leave, I am also very much looking forward to the next chapter — spending more time with my new granddaughter, enjoying time with family and friends, and having more time for my hobbies, including golf and travelling.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my patients for their kindness, trust and support over the years. It has been a real privilege to be your GP, and I will look back on my career with great fondness.

With very best wishes for the future,

Dr Susan Wall



Patient Feedback

We always welcome feedback from our patients, here are a few comments we have received over the past few months:

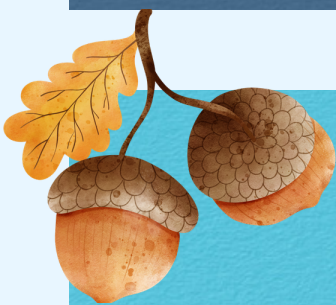
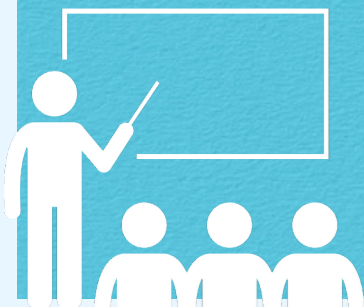
- “A brilliant GP, who we are so grateful to for all support, advice and care for our family over the last 2 decades”
- “Lots of parking, easy to get an appointment and really friendly staff.”
- “The staff at Heath Lane are lovely and they'll always try their best to help, whatever the issue.”
- “Fantastic service. Called for an appointment Tuesday; appointment Thursday. Thorough examination and my concerns addressed in full and with patience and kindness.”
- “My first use of the new Enhanced Hours service worked perfectly when our elderly neighbour needed medical attention late on Monday afternoon. My wife rang the practice, sent a photo of the problem and received a call back within the hour. Appropriate medication prescribed and collected from pharmacy next morning.”
- “I have been with this surgery since I moved to Chester. They have always been great to deal with. The ladies on the reception desk are lovely and are always able to get an appointment within just a few days!”

Staff Training Dates 2026

- Wednesday 9th September
- Thursday 8th October
- Wednesday 11th November

The surgery will be closed for staff training on these days from 1pm, we will reopen at 8am the following day.

NHS 111 will be available to assist you while we are closed.



Missed Appointments

Please remember if you cannot attend your appointment to contact us to cancel it ASAP. Your appointment could be offered to another patient who urgently needs help.

Between June and August there were 152 missed appointments, that is 25 hours of appointments lost across the whole clinical team.

Here is how our practice has been supporting patients

From June to August :

- Number of appointments booked - 5,228
- Number of new registrations - 135
- Number of prescriptions issued - 4,091
- Number of referrals done - 646
- Number of blood test requested - 1,926

Did you know that we have a Facebook and Instagram page?

You can click on the icon to be taken through to our page!

We share lots of useful information and practice updates on our pages as well as on our website.



Looking after your mind as the days get shorter



As autumn arrives, the days become shorter, the evenings get darker and the weather starts to change. For some people, this seasonal change can affect their mood, energy levels and motivation. It is completely normal to have good days and difficult days, but looking after your mental wellbeing can help you feel more balanced and better prepared for the months ahead.

Make the Most of Daylight

Try to get outside during daylight hours whenever you can. Even a short walk or spending some time outdoors can help you stay active and connected with the natural light.

Stay Connected

When the evenings get darker, it can be tempting to spend more time at home and become less socially active. Staying connected with friends, family and your community can make a real difference to how you feel.

Make Time for Yourself

Autumn can be a good opportunity to slow down and make time for things you enjoy. Try to include activities that help you relax and recharge, whether that's reading, listening to music, gardening, cooking, exercising or enjoying a hobby.

Be Aware of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Some people experience a type of depression that follows a seasonal pattern, commonly known as seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Symptoms can include a persistent low mood, loss of interest or enjoyment, feeling unusually tired, sleeping for longer than usual, difficulty concentrating or changes in appetite.

If you notice that your mood regularly becomes worse during the autumn and winter months, speak to your GP. There are treatments and support available.

