



**OAK TREE SURGERY &  
PENSILVA HEALTH  
CENTRE**

**To be leaders in the health and wellbeing of  
our staff and patients**



# SPRING NEWSLETTER

## A MESSAGE FROM DR GILBERT

As always, I'd like to thank all our patients for your continued support of the practice. As we welcome spring there have been several important developments recently, both nationally and within our surgery, and I wanted to update you on what they mean for you.

### **National GP Contract Headlines**

You may have seen recent headlines about the new GP contract and the requirement for all urgent patients to be seen on the same day. We want to reassure you that this is something we are already doing and are fully committed to continuing. Providing timely, safe, and effective care remains at the heart of our service.

### **Welcoming Two New Doctors**

We are delighted to welcome two new GPs to our team: Dr Silhanova and Dr Harnett. Both bring valuable experience and enthusiasm, and we are very pleased to have them join the practice. We hope you will give them a warm welcome over the coming weeks.

### **Electronic Prescribing Now Live**

We have now been live with Electronic Prescribing (EPS) since the 22nd January 2026. This has been a significant change for the practice and has involved many adjustments behind the scenes. Already, we are seeing benefits in terms of efficiency and medication safety. Thank you for your patience and understanding while we have been implementing these necessary updates.

### **Annual Reviews Moving to Birth-Month Scheduling**

From April, we will be moving all patients to a system where annual reviews take place during the month of your birthday. During the transition, some patients may be invited earlier than expected so we can align everyone with the new schedule. We appreciate your cooperation as we make this change, which will help streamline recalls and make things clearer for patients going forward.

### **Measles Outbreak – Please Check Vaccination Status**

There is currently a significant measles outbreak in London, primarily affecting unvaccinated children, and leading to several hospital admissions. The UK has now lost its measles-free status with the World Health Organization. Measles is a highly contagious illness that can cause serious complications and, in some cases, can be life-threatening.

Please ensure that you and your children are up to date with the MMR vaccination and all other vaccinations. If you believe you or your child may have missed a dose, contact the surgery, and we will be happy to arrange vaccination where appropriate. Vaccinations save lives.

# Spring Covid Clinics



The spring COVID vaccination programme is approaching! We will be sending out invites to our eligible patients from the 31 March 2026.

## Eligibility criteria:

- Aged 75 or over (including anyone turning 75 before 30 June 2026)
- Residents in care homes for older adults
- Aged 18 to 74 years with a severely weakened immune system (immunocompromised)

## Clinic dates:

18 April 2026 – Oak Tree  
25 April 2026 – Pensilva  
Time: 09:00–13:00



Housebound patients will be contacted directly with their vaccination visit date. If eligible, they will also be offered the RSV vaccination at the same time.

Care home patients will receive their Covid vaccination as part of care home reviews during April and May.

## Missed Appointments

In February, there were 222 missed appointments at Oak Tree Surgery and Pensilva Health Centre. This accounts for over 3300 hours of our clinician's time, and wastes vital NHS resources. These missed appointments could have been used by other patients if they had been cancelled in time to rebook.

If you need to cancel or change an appointment, you can do this:

- by telephone – call us on 01579 32 42 52.
- in person – speak to one of our receptionists at either site.
- online – if you are registered for online services via Patient Access or NHS App
- online – through our website

