

## Spring 2026 Patient Newsletter

### Our Numbers for January-March 2026



We have a total of 10,831 registered patients



We receive an average of 1,304 phone calls per week



We processed an average 2,628 clinical documents per month



We carried out 10,749 appointments, of which 9,298 were face to face and 1,451 were telephone consultations



We had 337 missed appointments (patients who did not attend)

### Practice Opening Times

Here are our regular opening times:

Monday to Friday: 08:00 -18:30  
Saturday, Sunday & Bank Holidays: Closed

If you require urgent assistance outside these hours, please call NHS 111 or, in case of emergency, dial 999.

Here are our enhanced access hours for pre-bookable appointments:

Every Monday & Thursday: 18:30-20:00  
Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April & Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May & Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June: 09:00-17:00

### Dispensary Opening Times

Our dispensary is here to provide you with any prescribed medication and helpful advice on managing your prescriptions.

Monday to Friday: 08:00-13:00      14:00-18:30

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 the practice will be unable to accept prescription request over the phone for safety and accuracy purposes. Ordering medication online or in person is widely regarded as a safer and more efficient method. Online systems provide patients with greater control over their medication orders, helping to reduce waste by encouraging the ordering of only what is necessary. Most GP surgeries in the UK now recommend alternative, safer methods for ordering repeat prescriptions, including:

- **Online Services:** The safest and easiest way is through the NHS App or SystmOnline via the practice website. Please contact the practice for more information about these options.
- **In Person:** You can submit your request by returning the tear-off slip from a previous prescription or a handwritten note to the prescription box in the waiting room.
- **By Post:** You can mail your prescription request slip or written order to the practice.
- **Email:** You can email the practice at [ddicb.dispensary.ashbournehc1@nhs.net](mailto:ddicb.dispensary.ashbournehc1@nhs.net). A link will be available on the practice website.

Medication Dispensing: Most prescriptions will be ready for collection within 72 hours.

## Spring Covid-19 booster

Spring is on the way, and it's a good time to boost your protection if you're more at risk from COVID-19. COVID-19 hasn't gone away and a spring dose helps keep your immunity topped up.

Immunity reduces over time, even if you've had COVID-19 or previous doses. The spring vaccination can:

- Lower your chance of becoming seriously unwell
- Help you recover more quickly if you do catch the virus
- Reduce the risk of needing hospital care

We will contact you through texts, emails or letter to book an appointment if you are eligible. You can, also, call the practice or ask at reception during your next visit, our team will be happy to advise whether you are eligible for a free jab and answer any questions you may have.

Eligible groups include:

- Are aged 75 or over (including anyone turning 75 before 30 June 2026)
- Live in a care home for older adults
- Are aged 6 months to 74 years and have a weakened immune system (for example, due to a health condition or treatment like chemotherapy)



## Home Blood Pressure Readings- Important Reminder

We are currently receiving a high number of paper blood pressure diaries (around 60 per week). Processing these manually is very time-consuming and increases the risk of errors or inaccuracies.

If you receive a link from us to submit your home blood pressure readings, please use this link to send your results online. This is the safest, quickest and most accurate way for us to record your readings.

Please note:

- The link is valid for **7 days** from when it is sent.
- If your link expires, you can **contact reception to request a new one** or you will receive a reminder link after **3 weeks**.
- **Paper copies should only be submitted if you have been sent an official template by the practice.**

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us provide a safe and efficient service.

