

# WALNUT TREE HEALTH CENTRE



PATIENTS PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG) SUMMER 2025

## WHAT IS SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

Social Prescribing is a non- medical approach to improve health and wellbeing by connecting individuals to community resources and activities that address their social, practical and emotional needs. It is a way that GPs and other healthcare professionals can refer to community services that can address issues such as loneliness, isolation and finance difficulties – all of which can have a major impact on their physical health.

There are four pillars of social prescribing that people can be referred to: physical activity, arts and culture, debt management and other practical advice and nature-based activities.

An example of a social prescription would be a health professional

Sourcing and encouraging lonely patients to engage in more activities such local groups, social activities, phoning family members, striking up conversations with neighbors or making coffee dates with friends.

Our Social Prescribers at Walnut Tree Health Centre are Charlotte Stone and Jackie Halpin. Please ask at reception or in your consultation for more details.

**Your PPG** is made up of volunteers who meet regularly with the practice to discuss and identify areas for improvement ensuring healthcare services are tailored to patient's needs. New members are always welcome.

**THE PATIENTS ASSOCIATION** is an independent patient charity campaigning for improvement in health and social care for patients in the U.K. They are non- disease specific and cover all health and care issues. Through their free phone help line they support thousands of people each year, helping them navigate the health and social care system. The Associations strategic goal is to embed patient partnership across the health and care systems. The Association wants everybody to be able to get the health and care services they need to live healthy, independent lives. You can read more on:

[weeklynews@patients-association.org.uk](mailto:weeklynews@patients-association.org.uk)

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There are three ways to make an appointment at Walnut Tree Health Centre:

1. Patients can use Engage consult on our website:  
[www.walnuttreehealthcentre.co.uk](http://www.walnuttreehealthcentre.co.uk)
2. By telephone on 01908 691123
3. In person at the surgery

The practice also has a facility for patients to be seen outside of normal hours at the Enhanced Access Services.

Please ask receptionist for more information.

Details and a wealth of information can be found on the practice website:

[www.walnuttreehealthcentre.co.uk](http://www.walnuttreehealthcentre.co.uk)

## **PHARMACY FIRST**

Pharmacists have always helped patients, families and carers in their communities stay well and healthy and are well placed to offer patients advice, for certain health conditions. Now by expanding the services of the community pharmacist the NHS is aiming to free up GP appointments and give people more choice in how and where they can access care.

Going to your local pharmacy offers a convenient way to get advice on minor health conditions :-

Earache 1-17 year olds

Impetigo 1-17 year olds

Infected insect bites – 1 year and older

Shingles 18 years and over

Sinusitis 12 years and over

Sore throat 5 years and over

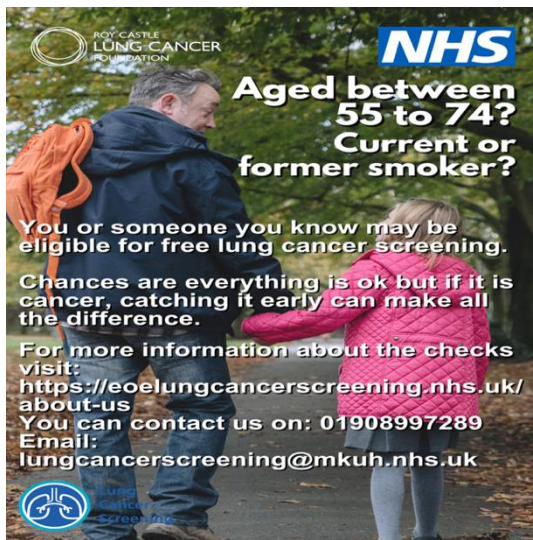
Uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs) Women 16-64

Don't wait for minor health issues to get worse – think of your local pharmacy first and get advice from your local pharmacist. Community pharmacists are highly skilled, qualified, health professionals who have the right clinical training to advise, treat you or signpost you to other relevant services where necessary, without the need of waiting for an appointment with your GP.

To find the service at a pharmacy near you : Find your Pharmacy link at

<https://www.nhs-services/pharmacies/>

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE WHO SMOKE**



**ROY CASTLE LUNG CANCER FOUNDATION**

**NHS**

**Aged between 55 to 74?  
Current or former smoker?**

You or someone you know may be eligible for free lung cancer screening.

Chances are everything is ok but if it is cancer, catching it early can make all the difference.

For more information about the checks visit:  
<https://eoelungcancerscreening.nhs.uk/about-us>  
You can contact us on: 01908997289  
Email: [lungcancerscreening@mkuh.nhs.uk](mailto:lungcancerscreening@mkuh.nhs.uk)

**Lung Cancer Screening**

The NHS is offering people who live in **Milton Keynes** aged between **55 and 74** who have ever smoked lung cancer screening to make sure everything is ok.

