

Monthly Patient Newsletter



Improvements to eConsult: Appointment Self-Booking Links

We're pleased to introduce a new, more convenient way to book routine appointments at the practice.

As part of our commitment to making access to care easier, patients who submit an eConsult and are triaged for an appointment will now receive a self-booking link via text message. This allows you to choose an available appointment time that works best for you — no need to call the practice or wait to be contacted.

How It Works:

1. Submit your health concern through eConsult.

2. Once your eConsult has been reviewed, you'll receive a text message with a link. This means you can book an appointment at a time and place that works best for you, without having to call the surgery.

In this newsletter
you can expect:

[Order what you need! - NHS Launches Campaign to Tackle £300 Million Annual Medicines Waste](#)

[Men's Health Strategy for England – We need you!](#)

[Join Our Virtual Patient Participation Group \(PPG\)](#)

And so much more!

The message will say:

"Your e-Consult has been triaged by a Senior Partner for you to see XXXX. Please follow the link to book an appointment at a time convenient for you or please contact the surgery. You may have a choice of locations for your appointment when booking via the link, please ensure you make a note of the surgery you choose."

Sent 9:00

3. Use the link to book your appointment at a time convenient for you.

Trial Phase

We will be trialling this new system with GP appointments only in the initial phase. If successful, we aim to expand self-booking access to all clinical appointments in the near future.

Want to Use This Feature?

Want to receive booking links by text?

Make sure we have your up-to-date consent. To do this, please contact your local surgery and we'll be happy to update your records.

Prefer to speak with someone?

No problem! You can still book your appointment with one of our Care Coordinators over the phone, just as before. Alternatively, you can collect a paper eConsult form to complete.

Updating your Personal Details

We are kindly requesting patients update their personal information, with particular attention to ensuring accurate telephone numbers. By keeping your details current, patients contribute to their own safety and efficient communication. This simple yet crucial step aids in preventing potential errors, streamlining appointments, and enabling prompt access to important healthcare updates. Your cooperation in confirming your personal information, especially telephone numbers, is greatly appreciated and supports the continuity of your care.

How can I update my information?

To update your email address or telephone number, you can either ring the surgery or complete a change of details form on the MVMG website: <https://ns.mendipvale.nhs.uk/contact/change-your-contact-details-form>

If you would like to change your name or address, please visit the surgery to complete a 'Change of Details' form.

Order what you need! - NHS Launches Campaign to Tackle £300 Million Annual Medicines Waste

Every year, the NHS in England loses an estimated £300 million due to unused prescription medicines — much of which is completely avoidable. A large portion of this waste stems from people routinely ordering more medication than they actually need.

In response, the NHS is launching a new campaign aimed at tackling this issue: 'Only Order What You Need'. This initiative is designed to help patients, carers and healthcare staff work together to reduce unnecessary prescriptions and ensure medicines are used more responsibly.

Debbie Campbell, Chief Pharmacist at NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire ICB, said:

"The NHS in our area is spending just under £3m on prescription medications each week – almost £150m each year. We want patients to be taking their medication as prescribed to get the best possible benefit but we know that a significant amount of this medication cost is going on unused or uncollected medications.

