

Newsletter

Spring 2026



Team Update

We are delighted to welcome a number of new staff to the Wallingbrook team:

- **Jessica Smale – Duty Team Care Coordinator**
- **Deb Kelly – Patient Care Coordinator**
- **Alice Cross – Business Services Coordinator**
- **Dr Nitin Mathew – Trainee GP**

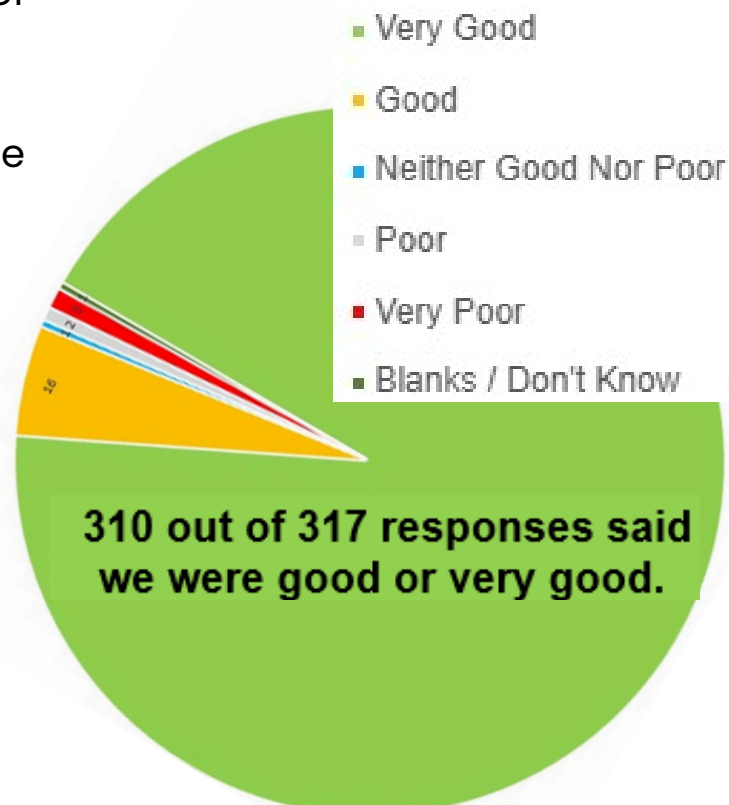
Family and Friends Test March 2026

In March 2026 we received 317 responses to our Family and Friends Test. Over 95% of these said we were good or very good! Thank you to all our patients who completed the survey. This is a valuable tool for us to check how we are doing.

We review all feedback and share with the practice team. Your input helps us learn and continue to improve the service we provide.

You can also provide us with feedback by completing a comments slip in the waiting room, speaking to our Patient Services Team or a Patient Participation Group representative or emailing us at:

d-icb.wallingbrookbsc@nhs.net



Staff Spotlight

Jo Hicks – Clinical Pharmacist

I'm a Clinical Pharmacist at Wallingbrook Health Centre, who joined the practice in 2019. I completed my Master's in Pharmacy at the University of Portsmouth, qualified in 2006, and earned a Clinical Diploma in Pharmacy in 2010. I became an Independent Prescriber in 2020 and have a broad and varied background in community pharmacy. Helping patients with hypertension and medication queries is something I particularly enjoy, making sure they feel confident and supported in their treatment. Outside work, walking on Dartmoor with my dog and spending time with my family are my favourite activities.



Here are three things you can do

to reduce medicine waste.

We want you to benefit from all of your medicines.
If you don't need them or can't use them, let us know.



Open the bag before you leave.

Medicines that leave the pharmacy have to be discarded.



Only order what you need.

Medicines you don't take away this time, will be available in the future.



Return unwanted and expired medicines to us.

This protects the local waterways, wildlife and the environment.