## PPG



PPG stands for Patient Participation Group. A PPG is a selection of patients who make a positive contribution to shape the services we provide. We are looking to relaunch our PPG. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Reception or sign up via our website:

<https://msw.fpm-group.co.uk/edit/PatientParticipationGroupPages/Signup>



## Help Us to Help You - Digital

Since introducing our new digital system earlier this year, we would like to thank all patients who have engaged with questionnaires and online booking. Your support is helping us improve how we deliver care. We are now moving into the next phase of this system, where you may notice:

- More regular questionnaires to support monitoring of long-term conditions and medication
- Invitations to book appointments via secure links, helping you access the right clinician more quickly
- Continued work to align annual reviews with your month of birth, making care more consistent and easier to manage

### **Why this matters**

Using digital tools allows us to:

- Review your health information more efficiently
- Prioritise patients who need more urgent care
- Offer appointments with the most appropriate clinician
- Reduce waiting times on the phone

### **A quick reminder**

If you receive a message from us:

- Please complete any questionnaire as soon as possible
- Follow the booking link if an appointment is requested
- Don't worry if the message doesn't include full details — the clinician will discuss everything with you at your appointment

### **We're here for everyone**

We understand that digital access doesn't suit everyone. If you:

- Do not use a smartphone or the internet
- Prefer to be contacted another way

Please let us know, and we will ensure you are supported through alternative methods.

### **Help us help you**

Keeping your contact details up to date and responding to messages promptly helps us provide safe and timely care, including issuing repeat medications and arranging follow-ups.

### **Your feedback**

We continue to review and improve the system and welcome your feedback.

## NHS App

The NHS app is a secure digital service from the NHS that allows you to access range of health services on your smartphone or tablet. You can use the app to access services at the practice such as requesting repeat prescriptions, checking test results, booking (some) and managing appointments and reading messages from the practice and wider NHS teams.

The NHS App is available on iOS and Android



## Meet Your Care Team: Healthcare Assistants (HCAs)

### HEALTHCARE ASSISTANTS (HCAs)

Healthcare Assistants work under the guidance of a nurse. They help with routine health checks and provide patients with general health and wellbeing advice.

**They can help with:**

- Health checks such as blood pressure monitoring, ECG, taking blood samples etc...
- Vaccinations and injections
- Healthy living advice e.g. stopping smoking and weight loss
- Dressings and stitch removals.



This quarter we are highlighting our Healthcare Assistant, Sylvia. She plays an important role in supporting your care and helping appointments run smoothly.

Why might I see a Healthcare Assistant?

You may be contacted by text or email and asked to complete a short questionnaire and/or book an appointment. In many cases, you'll first attend for blood tests or routine checks, such as blood pressure, weight- these are usually carried out by our HCA or phlebotomist before your main review.

These checks give us up-to-date information so we can monitor your condition and make sure your medication remains safe and effective. Attending these appointments helps avoid delays to your care and ensures your medication can be safely continued.



## Medication Reviews – Why They Matter

A medication review is a regular check-up of the medicines you are taking. It helps make sure everything is still right for you.

Over time, your health needs can change. You might be prescribed new medicines or some treatments may no longer be needed. A medication review gives you and your healthcare team a chance to look at this together.

### **Why is a medication review important?**

- To make sure your medicines are still safe and effective
- To check if you still need all your current medications
- To reduce the risk of side effects or medicines interacting with each other
- To answer any questions you may have about your treatment
- To help you get the best results from your medicines

### **What happens during a review?**

Our clinical pharmacists will:

- Go through all the medicines you are taking (including over-the-counter ones)
- Ask how you are getting on with them
- Check for any side effects or concerns
- Make changes if needed (such as stopping, starting or adjusting doses)

### **How can you help?**

- Please complete questionnaires regarding your medication as soon as possible
- Please book your appointment as soon as you receive a text message inviting you to do so
- If your medication review is overdue, we will only be able to issue prescriptions **2 weeks at a time** until your review is completed

### **Remember:**

Medication reviews are an important part of your care. They help keep you safe and ensure your treatment is working as well as possible.

## NHS Friends and Family

Patient feedback is essential in helping us provide the highest standard of care. By sharing your experiences, you enable the practice to deliver services which support the health and wellbeing of our community.

You can access the feedback form using the link below or via our practice website:

<https://www.ashbournemedicalpractice.co.uk/FriendsAndFamilyPages/FullSurvey?SurveyId=23440>