

# THORNFIELD MEDICAL GROUP

Spring 2026  
NEWSLETTER



## Upcoming Practice Closures

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May – Bank Holiday**

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May – Spring Bank Holiday**

If you need assistance during this time please visit a Walk in Centre, call 111 or in an emergency dial 999.

For a list of pharmacies which will be open over the bank holidays, please visit our website or Facebook page.

Welcome to our latest newsletter, we will be sharing the latest updates here at the practice and some important information with you!

### **HAPPY RETIREMENT**

We would like to share that both Dr Karn and Dr Coipel have recently retired.

We are extremely grateful for their dedication, care, and commitment to our patients and colleagues over the years. They will be greatly missed by both the team and the community they have served so well.

We would like to thank them sincerely for their hard work and wish them all the very best and every happiness in their retirement.

### **WELCOME**

We are pleased to let you know that we have two new GPs will be joining the practice soon, they are Dr Henderson and Dr Farrington.

They will be working alongside our existing team and they're looking forward to starting as both have been to the practice before when as a junior Doctor.

We are confident they will be a valuable addition to the practice and help us continue to provide high-quality, accessible services for everyone.

## Spring COVID-19 Vaccine 2026

COVID-19 hasn't gone away, and a spring dose helps keep your immunity topped up. Immunity reduces over time, even if you've had COVID-19 or previous doses. The spring vaccination can:

- Lower your chance of becoming seriously unwell
- Help you recover more quickly if you do catch the virus
- Reduce the risk of needing hospital care

### **Who should have the flu vaccine**

You can get the free NHS flu vaccine if you:

- Are aged 75 or over (inc anyone turning 75 before 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026)
- Live in a care home for older adults
- Are aged 6 months to 74 years and have a weakened immune system (for example, due to a health condition or treatment like chemotherapy)

If you're eligible, we will contact you directly with more information regarding clinics and how to book an appointment.

## Patients as Partners in Healthcare Education

Could you help train the healthcare professionals of the future?

The Medical School trains a range of students who will work in the NHS. Working with our students helps them to develop their communication and clinical skills.

Working with patients and volunteers is a hugely valuable part of their learning experience, help them develop excellent communications and examination skills.

To sign up to the service please contact the Patients as Partners in Healthcare Education Team via telephone or email.

Tel: 0191 2085612

Email [paphe@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:paphe@ncl.ac.uk)

For more information please visit:

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/medicine/engagement/patients-as-partners/>



## **+** Annual Reviews **+**

There is good evidence that patients who live with a long-term health condition, live longer when their condition is well managed. We also need to make sure that any medications that we give are helping you live well but also not causing any unintended harm. Therefore, it is very important that you are assessed to make sure that the best things for you are happening.

We will invite you to attend appointments in or around your birthday month so that all your health conditions can be reviewed together.

If you haven't received a message, please contact the surgery to check your eligibility.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE      COPD  
DIABETES      ASTHMA      EPILEPSY

## Social Prescribing Link Workers – SPLW Team

SPLWs connect people to community-based support, including activities and services that meet practical, social, and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing. This includes connecting people to statutory services for example housing, financial and welfare advice.

Some things the SPLWs can help with:

- Housing
- Benefits
- Financial problems
- Letters
- Power of attorney
- Getting food parcels/food vouchers/clothing/appliances/utilities/toiletries
- Homelessness
- Bereavement/mental health/loneliness
- Support with appointments
- Addiction support



If they can't help you directly, they will try their very best to find someone or something that can!

Speak to a Care Navigator or one of the Clinicians if you feel as though you could use

## The NHS APP

The NHS App offers a simple and secure way for people to access NHS services. People can download the NHS App on their smartphone or tablet, or find the same services in their NHS account on the NHS website using a web browser.

The NHS App helps people:

- order repeat prescriptions
- view their health record
- check results
- receive and view messages from the hospital or GP
- book and manage appointments
- check symptoms using 111 online

**Do more with  
the NHS App!**



Using the NHS App helps you stay more in control of your health, saves time waiting on the phone, and lets you access services at a time that suits you.