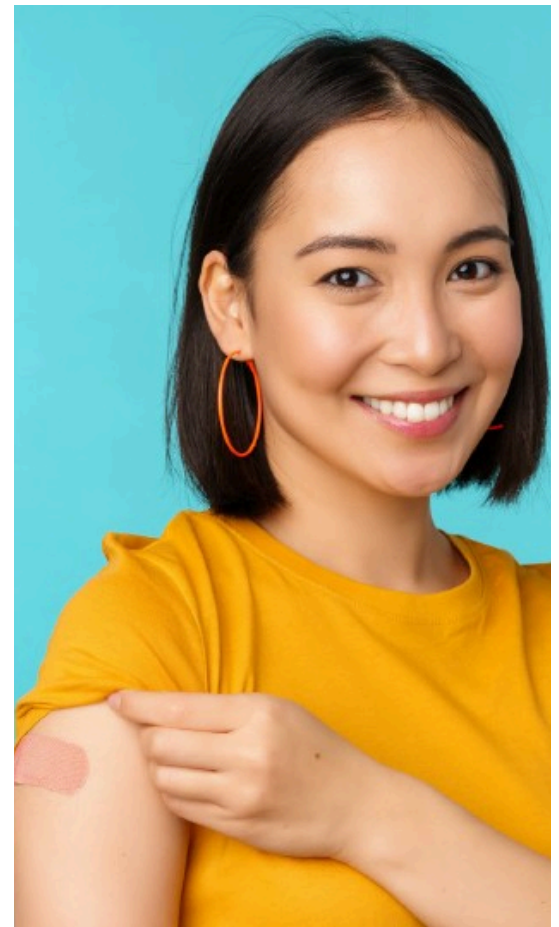
2026 Clinics and Practice Updates COVID Spring Programme

On 15 December 2025, the government, following advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, decided that a COVID-19 vaccination should be offered to those most vulnerable to serious illness and therefore most likely to benefit.

In England, vaccination will be offered in spring 2026 to:

- adults aged 75 and over
- residents in care homes for older people
- individuals aged 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed

Clinics will be held at Chulmleigh and Winkleigh surgeries in April, with invitations expected towards the end of March.



Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)

The current RSV programme for adults aged between 75 and 79 years is being extended.

From 1 April 2026, those aged over 75 will be eligible for a free vaccine to protect them from RSV. This is an infectious disease of the airways and lungs, it often causes symptoms similar to a cold, including:

- cough
- sore throat
- sneezing
- a runny or blocked nose

It can also cause wheeziness or shortness of breath and lead to pneumonia and other life-threatening conditions. There is no specific treatment and most infections will get better by themselves, but every year thousands of older adults need hospital care for RSV.

Eligible patients will be invited to book an appointment; if you believe you are eligible but have not been invited, please contact the practice.

For more information go to: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/vaccination-and-booking-services/get-a-free-rsv-vaccination/>

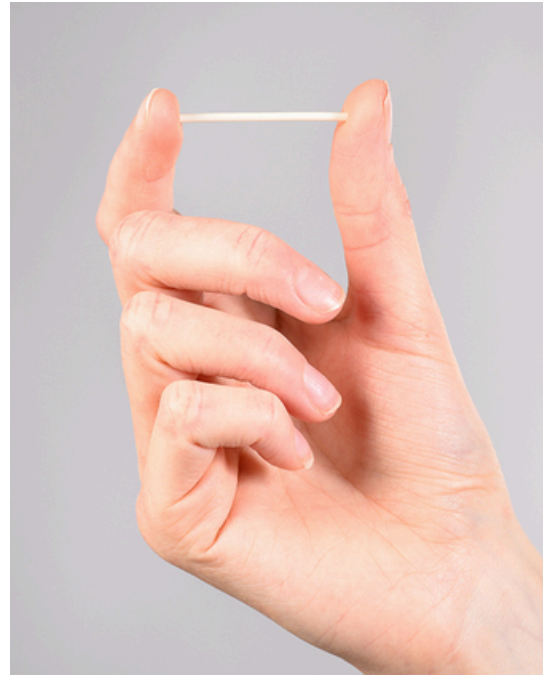


Implants and Intrauterine Device Service

Wallingbrook now provides a dedicated service for the provision of contraceptive implants and intrauterine devices (formally known as coils), to patients registered with Wallingbrook Health Group.

We offer a telephone advice and triaging service, and fitting and removal clinics.

Dedicated clinics are provided by the team. In addition to contraception, we also fit hormonal coils for management of heavy bleeding and as part of Hormone Replacement Therapy.







Prior to the consultation, please review the further information that is available on the new Devon Sexual Health website (screenshot seen below): <https://www.devonsexualhealth.nhs.uk/>

Contraception

Home > Contraception

What is contraception?

Contraception (also called **birth control** or **family planning**) means using methods to **prevent pregnancy**. There are lots of options — some use hormones, some don't. Contraception is **free from NHS services**, and knowing your choices helps you make the best decision for you.

 Progestogen-only pill (mini-pill)	 Hormonal coil (IUD)	 Contraceptive implant	 Injections
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Grief Café sessions

The Primary Care Network run Grief Cafés in each of the area’s medical practices. Patients can attend whichever of the Cafés suits them best.

Our next Grief Cafés are on Wednesdays at 2pm: 10 and 17 June and 1, 8 and 15 July.



