

A message from the PPG Committee to all patients

WHAT'S NEW AT VICTORIA MEDICAL CENTRE?

Dear VMC and LPMC patients,

The announcement on 21 October that the Government is intending to create neighbourhood health centres is an unwelcome U-turn. In an article in The Guardian on 8 July under the headline, 'Health secretary wants to bring back family doctors', Wes Streeting promised that ministers would divert billions of pounds from hospitals to GPs to 'fix the front door to the NHS' so that 'millions of patients will be able to see the same family doctor at every appointment'. Instead of supporting GP practices he apparently now favours one-stop neighbourhood health centres. VMC patients know that their trusted practice has a highly qualified team of doctors, nurses and administrators dedicated to patients receiving the best possible treatment. Could an impersonal 'neighbourhood health centre' do better than that?

On the subject of working with big tech and pharma companies, the Government should beware that the lure of access to potentially unlimited funds must be set against the private sector's unhealthy interest in getting access to patient records for commercial gain.

Mary Orr, Chairman, Victoria Medical Centre PPG

The PPG newsletter is addressed to all patients because **all patients** automatically belong to the Patient Participation Group and are welcome to attend PPG events in the Group Room and receive newsletters by text message or by picking up a printed copy from reception.

Over the last few months the practice team has undergone numerous changes in staff, structures and hours of work. As a result, there are now more GPs and administrative staff doing longer hours than ever before, enabling the practice to increase its services in spite of cuts to its overall budget. In a long-awaited move to improve communications there is now a handsome new **VMC noticeboard** in reception listing all the available services with a letterbox inviting patients to leave messages and comments on their experiences both good and bad.

Here are some of VMC's extended services:

1. VMC is seeking to increase minor surgery provision.
2. VMC has increased the provision of diabetic clinics, sometimes offering all day clinics.
3. Every Thursday a primary care dietician (Elena Pop) runs an all-day service from VMC.
4. There is a new clinic for the over-70s run by Dr Thaxter every Thursday, by invitation, focusing on addressing the needs and well-being of a vulnerable group of patients.
5. Our new Care Co-ordinator, (C.J. Carrington), is contacting older patients by telephone in order to check on their health and well-being.
6. Dr Pucek is holding FREE Saturday morning sessions on How to Navigate Midlife Transitions for Better Health. The next sessions are on 16 November and 14 December from 9.00–11.00 am. See details over the page.



Alongside the VMC noticeboard in reception there is an informative **Pharmacy First screen**, part of a nationwide campaign to encourage NHS patients to make the most of their local pharmacies. Pharmacists are highly trained and trustworthy. Asking for their guidance can often quickly identify and deal with a problem – in some cases such as diagnosing shingles when speedy action can prevent the condition getting much worse. Alternatively, you can trust your pharmacist to give you sound advice if you think you might need to make an appointment with a GP.

The new telephone system installed two months ago is proving to be much better than the previous one that caused so much frustration. All calls are now recorded and no-one should be cut off after a long wait. If a patient complains about the service, the practice will be able to listen to their call and track their experience. There have been positive reactions to the new telephone system, particularly the new 'request a call-back' option, which is working very well.

Responses to the annual **Patient Survey** have been disappointing so the survey has been extended by two months. This is your chance to have your say about what matters most to you, the good things and the not-so-good. If you have not yet completed the survey either online or at the practice, please do so as soon as possible in your own interest.

Navigating Midlife Transitions for Better Health by Dr Mateusz Pucek

Dr Pucek's 3-part talk series is designed for patients, both men and women, who are navigating the physical, emotional and mental changes that often accompany midlife. The series will cover the interconnected aspects of mind, body and soul, offering a holistic approach to maintaining good health and well-being during midlife. Each talk will provide insights and steps that patients can take to improve their physical health, manage their emotional well-being and foster a sense of fulfilment and purpose.

Talk 1: Body – Manage changes in metabolism, weight and energy. Learn diet, exercise and lifestyle tips to prevent and manage chronic conditions.

Talk 2: Mind – Tackle stress, anxiety and emotional exhaustion. Reduce mental chatter, build resilience and practice mindfulness.

Talk 3: Soul – Find purpose and fulfilment. Reconnect with your passions and relationships.

Vaccinations save lives! Vaccinations for Covid, Flu and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) are still available. This new vaccination protects vulnerable patients from getting an often serious viral chest infection that occurs in the winter months. Patients aged 75–80 are entitled to this vaccination as well as pregnant women. Book in for an appointment. Don't miss out! VMC can vaccinate, test and screen you FREE for a whole range of illnesses through from childhood to old age. Make sure that your vaccinations are up to date by asking at reception and making an appointment with a nurse.

Open Age Activities. This autumn there are health and well-being activities in the Group Room every weekday for the over 50s. Check the PPG noticeboard and enrol in one of the sessions to enjoy one of the safe and sociable exercise classes.

The next PPG event will be on Tuesday 21 January on the topic of UROLOGY, covering diseases of the urinary system – from easily treatable urinary tract infections and incontinence to more serious bladder and bowel problems and prostate cancer.



Patient Participation Group

Join us at Victoria Medical Centre on

TUESDAY 21 January

Don't Suffer in Silence

A panel of speakers will give sound advice about the actions you need to take to avoid becoming seriously ill from diseases of the urinary system

**BLADDER AND BOWEL PROBLEMS
INCONTINENCE
PROSTATE CANCER**

symptoms, tests, treatments
Question and Answer Session

6.00 – 7.30 pm

Doors open 5.45

Group Room VMC, 29 Upper Tachbrook Street, SW1V 1SN