If you haven't already signed up, we encourage you to download the NHS App and make the most of the convenient services available to you.

To make sure you don't miss important updates, we strongly recommend turning app notifications on, as this allows us to send you messages quickly and securely, such as appointment reminders or health updates.

Notifications help you stay informed in real time, reduce the need to phone the surgery, and support the NHS by cutting down on missed appointments, letters, and administrative costs.



### Need help setting up the NHS App?

We will be holding an NHS App support session at the practice where patients can drop in and receive one-to-one help with downloading, setting up, and using the NHS App.

This session is ideal if you're not confident with technology, don't own a smartphone, or have tried to set the app up before and got stuck.

Our team will be on hand to guide you through the process and answer any questions, helping you access services such as repeat prescriptions, test results, appointments, and practice messages more easily.

If you would like to attend, please contact the surgery!

### Local Help

Our local area has a lot to offer if you are struggling.

You can visit the below link [www.feedingfamilies.org.uk/get-help/](http://www.feedingfamilies.org.uk/get-help/) which has some useful links to help navigate you to the correct help in your area. If not, ask to speak to one of our Social Prescribers!

Some local help:

- CAP Debt Counselling, call 0800 328 0006 to arrange an appointment.
- Search Trussell Trust to find local food banks.
- Peoples Kitchen can provide a free hot meal daily.
- Vinnies Kitchen, Byker Bridge, you can get 10 items for £5.00.
- Newcastle Pop Up Pantry – google to find local pop-up areas and dates.
- Food Cycle:

Every Thursday 7pm at St Silas' Church, Clifford Street, Byker, NE6 1DR.

Every Wednesday 12:30pm at Monkchester Community Centre, Monkchester Road, Walker, NE6 2LJ



## Patient Participation Group (PPG)

A Patient Participation Group (PPG) provides an opportunity for two-way feedback between a GP practice and its patients, enabling them to work together to improve services and facilities.

The aim is to strengthen the relationship between patients and the practice, which is critical to provide modern, high-quality services.

We are actively seeking new members to join the group. Anyone over the age of 16 who is a registered patient or carer at the practice can join.

If you are interested in joining our Patient Participation Group and would like to get actively involved, please contact us and we'll gladly provide you with details of meeting times and up and coming projects.



## Neurodiversity-Friendly Cervical Screening



What does this mean for you?

**Cervical screening (smear tests) is an important health check that helps prevent cervical cancer by detecting early changes in the cervix before they can develop into cancer.**

We know that attending screening can feel worrying or uncomfortable for some people, and we are committed to making the experience as supportive and accessible as possible.

For autistic patients and those who are neurodivergent, we offer neurodiversity-friendly cervical screening appointments where you will always be listened to and kept in control of what happens.

Adjustments can be made to help you feel safe and comfortable. Please speak to reception if you would like a neurodiversity-friendly appointment – no formal diagnosis is needed.

- ✓ You will always be heard
- ✓ You will always be in control
- ✓ We will use clear & kind language
- ✓ We aim to offer different size speculums
- ✓ You can bring someone with you
- ✓ Your sensory needs matter

Scan the QR code to complete an online request form.

This can be used for both clinical and administrative requests including home visits, fit notes, letters, and medication.

If you're unable to use online, please let us know and we will look to see how we can help you.

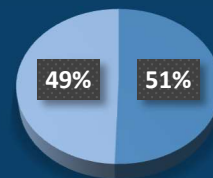
You can also order your medication by using the NHS app or by handing in a paper request into reception.

\*Please note all medication requests take 2 working days to be processed and sent to your nominated pharmacy.



During the month of January 2026, 801 patients did not attend their Clinical appointments

### Did Not Attend Appointments



- GP/ANP Appointments
- Nurse/HCA Appointments

51% of missed appointments were with a Doctor or Advanced Nurse Practitioner.

49% of missed appointments were with a Nurse or Health Care Assistant.

In total this equates to 200 hours of Clinical time wasted through patient not cancelling their appointments.

If you cannot make your appointment, please let us know so we can give it to someone else.

To cancel you can press option 2 on our phone line, reply to your reminder SMS message or cancel via the NHS app.

