

# PPG

## Patient Participation Group

**Victoria  
Medical  
Centre**

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news

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[www.leesplacemedicalcentre.com](http://www.leesplacemedicalcentre.com)

Dear VMC and LPMC Patients,

This bumper edition of the PPG newsletter covers a multitude of topics affecting patients at the Victoria Medical Centre and Lees Place Medical Centre. It almost feels as if we are getting back to normal, but we know that the pandemic is not over yet, and the new normal sometimes depends on decisions from on high that are not always in the best interests of GP practices and their patients, which is why we are so pleased to have the ear of Richard Meddings, the newly appointed Chairman of NHS England at our next PPG event on Wednesday 11 May. Save the date!

Mr Meddings insists that he wants to address the patients' needs and not the bureaucracy. It is a worthy aim and a good start. Let us respond by focusing our response on the things that really matter to us and not on minor irritations.

If you can be seated by 5.30 pm you will be able to attend the first Patient Participation Group Annual General Meeting since 2020 and hear Dr Susan Rankine giving a review of how the practice survived the last two ghastly years, and how the PPG did its best to help.

The PPG committee also needs to stand for re-election. If you feel you could make a contribution and become involved in how the practice delivers services, then please don't hesitate to let me know in advance. (email [vmcppg@live.co.uk](mailto:vmcppg@live.co.uk))

In a change of mood, we shall be hearing a short recital by award-winning solo violinist and chamber musician Sara Trickey. Live music has been notably absent from VMC – not for want of trying. We all know that great music can enrich our lives, and that music therapy can bring joy to people who are sad and lonely, and to those suffering from dementia. The practice plans to introduce live musical events in the Group Room from time to time and we would like to hear your opinions. We hope you enjoy the musical interlude and that it will be the first of many.

On page 2 you will find an up-date of staff changes, services and important information about the new South Westminster Primary Care Network. On page 3 there is information about some of our Local and Community Services, which we hope you will find helpful.

Best wishes to all,

**Mary Orr**

Chairman, VMC PPG

### VICTORIA MEDICAL CENTRE Patient Participation Group Event

**WEDNESDAY 11 May 2022**

**5.30 – 7.30 pm**

**5.30 – 6.00 PPG Annual General Meeting**

*Review of the year and election of PPG Committee*

**6.00 – 6.30 The healing power of music – recital**

**6.30 – 7.30 Guest speaker**

#### **Mr RICHARD MEDDINGS**

newly appointed Chairman of NHS England

*"I want to address the patients' needs not the bureaucracy"*

**Question and Answer session  
about patient needs in South Westminster**

Please submit your questions in advance  
to [vmcppg@live.co.uk](mailto:vmcppg@live.co.uk)

to help us maximise the number of topics covered

**THANK YOU**

Group Room, Victoria Medical Centre  
29 Upper Tachbrook Street, SW1V 1SN



*If you have never been to a Victoria Medical Centre Patient Group event, now's your chance to come along and have your say. All VMC/LPMC patients welcome.*

# NEWS FROM THE PRACTICE

**Staff** VMC and LPMC have a combined staff of 39 including 12 GPs, 5 practice nurses and 16 in administrative roles looking after 20,000 patients. The practice is actively looking for a replacement for an outgoing GP (Dr Castro) but there is a skill shortage at the moment nationally. Dr Dilanee Wirasinghe, currently on maternity leave, will be returning in June, and Sarah Leslie is now on board from a third party organisation helping with health promotion campaigns.

**Telephones** The new system is a great improvement but there are still improvements to be made. Patients having difficulty in getting through should try at less busy times such as early afternoon. VMC and LPMC continue to offer patients booking routine appointments a choice of face-to-face or remote consultations. All urgent appointments will continue as before, where patients will be contacted by one of the duty doctors first so that the best possible outcome can be achieved.

**Services** VMC is offering Audiology, Ear Syringing and Minor Surgery. The Well Woman Clinic and Respiratory services will be reintroduced later in the year along with ear microsuction, OpenAge now provide an exercise class on Friday mornings.

**DNAs** (Did Not Attend). It was reported to the PPG that Dr Thakore has a high level of DNAs at his Minor Surgery clinic, which is a shocking waste of his time and sabotages efforts to clear the backlog of NHS waiting times. The PPG recommended that VMC reminds patients by phone of their appointment and notes a DNA on their medical records.

**Physiotherapy** The current appalling MSK service provided by the contractor Healthshare is currently under investigation and we hope to see action taken.