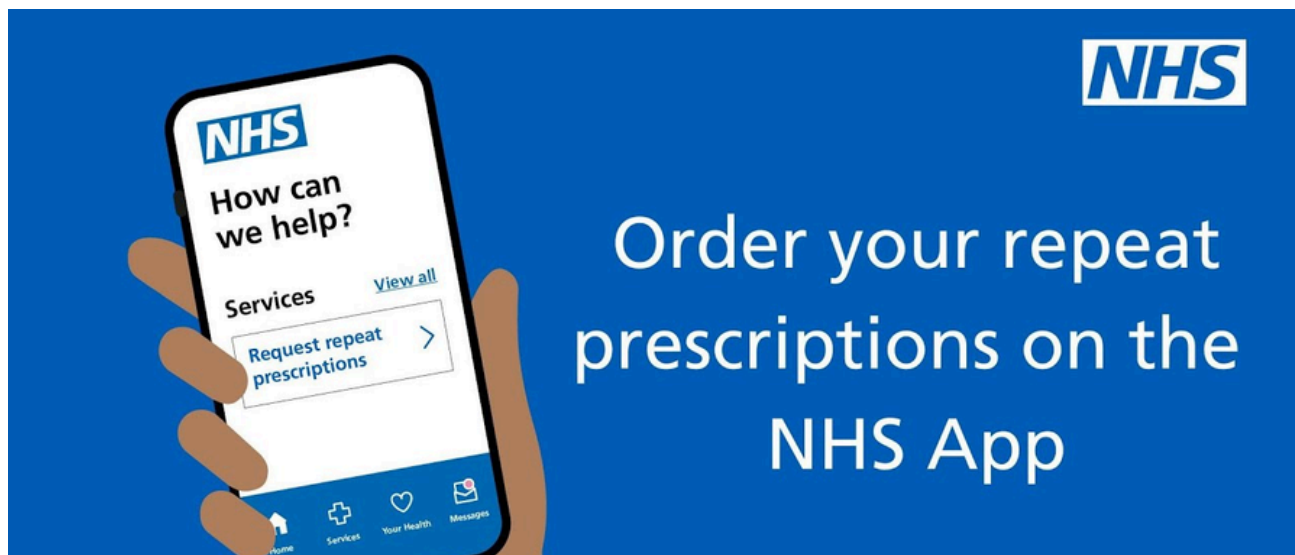
"By taking a few simple steps to check what medication you have at home and only ordering the



medications you need, you can help reduce medicines waste in our area."

Everyone has a part to play in reducing medicines waste. If you take regular medications, you can help by:

- Plan ahead – make a note in your calendar before your prescription due date to go through your medication and see what you need.
 - Keep track of what medication you're taking – don't continue to order medications you are no longer taking or where you have lots leftover.
 - Only order the medication you need – when putting in your next medication order, look at what you currently have available and only order what you need.
 - Check your medication before you leave the pharmacy – make sure you only have the medications you need. Anything that leaves the pharmacy cannot be reused.
 - Review your medications at your GP practice or pharmacy – if you want to know more or have any concerns about medication, ask for a medication review at your GP practice or speak to your pharmacist.
-



Manage repeat prescriptions on the NHS app

You can use the NHS App to access a range of NHS services including managing your repeat medications. You can request and view repeat prescriptions on the NHS App and have them sent to a pharmacy of your choice.

A new 'Amazon-style' tracking system has also recently been launched, enabling you to track the progress of your repeat prescriptions from the app.



**Don't ignore
your cervical
screening invite**



Kindness Counts: Supporting the Team Who Support You

Our Patient Co-Ordinators are usually the first friendly voice you hear when you contact the surgery. They play a vital role in helping you get the care patients need — whether that's booking appointments, pointing patients in the right direction, or keeping things running smoothly behind the scenes.

A Patient Co-Ordinator is a specially trained member of the team who supports patients by navigating appointments, sharing important information, and helping patients access the right care at the right time. They are not just administrative staff — they are trained to understand NHS systems, confidentiality, safeguarding, data protection, and dealing with difficult or sensitive situations - all so they can help patients in the best way possible.

Sadly, despite being such a key part of the team, they are sometimes on the receiving end of frustration or unkindness. That's why a new video campaign has been launched to remind us all that our Co-ordinating team are here to support patients— and a little patience and kindness can make a big difference. The video is a great opportunity to hear a little about the types of conversations our team experience.

👉 **Watch the video here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrIETspRMIA>



Routine Appointment

For non-urgent health concerns, follow-ups, or ongoing care (e.g. medication reviews, chronic condition check-ins, general health advice). These appointments are typically scheduled in advance – within 2 weeks of eConsult submission.

