

THE ELMS MEDICAL PRACTICE

January 2026 NEWSLETTER



"Elms Patient's Voice"

We're looking for patients who want to:

- ✓ Share ideas and feedback
- ✓ Help improve our services
- ✓ Work with staff to support the local community
- ✓ Influence how services are developed

Who can join?

Any registered patient—everyone is welcome!
(You can participate in person or remotely.)

Interested?

- 👉 Speak to reception
- 👉 Or visit our website to sign up



Starting 1 January 2026, the NHS is adding varicella (chickenpox) into the MMR vaccine (measles, mumps, rubella) as part of the future routine immunisation schedule.

Eligible Children will now be offered a 4 in 1 vaccine:
MMR including varicella (chickenpox).

This change follows advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).



Cervical Cancer Prevention Week, 22nd–28th January

During Cervical Cancer Prevention Week, we're encouraging women and people with a cervix to attend their cervical screening appointment – it really does save lives. Cervical screening is a free health test that can prevent up to 75% of cervical cancers and is estimated to save around 5,000 lives every year.

While it can sometimes feel worrying, understanding what to expect during your appointment can help to put you at ease and make attending easier. The test itself usually takes less than five minutes. While it may feel briefly uncomfortable, it's an important check that could save your life. If you're due, book your test today

Follow us on @TheElmsMedicalPractice on Facebook & Instagram

DID YOU KNOW? We offer a callback

option—you won't lose your place in the queue, and we'll ring you back as soon as it's your turn. Last month we completed **nearly 4000 callbacks!** When offered a callback just follow the instructions.

📞 This has supported to **lower our wait call times significantly**, alongside our new phone system.

➡️ Reminder - our quietest times to call for non-urgent requests are in the late morning and afternoon, during mid-week.

 **Don't wait
try our
callback option**

You can help make a difference to everyone's health and wellbeing in the borough. Have a look at the strategy drafted by residents, the council, NHS, Healthwatch and the community sector and share your views

👉 www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/HealthWellbeingConsultation

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Have your say on changes to **services for families**

Public consultation on the Healthy Child Programme



We want to hear from **families and young people** in the borough about proposed changes to services and how they and their communities may be affected.

For more information and to share your views scan the QR code or visit: cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/HealthyChildProgramme

You can also call us on: 0300 123 8123 quoting 'Healthy Child Programme consultation'.

The public consultation is open until **Sunday, 8 February 2026**

Have your say

Scan the QR code for more information and to share your views.



National Obesity Awareness Week, 10th–16th January

National Obesity Awareness Week (NOAW) runs annually in January to raise awareness of the dangers of obesity while educating about managing weight.

Losing weight has many benefits for your health, if you're currently overweight. Not only will you feel better in yourself, but it may help to reduce the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

While it may seem daunting, making small changes to your diet and lifestyle can really help to lose the pounds. Why not try some of these ideas?

- Swap sugary drinks for water
- Read food labels – choose green choices rather than red
- Choose wholegrain alternatives for bread, cereals and pasta
- Eat five portions of fruit and vegetables daily
- Restrict alcohol intake

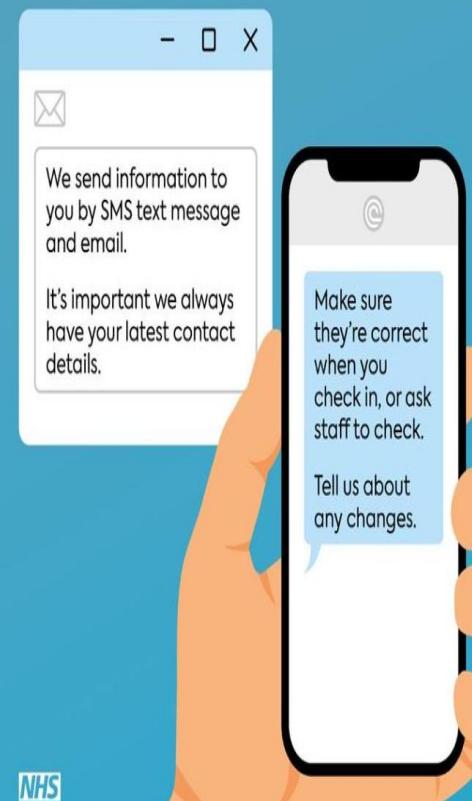
Weight loss is always more successful with support. If you don't want to join a group, share your plan with someone close to you to motivate you on the days when you're struggling.

<https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight/>

Follow us on @TheElmsMedicalPractice on Facebook & Instagram



Do we have the right mobile number and email address for you?



When you're asked about your care during pregnancy, use the **BRAINS acronym** to help guide your conversations with your midwife or doctor. It's a simple tool to make sure your decisions feel right for you and your baby.

Use BRAINS to help you make decisions about your care

When care is offered to you or your baby, remember you always have choices about the decisions you make.

When asked to make decisions about your care, think about asking...

- What are my options?
- How long do I have to think about my options and make my decision?



Benefits

- What are the benefits of this procedure or intervention?

Risks

- What are the risks of this procedure or intervention?

Alternatives

- Are there any alternatives?

Intuition

- How do I feel about my decision? What does my 'gut' tell me?

Nothing

- What if I decide to do nothing? What will happen next?

Second Opinion

- Who else can I talk to for help and support with my decision making?

Make more time for the important things this winter. The **NHS App** is the quickest, easiest way to find local health services, get advice, and order repeat prescriptions, so you can get back to making memories.

Search 'NHS App' to get it set up on your device.