## Menopause Cafés

Do you want to understand more about the menopause? If so, you are invited to join Dr Rankine at one of the Menopause Cafés being held in the Group Room at VMC on Saturday 21 May and Saturday 17 September 10.30 am – 12.00 pm

## THE SOUTH WESTMINSTER PRIMARY CARE NETWORK

### What it means to you

#### What is a primary care network (PCN)?

A Primary Care Network consists of a group of GP practices based in a local community. A PCN partnership encourages GP practices within a network to share their expertise and resources to develop closer links with community health providers, hospitals, mental health trusts, local pharmacies and voluntary organisations. VMC and LPMC are part of the South Westminster Primary Care Network.

#### What will change for you?

Being part of the South Westminster Primary Care Network will enable VMC patients not only to access a wider range of services provided by other local GP practices but also other local non-clinical services including voluntary organisations.

#### What will remain the same?

You will still be registered with VMC and will continue to access your GP services in the usual way, although VMC may from time to time refer you to another practice within the South Westminster PCN to enable you to access a specific specialist service.

#### Confidentiality

To ensure continuity of care within the Primary Care Network, the PCN must ensure that appropriate data sharing arrangements are in place. If you have not already given your consent, VMC will ask for your permission to share your summary medical record with other GP practices and health service providers with the PCN.

**NOTE** You have the right to restrict or object to sharing your personal data.

#### VMC's partners in the South Westminster PCN

Kings College Health Centre

Royal Mews

Westminster School

Belgravia Surgery

The Doctor Hickey Surgery

Millbank Medical Centre

Dr Victoria Muir's Practice

Pimlico Health@ the Marven Surgery

#### How you can help develop your PCN

If you would like to influence how services are being developed within your Primary Care Network, join the VMC Patient Participation Group.

# **Useful Local and Community Services in South Westminster**

## **COVID VACCINATIONS**

It is never too late to get your first, second or booster dose of the COVID 19 vaccine.

The nearest pharmacies to VMC offering Covid 19 vaccinations are the Warwick Pharmacy, 34-36 Warwick Way tel. 020 7834 4721 and Portmans Pharmacy 93–95 Tachbrook St. tel. 020 7834 2816.

## **OPEN AGE ACTIVITIES**

The charity Open Age organises a huge range of activities in South Westminster for anyone aged 50 and over to help them maintain an active lifestyle and develop a whole range of new and stimulating interests. Membership is free. All you have to do to join is to complete a membership form, available from the surgery or online at [openage.org.uk](http://openage.org.uk).

## **AGE UK WESTMINSTER**

Age UK offers support and services to older people from befriending to online digital skill training, social activities and transport services. If you or someone you know needs help, or you would like to volunteer, or you need information and advice please contact them by phone on 020 3004 5610.

## **MY HEALTH LONDON**

This website was developed by NHS England and the Mayor's Office and is now owned by London CCGs. It provides maps, contact information, opening times and service information for primary care, urgent and unscheduled care, community services and maternity services in London. The fact that it did not recognise my home address or postcode was a bit of a downer, but you could always try phoning 020 3049 444.

## **ONE WESTMINSTER**

The purpose of this charity is to find volunteers of all ages to support local charities. They also have four volunteering projects aimed at addressing local needs: Volunteer employment support to help the unemployed to find jobs, Befriending an elderly person, Learning disabilities volunteering and a Wellbeing chat service. Contact: 020 7723 1216.

## **COMMUNITY TRANSPORT**

Westminster Council offers a range of services to help keep you socially active and able to live independently. For information phone 020 8964 1114.

## **NHS 111 SERVICES**

NHS 111 exists to make it easier and quicker for patients to get the right advice or treatment they need, be that for their physical or mental health 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## **GET HELP FROM NHS 111 by phone – free from a landline or mobile phone**

Ringing 111 is a safe option if you have an urgent medical problem and are not sure what to do. A fully trained adviser will ask you questions about your symptoms and, depending on your situation, will:

- \* find out what local service can help you
- \* connect you to a nurse, emergency dentist, pharmacist or GP
- \* arrange for you to have a face-to-face appointment with a doctor if you need one
- \* be given an arrival time if you need to go to A & E
- \* be told how to get any medicine you need
- \* get self-care advice

You can ask for a translator if you need one. If you are deaf you can use the British Sign Language service: NHS 111 (BSL) interpreter service.