Urgent Appointment

For issues that are not life-threatening but require attention within a short time frame (e.g. new symptoms, infections, worsening of a known condition). These are offered on the same day through our Duty Doctor list. You may be asked to visit an alternative surgery instead of your preferred site.



Emergency

For severe or life-threatening conditions that require immediate medical attention (e.g. chest pain, severe difficulty breathing, suspected stroke). These situations should involve calling 999 or going to A&E.



Men's Health Strategy for England – We need you!

You may have seen in November the government announced their intention to publish a new national male health strategy for England. More recently they have asked for a call for evidence. They are seeking the views of the public, as well as health and social care professionals, academics, employers and stakeholder organisations to inform a Men's Health Strategy for England. They are particularly interested in the lived experience of all those directly affected by men's health issues.

We know that men face unique challenges throughout their lives. Men are disproportionately affected by a number of health conditions, including cancer, cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. Life expectancy data also shows that men live on average 4 years fewer than women (79.1 versus 83.0 years in England, respectively).

Rather than a formal consultation on specific proposals, this call for evidence is a request for ideas and evidence that the government can build upon and discuss further with key interests.

The call for evidence is available to individuals aged 16 and over living in England and organisations that operate or provide services in England.

The call for evidence includes questions on:

- topics that the Men's Health Strategy should cover
- health literacy, education and training
- health behaviours
- health conditions affecting men
- health and work
- men's engagement with healthcare services
- men's experience of healthcare services

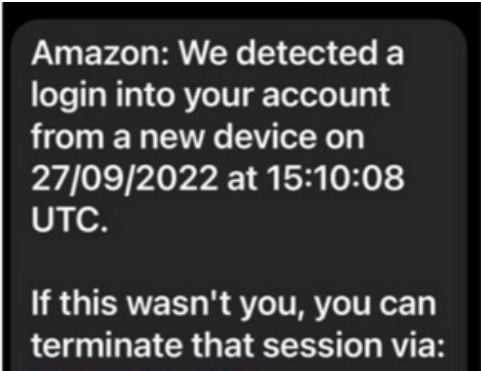
Respond online by the 11:59pm on 17 July 2025 - [Men's Health Strategy - Department of Health and Social Care](#)

For those using the [British Sign Language version](#), the call for evidence will remain open until 11:59pm on 15 August 2025.

Fraud Protection Team

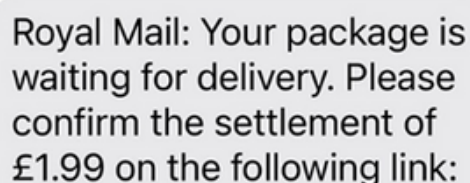
Monthly Message: Beware of phishing texts and emails

This month, Fraud Protect Officers from Avon and Somerset Police want to make people aware of phishing texts and emails. Fraudsters can pretend to be anyone over text or email and they are often influenced by current affairs, such as Covid and the cost-of-living crisis. Here are some text message examples below where we have removed the links, but these could also come through via email.

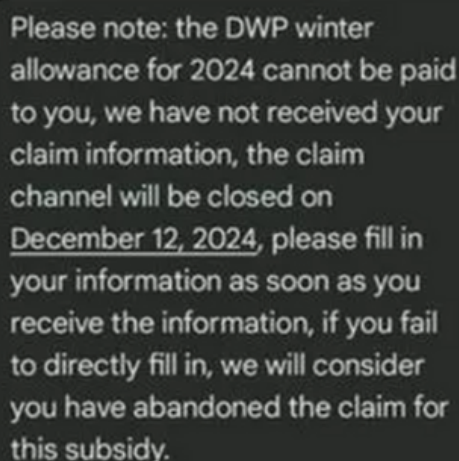


Amazon: We detected a login into your account from a new device on 27/09/2022 at 15:10:08 UTC.

If this wasn't you, you can terminate that session via:



Royal Mail: Your package is waiting for delivery. Please confirm the settlement of £1.99 on the following link:



Please note: the DWP winter allowance for 2024 cannot be paid to you, we have not received your claim information, the claim channel will be closed on December 12, 2024, please fill in your information as soon as you receive the information, if you fail to directly fill in, we will consider you have abandoned the claim for this subsidy.