It's OK to Ask for Help

Sometimes looking after yourself isn't enough, and that's OK. If you're feeling low, anxious, overwhelmed or unable to cope, talking to someone can be an important first step.

Find support and advice

For practical advice, self-help tools and information about mental wellbeing, visit: NHS Every Mind Matters

www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters

For information about seasonal affective disorder (SAD), including symptoms and treatment:

NHS – Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)

www.nhs.uk – Seasonal affective disorder (SAD).





Prepare for Winter

As autumn arrives, it's a good time to prepare for the colder months and check whether you are eligible for any of the seasonal vaccinations offered by the NHS. Vaccination can help protect you from serious illness and is particularly important for people who are more vulnerable to infections.

Flu, COVID-19 and RSV Vaccinations

The flu vaccine is offered every year to people who are more likely to become seriously ill with flu. This includes people aged 65 and over, pregnant women, people with certain long-term health conditions, those living in care homes and some carers. Eligible children and other groups may also be offered the vaccine. Most eligible people can receive their flu vaccination from 1st October 2026, with some groups, including pregnant women, able to receive it from 1st September.

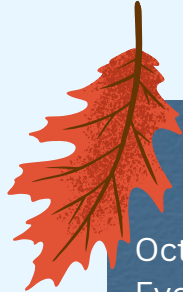
The COVID-19 vaccine is available to eligible people who are at increased risk of becoming seriously unwell. For autumn/winter 2026, this includes adults aged 75 and over, residents of care homes for older adults and people aged 6 months and over with a significantly weakened immune system. Vaccinations will take place from 1st October 2026 for most eligible people.

The RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) vaccine helps protect against a common virus that can cause serious respiratory infections, including pneumonia and bronchiolitis. It is offered on the NHS to pregnant women from 28 weeks, adults aged 75 and over and people living in care homes for older adults.

If you are eligible for any of these vaccinations, speak to your GP surgery, pharmacy or maternity service to find out how to arrange your appointment. You do not always need to wait for an invitation before booking.

For the latest information about eligibility, vaccination dates and how to book, visit:
NHS – Winter vaccinations and winter health
[www.nhs.uk – Winter vaccinations and winter health](https://www.nhs.uk/winter-vaccinations-and-winter-health)





Stoptober: Give Quitting a Go

October is the perfect time to take the first step towards a smoke-free future. Every October, Stoptober encourages people across the country to try quitting smoking.

Giving up smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health, whatever your age or how long you have been smoking.

Stopping smoking can improve your health in both the short and long term. Within days and weeks of quitting, your body begins to recover, while over time your risk of serious conditions such as heart disease, stroke and lung disease decreases.

Why Quit?

Quitting smoking can bring benefits that you may notice quite quickly. You may find that you:

- Breathe more easily and cough less.
 - Have more energy.
 - Enjoy the taste and smell of food more.
 - Save money.
 - Feel more confident about your health.
 - Reduce your risk of serious smoking-related illnesses.
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It can also have benefits for the people around you by reducing their exposure to second-hand smoke.

You Don't Have to Do It Alone

Quitting can be difficult, and it is completely normal to need more than one attempt. Don't be discouraged if you've tried before — every quit attempt is a step towards stopping for good.

There are different types of support available, including stop-smoking services, nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and other treatments. Getting professional support can significantly improve your chances of quitting successfully.

Your GP surgery or local stop-smoking service can provide advice and help you find an approach that works for you.

Take the First Step

You don't have to wait until October to start preparing. Think about why you want to quit, choose a quit date and consider what support might help you.