## **GET HELP FROM NHS 111 online**

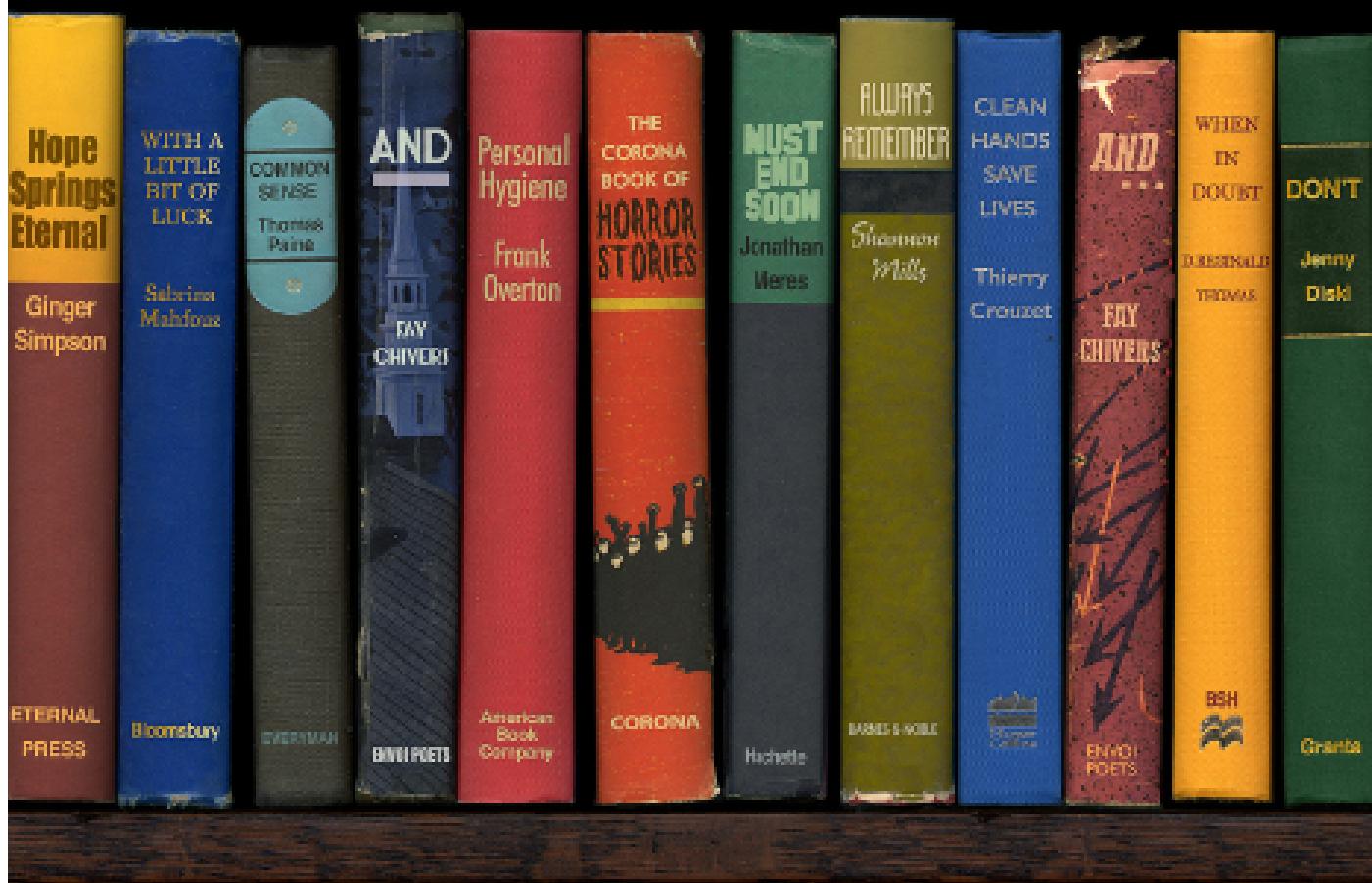
NHS 111 online can tell you

- \* where to get help for your symptoms if you are not sure what to do
- \* how to find general health information and advice
- \* where to get an emergency supply of your prescribed medicine
- \* how to get a repeat prescription

## **HEALTHWATCH CENTRAL WEST LONDON**

Healthwatch England is an independent statutory body whose purpose is to listen to the experiences of people who use local health and social care services. Healthwatch takes action where there is a problem, and makes sure that residents, patients and carers have a say in how their local services are shaped

Healthwatch Central West London works closely with the VMC PPG to help improve the quality of health and social care services in South Westminster. They are currently looking for young Healthwatch volunteers who live, work or study in and around Westminster in order to improve the mental health of young people in our community. For more information phone 020 8968 7049.



Contact Victoria MC and Lees Place MC by email: [CLCCG.VMC@nhs.net](mailto:CLCCG.VMC@nhs.net)

Contact the Patient Participation Group by email (on PPG matters only).  
Not to be used for clinical or practice related matters): [vmcppg@live.co.uk](mailto:vmcppg@live.co.uk)