When the victim follows the link, they will be asked for personal details such as bank/card information and passwords. However, just clicking on the link alone can result in malicious spyware or viruses being downloaded onto the victim's device.

Unfortunately, there is often a secondary part to these phishing texts, which is particularly sophisticated. It is known as "transfer into a safe account" fraud. The victim, maybe even a few days later, might be contacted by a fraudster, purporting to be from their bank. The fraudster will know who they bank with, along with other personal details, from the information harvested from the phishing text. They will claim that there has been fraud on their account and their funds are at risk, often referring to the phishing text. The victim, remembering the recent phishing text, is often convinced by the fraudster, feeling panicked by the thought of their funds being at risk. The fraudster explains that, to protect their funds, they need to transfer them into a "safe account". The bank details provided simply belong to the fraudster.

REMEMBER:

- Stop and think before responding to any email or text message
 - Don't click on links unless you can verify where they came from
 - Never provide information to anyone who contacts you out of the blue – take time to verify their credentials through a trusted source
 - Just because a text or email purports to be from a government agency or organisation doesn't mean it is
 - Forward scam text messages to **7726** (SPAM) and emails to **report@phishing.gov.uk**
-

eConsult – Responding to your Feedback

“It was easier and much less trouble than getting to the surgery”

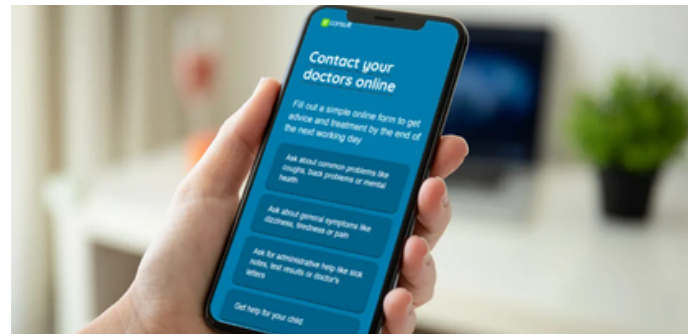
Thank you for your feedback. We're really pleased to hear that you found eConsult easy to use and more convenient than coming into the surgery. One of our goals is to make accessing care as straightforward as possible, and it's great to know that you were able to contact the surgery wherever you are using eConsult. If you have any further suggestions or feedback, please don't hesitate to let us know.

“I am happy with the concept of e consult but I have never been successful at accessing the form. I do not find the system easy to use and instruction on how to access the e consult form are lacking”

Thank you for your feedback. We're really pleased to hear that you're supportive of the eConsult concept, but we're sorry to hear that you've had difficulty accessing the form.

We understand that technology isn't always straightforward, and we appreciate that clear instructions are important. We're currently reviewing how we can make the process easier to navigate and will look at improving the guidance we provide on our website and in the practice.

In the meantime, if you're having trouble accessing or completing the eConsult form, please don't hesitate to call the practice. A member of our



team will be happy to guide you through the process or complete a form on your behalf over the phone or in the surgery.

“Answering the questions is frustrating. The first one asks what the problem is. Then you go through a lengthy process saying exactly the same things again. The delay between completing the eConsult and actually speaking to a human can be more than 24 hours and the condition can become worse during that time.”

Thank you for taking the time to share your experience. We're sorry to hear that you found the eConsult process frustrating. We understand that answering similar questions more than once can feel repetitive, and that delays in response can be worrying when you're feeling unwell.

It may help to know that eConsult is intended for routine appointments only. A routine appointment is for a non-urgent issue that does not require same-day attention—such as a medication review, a long-standing or stable condition, or a new but non-urgent symptom.

Our current policy is that someone from the practice will respond to your eConsult within 3 working days, and if an appointment is needed, it will usually be

offered within 2 weeks.