[#MakeMoreTimeNHSapp](#)



If you struggle with your mental health, have financial worries, have experienced grief or loss, or are struggling with loneliness, Christmas time can bring with it feelings of stress, anxiety and sadness.

If you need **urgent mental health support**, please call NHS 111 and select the mental health option. Our dedicated staff are ready to talk to you. <https://bit.ly/3cd87mo>



Protect yourself from serious lung infection



If you're aged 75 to 79, your GP will contact you about getting your free respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine

Samaritans' Brew Monday, 20th January

The third Monday in January is often termed 'Blue Monday', but we can put on the kettle and turn it into 'Brew Monday'!

There's nothing better than a cuppa and a chat to lift your spirits. **Samaritans' Brew Monday** encourages us to take a moment to check on each other, particularly during the cold, darker days which can lead to feeling low.

Whether you've overindulged during the festive season or you're simply ready to make a change for your health, January is a great time to reset your relationship with alcohol.

Trying **Dry January** can have many more benefits than you'd expect – not only will your bank balance see a positive change but your health will thank you! In just 30 days, you'll find you sleep better, your energy levels and concentration will increase, and by the end of the month, you'll have reduced your risk of developing cancer.

You can even keep motivated with the free Try Dry® app; download it today: <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/help-and-support/managing-your-drinking/dry-january>

Why not give an alcohol-free January a try?

WINNING STREAK

Boss your booze-free streak with

TRY DRY®



We offer 1 to 1

- **Adult Counselling**
- **Emotional Wellbeing support**

To find out more please call **01606 836 305** or email us at **office@midcheshiremind.org.uk**



YOUR WELLBEING MATTERS SUPPORT, STRENGTH & SPACE TO GROW

We work collaboratively across our community to create a safe, inclusive space where every individual's wellbeing is valued and protected.

Implementing wellbeing into our established kids and youth club

A safe, familiar and fun space for children to connect and thrive.

1-1 sessions with children

A supportive space where children are:

- Heard, understood and valued
- Encouraged to build trust and confidence
- Guided with age-appropriate therapeutic tools

Helping children build confidence and self awareness, where they can express and grow emotionally.

Group wellbeing sessions with children and teens

A supportive space to:

- Socialise and form friendships
- Share thoughts and feelings
- Explore identity and self-awareness
- Learn practical wellbeing tools

Helping young people connect, express and grow together.

Check-in phone calls for young individuals

We offer a consistent point of contact to help children feel supported, stay connected and reduce feelings of isolation between sessions.

Love Your Liver Month

Did you know your liver performs over 500 jobs to keep you alive? So, it's important to show it some love! When it's damaged, the liver can repair itself, but only up to a point. Nine out of ten cases of disease could have been prevented. However, people with liver disease often don't have any symptoms until the disease has progressed and it's far too late for treatment. So, look after your liver with these top tips:

- Focus on a balanced diet
- Stay hydrated
- Minimise alcohol
- Take the correct dosage of medications
- Ensure safe hygiene to reduce the risk of hepatitis

<https://britishlivertrust.org.uk/information-and-support/love-your-liver/>

STIQ Day, 14th January

STIQ Day takes place on 14th January – a date chosen because many common STIs, such as chlamydia, can take around two weeks to show up on a test. If the festive season included unprotected sex, now is a good time to think about getting tested and looking after your sexual health.

Many STIs can exist without showing any symptoms or may be mistaken for something else. Regular testing is important for your health and those you're intimate with, and in most locations, you'll be able to access free testing.

Did Not Attend (DNA) Appointments – The Impact on Our NHS

When patients do not attend appointments and fail to cancel in advance (known as DNAs), it has a significant impact on general practice and the wider NHS. Each missed appointment means lost clinical time that could have been used to care for another patient.

DNAs contribute to longer waiting times, reduced appointment availability, and increased pressure on already stretched services. They also carry a financial cost — missed GP appointments cost the NHS millions of pounds each year, diverting resources away from patient care.

What the practice is doing

- Using text message reminders to reduce missed appointments
- Making it easier to cancel appointments in advance via the NHS app
- Reviewing repeat DNAs and offering appropriate support where needed

How you can help

If you are unable to attend, please cancel your appointment as soon as possible so it can be offered to another patient. This helps us make the best use of NHS resources and improve access for all patients.

You can also join The Elms Patient Voice to give your support in reviewing our processes and help us reduce the number of DNAs in the practice.

Thank you for your support.



★★★★★ 2 weeks ago **NEW**

As a mother of 3 school age children and a patient myself, I highly recommend the Elms Medical Practice. In the 13 years we have been registered at the practice, we have received the highest level of care possible. Dr Snowden and his team have assisted in several medical emergencies and I cannot thank them enough. We appreciate the pressures of the NHS, but we have always been able to get appointments or advice if the surgery is fully booked. The receptionists are always helpful too and try their hardest to fit us in or point us in the right direction for alternative care. All the doctors we have seen have been professional and take our concerns seriously. Both surgeries are so clean, well maintained and well equipped. Thank you again!



NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service,

allows pharmacists to provide confidential consultations, assess suitability, and initiate or continue prescriptions for oral contraception (combined or progestogen-only) for eligible individuals, often with blood pressure checks, without needing a GP referral, making contraception more accessible.

This service covers starting the pill, ongoing supply, and even emergency contraception, enhancing choice and reducing barriers, especially for younger users and vulnerable groups.

Use the pharmacy finder
<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy-offering-contraceptive-pill-without-prescription> to locate participating pharmacies.