It's an appointment over the phone and maybe a scan.

Chances are everything is ok but if it's cancer, catching it early can make all the difference.

Keep an eye out for your invite by **text message** or **letter**.

For more information about the checks visit:  
<https://eoelungcancerscreening.nhs.uk/about-us>

You can contact us on: 01908997289  
Email: [lungcancerscreening@mkuh.nhs.uk](mailto:lungcancerscreening@mkuh.nhs.uk)



## **Protected Learning Times**

Kindly note that Walnut Tree Health Centre will be closed for protected learning times between 14:30 - 18:30 on the 18<sup>th</sup> June, 18<sup>th</sup> September 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025, and the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

This newsletter has been compiled by PPG Chairperson Janet Smith, with the help from, Anne Burkle.

# An update on weight loss medication, tirzepatide

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On 23 December 2024 the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published the Technology Appraisal in relation to tirzepatide (Mounjaro™) which is a new drug for managing obesity.

This medication is now available in Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes for certain groups of people with higher levels of obesity and at least four co-morbidities (other conditions). The medication is currently only available through our specialist weight management clinics, as we work through a process and undertake clinical steps before for this is available for patients on prescription.

In the short term this medication will not be available from GP practices, NICE have indicated in the guidance that it could take up to 12 years to make it fully available to the eligible population.

Please see the FAQs below, which provide more information on what this means for Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes residents.

## What is changing in the management of obesity because of NICE's announcement?

Tirzepatide is currently prescribed for the treatment of type 2 diabetes but is now available for weight loss purposes but only as described above.

People in England over the age of 18 who are living with obesity and another weight-related health issues will be able to access the weight loss drug tirzepatide through specialist weight management services from spring 2025, if they fit the eligibility cohort

## Who can access tirzepatide?

Eventually this medication will be available for people living with obesity who have a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or over and four other weight-related health problems; or a BMI of 37.5 and one weight related health problem; for people from South Asian, Chinese, other Asian, Middle Eastern, Black African or African-Caribbean ethnic backgrounds, who are at a higher risk of medical problems at a lower BMI.

## Can I access tirzepatide straight away?

Introducing this new treatment to NICE's estimated 3.4 million eligible patients requires the NHS in England to develop a completely new service for primary care and many healthcare professionals will need to be trained to deliver it.

A staged approach will help manage demand on existing healthcare services. This allows the safe prescribing of tirzepatide and the appropriate support for patients.

Tirzepatide will initially be offered to individuals facing the most significant health risks related to their weight, through specialist weight management services.

Tirzepatide will not immediately be available and will not be accessible to everyone who wishes to use it. Initially, tirzepatide will only be available on the NHS to those expected to benefit the most.

## How does tirzepatide work for weight loss?

Tirzepatide works by suppressing appetite centres in the brain that control gut hormones. It decreases the appetite and slows the movement of food passing through the body, making you feel fuller for longer.

Clinical trials have shown tirzepatide can help people living with obesity lose up to 20% of their starting body weight, depending on the dose and accompanying diet and lifestyle support.

Tirzepatide can only be prescribed by a healthcare professional alongside programmes which support people to lose weight and live healthier lives by making changes to their diet and physical activity.

Tirzepatide comes as an injection, which can be self-administered once a week.

## What if a patient is already receiving tirzepatide treatment?

Patients can continue taking tirzepatide if they are prescribed it to manage their diabetes.

If patients are using tirzepatide they have acquired privately, they may be able to access the medication through an NHS prescription if they meet the NICE and NHS qualifying criteria. However, patients should not gain advantage over other patients waiting for NHS care. More information about this will be made available in the new year.

## Will everyone who is eligible have access to the drug?

Tirzepatide might not be suitable for everyone and not everyone who meets the eligibility criteria will want to use it to support their weight loss. A healthcare professional will discuss the most appropriate care and support, based on individual patient's need. This could include behavioural support programmes, medical options including prescribing or bariatric surgery.

## The NICE announcement mentions 'wraparound' care. What does this mean?

Any patient prescribed tirzepatide must participate in the specifically designed 'wraparound' care required by NICE guidance. This focuses on diet, nutrition and increasing physical activity. As NHS England develops the service, it will provide more details of the wraparound support offer for patients who qualify. Patients cannot be prescribed tirzepatide if they do not wish to undertake the wraparound care support.

## Will there be a cost to the patient for being prescribed tirzepatide?

Normal prescription charges will apply unless you are entitled to free NHS prescriptions (for example, because you have a medical exemption certificate).

[www.blmkhealthandcarepartnership.org/an-update-on-weight-loss-medication-tirzepatide/](http://www.blmkhealthandcarepartnership.org/an-update-on-weight-loss-medication-tirzepatide/)