The sessions provide an opportunity to meet with other people who are also experiencing a challenging time, to learn a little about the processes of grief and some strategies to help in day-to-day life.

If you are interested in attending this course or a future course at one of the other practices, then you can refer yourself or let your medical practice know and they can refer on your behalf.

Healthy Living Group



Looking to build healthier habits and feel more in control of your wellbeing? Join the Healthy Living Group at Wallingbrook Health Centre. This supportive programme helps you develop a better relationship with food, discover enjoyable ways to move more and learn practical strategies for managing stress.

Running across three sessions on 1 April, 6 May and 3 June 2026, the group offers a friendly space to learn new skills, share experiences and stay motivated alongside others working toward similar goals.

Childhood Immunisations 2026

Significant changes have been made to the childhood schedule of immunisations starting 1 January 2026. These include a new appointment at 18 months and the addition of the measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (MMRV) vaccine to the routine child immunisation schedule.

For more information on your child’s vaccination schedule, please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them/>

The complete routine immunisation schedule

From 1 January 2026

Age due	Diseases protected against		Vaccine given and trade name		Usual site ¹
Eight weeks old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b (Hib) and hepatitis B		DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB	Infanrix hexa or Vaxelis	Thigh
	Meningococcal group B (MenB)		MenB	Bexsero	Thigh
	Rotavirus gastroenteritis		Rotavirus ²	Rotarix ²	By mouth
Twelve weeks old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, Hib and hepatitis B		DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB	Infanrix hexa or Vaxelis	Thigh
	MenB		MenB	Bexsero	Thigh
	Rotavirus		Rotavirus ²	Rotarix ²	By mouth
Sixteen weeks old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, Hib and hepatitis B		DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB	Infanrix hexa or Vaxelis	Thigh
	Pneumococcal (13 serotypes)		PCV	Prevenar 13	Thigh
One year old (on or after the child’s first birthday)	Pneumococcal MenB Measles, mumps, rubella, varicella		PCV MenB MMRV	Prevenar 13 Bexsero ProQuad or Priorix Tetra	Upper arm or thigh
Eighteen months old	Born on or after 1 July 2024 Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, Hib and hepatitis B Measles, mumps, rubella, varicella	Born on or before 30 June 2024 No appointment	DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB MMRV	Infanrix hexa or Vaxelis ProQuad or Priorix Tetra	Upper arm or thigh
Three years four months old or soon after	Born on or after 1 January 2025 Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and polio	Born on or before 31 December 2024 Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and polio Measles, mumps, rubella, varicella	dTaP/IPV MMRV	REPEVAX ProQuad or Priorix Tetra	Upper arm
Boys and girls aged twelve to thirteen years	Cancers and genital warts caused by specific human papillomavirus (HPV) types		HPV	Gardasil 9	Upper arm

Bowel Cancer Awareness Month 2026

Bowel cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the UK. Almost 44,000 people are diagnosed with bowel cancer every year.

More than nine out of ten new cases (94%) are diagnosed in people over the age of 50. But bowel cancer can affect anyone of any age. More than 2,600 new cases are diagnosed in people under the age of 50 every year.

1 in 17 men and 1 in 20 women will be diagnosed with bowel cancer during their lifetime.

Know the symptoms of bowel cancer



Bleeding from your bottom



Blood in your poo



A change in how often you poo, or regularly having diarrhoea or constipation



Losing weight but you're not sure why



Feeling very tired all the time but you're not sure why



A pain or lump in your tummy

If you have any of these symptoms, talk to your GP and ask about an at-home test.

Westbank Health Walks

Westbank's Health Walks offer regular short walks each week across various locations across Devon, including Chulmleigh. Walks are graded by difficulty and length to help you choose the best for your ability. Anyone can turn up and join in – it's free, fun and friendly.

Explore the outdoors, get to know the local area and meet new friends too. Full details can be found at

<https://www.westbank.org.uk/healthwalks>

The Chulmleigh Walk Leaders meet fortnightly throughout the year at 9.30am at the Pavillion car park (EX187JZ). The walk is approximately 3 miles through woods and farmland and is classified as a Level 3 walk, which may include hills and rough terrain. Dogs on leads are welcome. For more information contact 01769 580819.



BP Monitors at Chulmleigh Library

Library users are now able to borrow a blood pressure monitor for three weeks to use at home. Guidance developed with support of the One Devon Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) Prevention Group, includes GP-led instructional videos on how to take a blood pressure measurement, record readings and interpret results, alongside advice and signposting on how to prevent and lower high blood pressure.