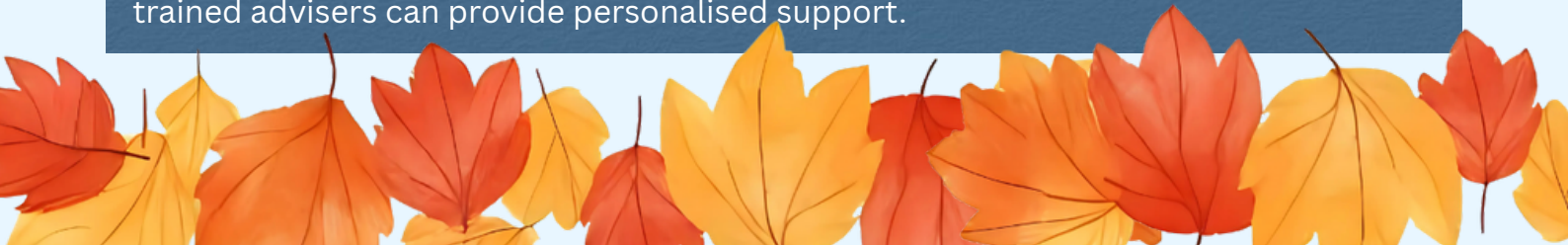
The NHS has free information, tools and support to help you stop smoking.



Find out more:

[NHS – Better Health: Quit Smoking](#)

You can also find your local stop-smoking service through the NHS website, where trained advisers can provide personalised support.





Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October is a good time to check in with your breast health

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an annual campaign that aims to raise awareness of breast cancer, encourage people to recognise changes and highlight the importance of screening.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK. Knowing what is normal for you and being aware of any changes can help you seek advice promptly if something doesn't feel right.

Know Your Breasts

Breasts naturally change throughout life, and everyone's breasts are different. You don't need to follow a specific routine or check your breasts at a particular time – simply get to know how your breasts normally look and feel.

Changes to look out for include:

- A new lump or swelling in your breast, chest or armpit.
- A change in the size or shape of your breast.
- Changes to the skin, such as dimpling or puckering.
- A change in the appearance of the nipple or nipple becoming inverted.
- Unusual discharge from the nipple, particularly if it is blood-stained.
- A rash or crusting around the nipple.
- Persistent pain in your breast or armpit.

Most breast changes are not cancer, but it is important to have any new or unusual change checked by your GP. Don't wait for your next screening appointment if you notice something that is unusual for you.

Breast Screening

Breast screening (mammograms) can help find breast cancer at an early stage, when it may be easier to treat.

In England, women aged 50 to 71 are routinely invited for breast screening every three years. You will receive your first invitation between your 50th and 53rd birthdays. Women over 71 can request screening every three years by contacting their local breast screening service.

If you receive an invitation for breast screening, attending your appointment can be an important part of looking after your health.

If you are under 50 and have concerns about a change in your breast or chest, you should still contact your GP. You do not need to wait until you are eligible for routine screening.

Find out more

visit: [NHS – Breast cancer](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/breast-cancer)



NHS App

The NHS App allows you to access a range of NHS services, you must be aged 13 or over and registered with a GP surgery in England to be able to register.

The NHS App enables people to:

- Order repeat prescriptions and set or change their nominated pharmacy
- Book and manage some appointments, including hospital appointments
- View your GP health record to see information like your allergies and medicines
- Register your organ donation decision
- Choose how the NHS uses your data
- View your NHS number
- Get health information and advice

For more information please visit: nhs.uk/nhs-app

Download the app here:



Members of our Patient Participation Group will be running some drop-in sessions over the coming months to help patients get set up with using the NHS App. Keep an eye out on social media for upcoming session information.





Are you a carer?

Do you have a carer or are you someone that cares for a spouse, family member or friend?

There are many unpaid carers in our community who have not been identified, usually because they do not see their role as 'a carer' and are therefore not aware of the services and support available to them.

If you have someone that cares for you or you are a carer, please ask our reception team for a Carers' information leaflet.



"We need your feedback"

The NHS Friends and Family Test



Your feedback will help us learn more about what you think of your experience at our surgery, what you like and what you think we could improve on.

Ultimately, you are helping us make changes to ensure we can offer the best possible care.

You can find our 'Friends and Family Test' by clicking [here](#).

Military Veteran's (Ex- Armed Forces).

Heath Lane Medical Centre is an accredited Veteran Friendly GP practice. We are proud to support our Armed Forces community. If you are a veteran patient, please let us know that you have served so that we can make sure that we understand your health needs.

The Veteran Friendly Practices accreditation scheme is run by the Royal College of General Practitioners in partnership with NHS England and NHS Improvements.



**Armed Forces veteran
friendly accredited
GP practice**