If at any point you feel your condition is getting worse or becomes urgent, please do not wait—contact the practice directly so we can arrange a same-day appointment if appropriate, or call NHS 111 for advice outside of our opening hours. eConsult should not be used for urgent problems.

A Warm Welcome to Our New Staff

Over the last months we have welcomed several new team members to MVMG, including:

- Sadie Worland, HCA at Langford Surgery
- Gwen Cook, Pharmacist at Langford Surgery
- Yashkumar Sutaria, Physiotherapist at Langford Surgery
- Clarissa Thomson, Patient Services Manager at Yatton Surgery
- Ebenezer Nartey, Mental Health Practitioner, at Southmead Health Centre
- Bronagh Weston, Advanced Practitioner, at Southmead Health Centre

**Better
Health** every mind
matters



Discover simple steps to help look after your mental wellbeing

Search Every Mind Matters



Join Our Virtual Patient Participation Group (PPG) – Make a Difference at Your Practice!

Have you ever thought about how you can contribute to improving healthcare in your community? By joining our Virtual Patient Participation Group (VPPG), you can make your voice heard and help shape the services that matter most to patients like you.

What is the PPG?

The Patient Participation Group is a volunteer group of patients and practice staff working together to

- Discuss patient needs and priorities.
- Develop new ways to improve services.
- Create stronger links between the practice and the community.

Why Join the Virtual PPG?

- Be Heard: Share your experiences, opinions, and ideas to influence decisions.
- Stay Informed: Gain insights into changes in healthcare services and new initiatives in our practice.
- Make an Impact: Work with practice to enhance the patient experience and improve care for everyone.

How You Can Help

- Attend meetings.
- Share feedback and suggestions from your perspective as a patient

- Contribute to discussions and initiatives aimed at improving our practice.

No Special Skills Required!

You don't need any prior experience—just a passion for improving healthcare and a willingness to get involved.

When are the Virtual PPG meetings?

Our VPPG meetings take place every other month on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm via Microsoft Teams. They are hosted by the PPG Vice Chair, Heather Pitch, along with representatives from MVMG.

The next virtual meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 23rd July.

Do you host face-to-face meetings?

Yes, we offer both face-to-face and online PPG meetings to give everyone the opportunity to get involved. Due to limited space, in-person attendance is restricted, and face-to-face membership is reviewed annually to ensure fair access for all interested patients. To help more people stay connected and contribute, we also run regular online meetings — and we'd love for you to join us virtually and have your voice heard.

Ready to Join?

Registering your interest is easy!

- Go to the MVMG website to complete the online registration form - [Patient Participation Group Form - Mendip North Somerset](#)
- Ask at reception during your next visit to the practice.

Together, we can ensure that healthcare services are patient-centred and responsive to the needs of our community. Join us today and help us make a difference!

The Future of Congresbury Surgery

Serving as a "hot site" during the COVID-19 pandemic, Congresbury Surgery provided essential services to the community, allowing the practice to safely see patients suspected of having COVID-19. However, due to ongoing challenges and the limitations of the site, it has since been temporarily closed and is no longer viable for long-term clinical use. As a result, over the last 5 years Congresbury patients have been reallocated to our neighbouring branch sites at Langford Surgery and Yatton Surgery

Given the temporary closure, we are now evaluating options for the building's future. We are considering its potential long-term use, considering the needs of the local community and surrounding areas. We are committed to exploring alternatives that will meet the healthcare needs of our patients, including the possibility of re-purposing the building. As such, we would like to invite you to complete our survey. The survey focuses on gathering input from patients and the community on how the temporary closure has impacted their access to receive healthcare.

You can complete the survey online, by clicking on the link:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Congresburysurgery/>

Or visit our Langford Surgery and Yatton Surgery to complete a paper copy.

Please be reassured that all responses are anonymous.

All updates regarding Congresbury Surgery will be communicated in the Patient Newsletter and on the dedicated web page on the Mendip Vale North Somerset website: <https://ns.mendipvale.nhs.uk/surgery-information/the-future-of-congresbury-surgery-what-s-next>

