

- Welcome to a periodic newsletter aimed to keep you informed and up to date with news and Practice developments.
- The newsletter is developed as a collaboration with the Practice and with Peartree **Patient Voices** (see below).

### A Reflection from GP Dr Thomas Gillham



When I joined Peartree Group Practice in 2012, our work looked very different from today. Over the past thirteen years we have transformed from a traditional GP-led and GP-delivered service into a GP-led digital triage system supported by an outstanding multidisciplinary team. This shift has enabled us to offer thousands more appointments, ensuring GPs can focus on the most complex issues and provide continuity for those living with long-term conditions.

Digital triage has been a genuine step forward. It allows us to understand each day's demand before allocating our capacity—far more effective, and fairer, than the old system where appointments simply went to those who got through first on the phone. Every online request is reviewed the same day and an appropriate appointment or outcome provided, with staff completing the form for anyone unable to access the internet.

Peartree has evolved enormously, but our commitment to compassionate, patient-centred care remains at the heart of all we do.

### People & Services at Peartree Group Practice

We currently employ a wide range of clinicians including Doctors, Nurses (with a range of specialisms), Minor Illness, Clinical Pharmacists, Health Care Assistants, Physiotherapists and Social Prescribers working alongside our Practice administration team.



- **Doctors** see more complex presentations and support the wider clinical team. The wider team free up GP appointments to ensure excellent same day access for urgent concerns.
- **Minor Illness** specialists trained in delivering care for all minor ailments are available 5 days per week to support chest, throat, eye, urinary tract and ear infections.
- **Nurses and HCA's Assistants** are skilled in wound care, blood pressure checks, ECG, health checks and vaccinations alongside wound management, child immunisations, cervical screening and vaccinations.
- **Nurse specialising in Women's health** - Julie Adolph works Tue – Thu offering specialist Gynaecology and well woman clinics.
- **Clinical Pharmacists** are experts in medicines and prescribing. They review repeat prescriptions, make changes if needed and advise on possible side effects. Our pharmacists perform Asthma, Hypertension and Diabetes annual reviews.
- **Physiotherapists** have advanced skills to assess, diagnose and recommend appropriate treatment for problems affecting your neck, back, joints, muscles and nerve pain. They can give you expert advice and exercise plans to manage condition.
- **Social Prescriber's** connect you to nearby groups, activities, and services to meet your social and practical needs.

- **Pharmacy First** is a new service offered by local pharmacies offering support and treatment (*including medication and antibiotics*) for the following conditions: **Ear Infections** (1 – 17 years old); **Tonsilitis** (5 years+); **UTI** (age eligibility is women 16 – 64 years); **Impetigo** (1 year+); **Shingles** (18 years+); **Infected bites** (1 year+); **Sinusitis** (16 years+).

➤ **We encourage you to use this service first as all eligible patients will be directed here by the clinical triage team.**

### Local Health Matters Talks



- In 2025 we held several, free to attend, Health Matters evening talks on pertinent topics which were well attended.
- These talks are open to patients from all Practices in WGC & Welwyn.
- In 2026 we plan more of these to cover topics expected to include\*:
  - Menopause (**26<sup>th</sup> February 7-9pm**)
  - Adult Learning Disability
  - Men's Health (inc. Prostate & Urology)
  - Respiratory
  - Cardiovascular
  - ADHD

\* Subject to changes



## Practice Updates

### Winter Flu and COVID Campaign

- Peartree have successfully delivered 3,000 flu vaccinations and 1,200 COVID vaccinations. The flu campaign runs until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2026.
- We ask all patients to have their vaccinations at the surgery as our funding is **reduced** if you have a vaccination at a local Pharmacy.
- Non attendance of Appointments
- Peartree would like to stress the importance of attending prebooked appointments and notifying the practice in advance of cancellations.
- We have observed an increase in the number of missed appointments at the surgery. **Missed appointments result in wasted appointments and impacts on availability for other patients.** We are monitoring closely and will be sending letters to patients who do not attend their appointments.
- Please note patients who fail to attend 3 appointments will be asked to register with an alternative provider.

## Digital Triage Performance (Appointment Booking)



- Since June 2024 we have been successfully operating a Digital Triage system for appointments. The service is open for medical requests from 7.30am until 6.30pm each day.
- We receive an average of **300** requests a day and **99%** of these are actioned the same day.
- In a typical day we will provide **150** same day appointment slots with clinicians, with the remainder of the demand met by follow up appointments, advice, referrals and prescriptions.
- A reminder of the digital link for appointments: <https://acurx.nhs.uk/patient-initiated/e82040> (see the Practice Website).
- Non-digital access (e.g. phone / at reception) is available for those who cannot use the internet for whatever reason.
- Peartree is a large practice with over 21,000 patients but still aim to reply to your online consultation the **very same day**. We are proud to announce that we ranked **3rd in Hertfordshire and West Essex** (out of 125 practices) for volume of online consultations managed and actioned within 24 hours.

### Patient Survey

Since December 2024, **1,479 patients** have completed our online survey, with **621** also leaving comments. We're really encouraged by the results — 85% of responses were positive overall, and we received over 320 compliments.

Here's what you told us:

- 😊 **92%** found our reception team **helpful or very helpful**
- 💻 **92%** were happy with their last appointment
- 👍 **82%** would **recommend us** to friends and family
- 📞 **72%** said it's **easy or very easy to contact us by phone** (average wait time: 1 mins 47 secs)

➢ See the full results here (excluding comments): <https://ppvgp.short.gy/Survey2>

The survey included a section for comments and feedback. We would like to thank all patients who participated in the survey. **We have analysed all constructive feedback** to consider changes at the practice. Some patients felt that the new digital triage system did not consider their ability to use technology or felt it blocked traditional methods of contact such as telephone or walk in. We would like to reiterate that **patients are encouraged to use the online e-consultation service**. However, **if you do not have access to the internet or struggle to complete the e-consultation** you are very welcome to telephone the practice or walk in and one of our team will be delighted to complete it for you. All e-consultations are assessed by the clinical assessment team **that same day**. Those who prefer to phone the surgery will be delighted to know that e-consultations have reduced demand on our telephone lines by 80% and we typically answer telephone calls on average in **1 min 47 seconds**. We have additional staff in the morning so please do call then if it is appropriate to do so.

### Premises

We operate from both Peartree Surgery and Moors Walk Surgery.



Peartree Lane Surgery

- Peartree Lane Practice is open 8am and closes at 6:30pm.
- Moors Walk Surgery opens at 8am and closes at 5pm Monday to Thursday and 1pm on Fridays
- We offer limited extended access appointments on evenings and weekends please note on your e-consultation if this is of interest.
- **Hollybush Surgery** is currently being renovated and will be open again in April 2026 for appointments.



Moors Walk Surgery

**PatientVoices** is the Patient Participation Group (PPG) for Peartree Group Practice, comprising Peartree and Moors Walk surgeries. It is run by patients and is a contractual requirement of the Practice.

As a registered patient of the Practice, we hope you might be interested in joining **PatientVoices** whose main aim is to work with the Practice and offer patients' views on the services provided. You can play an active role, or you can simply receive regular updates from us about the Practice, our activities and healthcare in general. For more info and to join, please see here: <https://peartreegp.co.uk/patient-voices/>.

++++ Thank you for reading our Newsletter +++