A collaboration between Devon County Council Public Health, NHS Devon and Libraries Unlimited follows a pilot in Torbay, which showed the value of such a scheme without overloading practices with additional pressures. It supports the One Devon CVD Prevention Group's aim of improving community hypertension case finding and enabling self-care skills.

Over 300 blood pressure monitors are available for loan across libraries within the Devon County Council area. A full list of participating libraries across Devon and Torbay can be found here:

<https://onedevon.org.uk/check-your-blood-pressure>



CHECK YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

You can check your blood pressure at home by borrowing a monitor for free from your local library

NHS

onedevon.org.uk/check-your-blood-pressure

The image shows a woman with short blonde hair and glasses, wearing a beige sweater, sitting at a table. She is smiling and looking at a tablet computer. A blood pressure cuff is wrapped around her left arm. The background is a blurred indoor setting, likely a library or a home. The text is overlaid on the image in white and blue boxes.

Meet your Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Our PPG consists of voluntary patient representatives who are actively involved in the planning and development of new and existing health services provided by Wallingbrook Health Group. The PPG meet regularly with practice staff to consider improvements in healthcare service provision supplied by the practice to patients.

Our PPG members are always keen to receive feedback and hear patient experiences. You can contact the PPG at wallingbrookppg@gmail.com or speak to members within your community.



Maggie Samuel – Chulmleigh (Acting Chair)

I am an advocate for an active retirement. I live in Chulmleigh and participate in a wide variety of activities including keep fit, yoga and being a local walk leader.

Jack Earnshaw – Burrington (Vice Chair)

I joined the PPG as a result of my interest in how services are delivered and the use of IT systems. I enjoyed a career in Aerospace and Financial Services and have been involved in a number of charities and public services.



Mary Bavidge – Chulmleigh

I had a career in nursing, including psychiatric nursing. I managed nursing homes, caring for patients suffering with dementia. I have three children, two stepchildren, many grandchildren and one great grandson!

Bill Graham – Lapford

In addition to the PPG, I am a member of Lapford Parish Council, the PCC of the Parish Church, as well as other village committees. I had a career in technical disciplines in theatre, conferences and major events.





Andrew Warner - Winkleigh

I was educated in Yorkshire and Edinburgh leading to a career as a Veterinary Surgeon. I arrived in Winkleigh in 1980 and stuck!

I have an understanding of the pressures of working in the Veterinary profession and am sympathetic to the roles that the medical professions have to perform.

If our local provision is not working for you let me know. It's good to talk.

Jean Perrin - Winkleigh

At the age of 11 I was traumatised by a serious hip injury. After a long time in hospital, I turned to art for my therapy. Years later, living in Canada, I worked on a drug trial, with a major pharmaceutical company, as well as studying art.

I care about health and people and feel that more of us should embrace retirement.



Roger Janes - Chulmleigh

I became a patient about 40 years ago when living in Lapford.

I am married with two daughters and three grandsons.

I had worked in farming, teaching and the construction industries, sometimes combined.

My interests are in community involvement and men's mental health.

Due to the lack of, and disjointed information about what was happening in Chulmleigh I founded and arranged initial funding for Your Chulm to provide a free informative local news sheet.

Yvette Coles - Chawleigh

Originally from Sussex, I have lived in Devon for many years and my children were born and raised here. I served in the RAF and when discharged worked in Financial Services.

For the last 15 years I have worked on various Government funded contracts. Most recently I was an Innovation and Growth Specialist supporting businesses in the South West.

I retired a year ago and am keen to use my skills and experience in support of the local community.



Monthly Wallingbrook Dispensary Closures

To accommodate training for all our dispensary team the dispensary will close for one hour a month. This takes place in the second week of each month, alternating between a Monday and Friday, from 1pm until 2pm. For a full list of closure days and times please visit:

<https://www.wallingbrook.co.uk/opening-hours>

Practice Training Afternoons

2026 Practice Training afternoons are on:

- Tuesday 9th June 2026
- Thursday 10th September 2026

On the above dates we will be closed from 1pm. Reopening as usual the next day.

If you have an urgent medical need during a training afternoon, please continue to ring the usual telephone number for the practice and you will be put through to the duty service.

We ask that you please do not ring for routine appointments and queries during that afternoon.

For more information on closures and where to access medical assistance when we are closed, please visit:

<https://www.wallingbrook.co.uk/opening-hours>

For immediate, life-threatening emergencies, continue to call 999.

Wallingbrook Health Group

Contact Details

Phone - 01769 580295

Website - www.wallingbrook.co.uk