



St Helens

Medical Centre

Patient Participation Group

NEWSLETTER

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Issue 16

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SPRING

As March arrives, it brings with it a quiet but unmistakable shift. The mornings brighten a little earlier, the air softens, and the first brave shoots of spring begin to push through the soil. After the long stillness of winter, this month feels like a gentle invitation to look forward, to reset, and to reconnect with our own wellbeing.

At St Helens Medical Centre, we see March as a natural turning point in the year. It's a moment when many of us feel ready to take stock of our health, re-establish good habits, and make small but meaningful changes that can carry us into the brighter months ahead.

Our website with details about booking appointments, prescription information, econsult, and much more can be found at:
www.sthelensmedicalcentre.nhs.uk

Opening times: Monday – Friday 8:00am to 6:30pm

Contact us: 01983 871828 | hiowicb-hsi.sthelensmc@nhs.net

Keep up to date with our latest health news on Facebook by scanning the QR code below on a smartphone:



A Season That Encourages Us to Step Outside

Spring has a remarkable effect on both body and mind. Even a short walk outdoors can lift mood, reduce stress, and improve energy levels. As the days lengthen, we encourage our patients to take advantage of the lighter evenings - whether that means a stroll around the block, tending to the garden, or simply opening a window to let in the fresh air.

For those managing long-term conditions, gentle outdoor activity can be especially beneficial. If you're unsure where to start, our clinical team is always happy to offer guidance tailored to your needs.

Spring Cleaning for Your Health

Ideal time to review your personal health routines:

- Medication checks – Are your repeat prescriptions up to date? Do you have questions about how or when to take your medication?
- Screenings and vaccinations – If you've received an invitation for screening, please do take up the offer. Early detection saves lives.
- Mental wellbeing – The change of season can be uplifting, but it can also feel overwhelming for some. If you're struggling, you're not alone. Our team is here to listen and support you.

Supporting Our Community Together

The Patient Participation Group (PPG) continues to play a vital role in shaping the services we provide. Your feedback helps us understand what matters most to our patients—from appointment access to health education and community support.

March reminds us that change doesn't have to be dramatic to be meaningful. A little more daylight, a few more steps each day, a renewed commitment to self-care—these small shifts can have a powerful impact on our overall health.

As we step into spring together, St Helens Medical Centre remains committed to providing compassionate, accessible, and patient-centered care. We look forward to supporting you through the season of renewal and beyond.

Wishing all our patients a healthy, hopeful, and uplifting start to spring.

Covid-19 spring booster campaign

The NHS spring covid-19 vaccination programme is due to run from 13th April to 30th June 2026. This booster will be offered to people at higher risk of serious illness: adults aged 75+, residents in care homes and people aged 6 months+ who are immunosuppressed.

Appointments will be available at the practice soon. Further information about appointments will be communicated in due course.

Seasonal Nutrition Boost

Spring produce is rich in vitamins and antioxidants.

In-season options:

- Asparagus
- Spinach
- Peas
- Strawberries
- New potatoes



St Helens Health Walks 2026

Walking is a type of cardiovascular physical activity, which increases your heart rate. This improves blood flow and can lower blood pressure. It helps to boost energy levels by releasing certain hormones like endorphins and delivering oxygen throughout the body. Spring is a season of change and growth, so it's the perfect opportunity to make a positive change in your life.

- St Helens Health Walks take place every Wednesday from 10am and usually ends around 1pm
- Walkers meet by the sports pavilion on St Helens Green
- The varied walks take place around the St Helens, Seaview, Bembridge and Brading areas and the distance is normally between 4 and 8 miles
- A shorter walk for those requiring one is offered
- The aim of the friendly walks is to help provide opportunities for physical exercise as well as positive social opportunities
- The walks have a leader and a back marker to provide support for walkers
- If you need further information, please contact Maurice Dix Tel: 07854 368 419 or by email at maurice.dix@btinternet.com



Age UK Update

For over 50 years, Age UK Isle of Wight has been a vital cornerstone of support for the Island's older residents. Founded in 1973, the charity is dedicated to helping those aged 50 and above navigate the challenges and opportunities of ageing, ensuring they can lead joyful, fulfilling, and independent lives. Yet, despite our widespread impact, a common misconception remains about who we truly are and how we operate.

A Local Charity with a National Name

While we carry a widely recognised brand name, Age UK Isle of Wight is a fully independent, local charity. Every single penny raised, donated, or earned by the charity stays right here on the Isle of Wight to directly benefit residents.

Operating in a community with a significantly older-than-average population, the charity relies entirely on its own fundraising efforts, generous community donations, and revenue-generating services to keep its doors open. Recently, we met with both Island MPs, Richard Quigley and Joe Robertson, to help us advocate for sustainable social care funding and highlight the unique pressures facing the Island's ageing demographic.

A Lifeline of Services

We provide a comprehensive support system for older Islanders. Our core **free** services include Dementia Care Navigation, Information and Signposting, Digital Support, Hospital Discharge Support, Social Groups, and Befriending. The scale of our community care is vast; last year alone, our Good Neighbour Scheme provided 8,800 hours of support, and our Information & Support Service answered over 9,000 calls.

The "Just About You" (JAY) Service

To help adults over 18 continue living independently at home, we created our *Just About You* (JAY) bespoke home help service. Our fully DBS-checked support workers provide a trustworthy hand with daily tasks like housework, gardening, shopping, and meal preparation. We also offer companionship and transport for outings or appointments. Please note, however, JAY is strictly a home help service; we do not provide personal care or handle medication. Because JAY is a not-for-profit service, all fees directly cover operational costs, and any surplus acts as a donation back to Age UK Isle of Wight. By using JAY, you can feel proud that your monthly fees are actively funding our wider charitable work across the Island.

Contact Jay at JAY@ageukiw.org.uk

Making an Impact, Together

In the last five years, we have proudly supported nearly 27,000 individuals on the Isle of Wight. As a charity, we rely on the generosity of our community through volunteering, fundraising, or leaving a gift in a will to sustain this essential work. We believe that together, we can create a brighter future for those who need it most, and if you'd like to get involved or receive our services, you can ring **01983 525282** or email info@ageukiw.org.uk

Mountbatten Fundraiser

One of our GPs, Dr Westmore, is taking on the Lapland husky trail in aid of Mountbatten. Further information is available in the poster below.

Lapland Husky Trail



with

Mountbatten



Dr Westmore

I would like to raise money as a thank you for all the amazing work they do on the island. I will be completing a 260km trek in the Arctic Circle. If you would like to support/ sponsor me please donate in the bucket behind reception Or scan the QR code below:



<https://theearlmountbattenhospice.enthuse.com/of/sarah-westmore-938aa>

20-27th March 2026



Patient Participation Group Members

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