**Please help us to maximise appointment availability.**



# Month of Birth Recalls

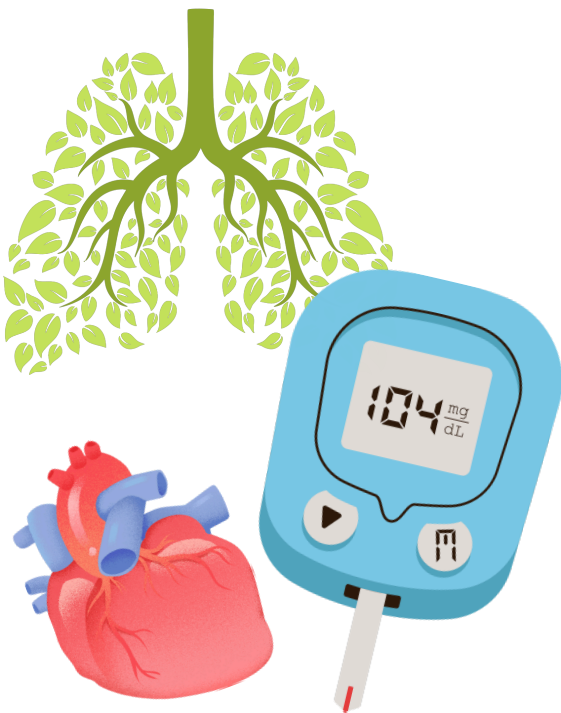
From April we will be returning to a Month of Birth recall for Chronic Disease Reviews.

## Benefits:

- This system will make it easier for patients to remember their appointments
- Improves efficiency
- Ensures consistent monitoring of conditions.

## Booking

If you have a chronic disease (such as asthma or diabetes etc), you will receive an invite to book your annual review(s) the month before your birthday. You will receive a text message with a self booking link or a request to contact the Surgery. If you do not have a mobile phone we will write to you or call you. If you require a review for more than one condition, we will aim to consolidate these into a single appointment, minimising the number of visits or calls for patients ensuring Every Contact Counts.



As we transition back to this process, some patients may find that their annual reviews are initially less than 6 months apart, but please ensure you book your review if invited.

Annual reviews are an important part of Chronic Disease Management as they provide an opportunity to monitor a patient's condition, adjust medication(s) and prevent complications.

# Childhood Immunisations

## MMRV

The MMRV vaccine has recently been introduced to the routine childhood immunisation schedule. The MMRV helps protect children against measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox (varicella).

These infections spread very easily between people and can lead to serious problems including meningitis, inflammation of the brain (encephalitis), pneumonia, and hearing loss.

The MMRV vaccine is recommended for young children as part of the NHS vaccination schedule.

The number of doses children are given depends on when they were born. Some older children will have already had 1 or 2 doses of the MMR vaccine which also protects against measles, mumps and rubella, but not chickenpox. If due, we will contact you via text message or letter.

Please note that we do not offer the Men B vaccination for individuals over the age of 2. It can be obtained privately elsewhere, though this will incur a cost.

With the recent outbreak of meningitis & measles, ensuring your child is up to date with their immunisations is even more important.

## Meningitis outbreak: what you need to know

### What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is a serious but uncommon illness caused by meningococcal bacteria. It can lead to meningitis - inflammation of the lining of the brain - and sepsis. The onset can be sudden, which is why knowing the signs and symptoms, and acting quickly, is so important.

### How is the disease spread?

Transmission of MenB requires close and prolonged contact to spread including living in the same household and intimate contact such as kissing or sharing drinks or vapes. The bacteria are not as contagious as other infections such as measles and COVID-19.

### Symptoms to look out for include:

- a rash that does not fade when pressed with a glass
- sudden onset of high fever
- severe and worsening headache
- stiff neck
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- joint and muscle pain
- dislike of bright lights
- very cold hands and feet
- seizures, confusion or delirium
- extreme sleepiness or difficulty waking

If you or someone you know develops these symptoms, seek medical help urgently by going to your nearest A&E or calling 999. If a friend goes to bed unwell, check on them regularly.

# Patient Participation Group – PPG



The aims of the Patient Participation Group (PPG) are:

- To facilitate good relations between the GP practice and patients by communicating patient experience, interests and concerns and providing feedback to the practice on current procedures and proposed new developments.
- To work collaboratively and positively with the practice to improve services and facilities for patients and to act as a sounding board for practice staff on issues affecting patients.
- To build two-way communication and co-operation between the practice and patients, other individuals and organisations in healthcare, and the wider community.
- To act as a representative group to support the practice and influence local provision of health and social care.

We are always looking for patients to join the PPG; if you are interested, please speak to the receptionist. Additionally, we are very keen to set up a “virtual group” as we are aware of patients who may like to join but cannot attend meetings through work commitments, child care, housebound or those in a care home (or their carers/relatives).

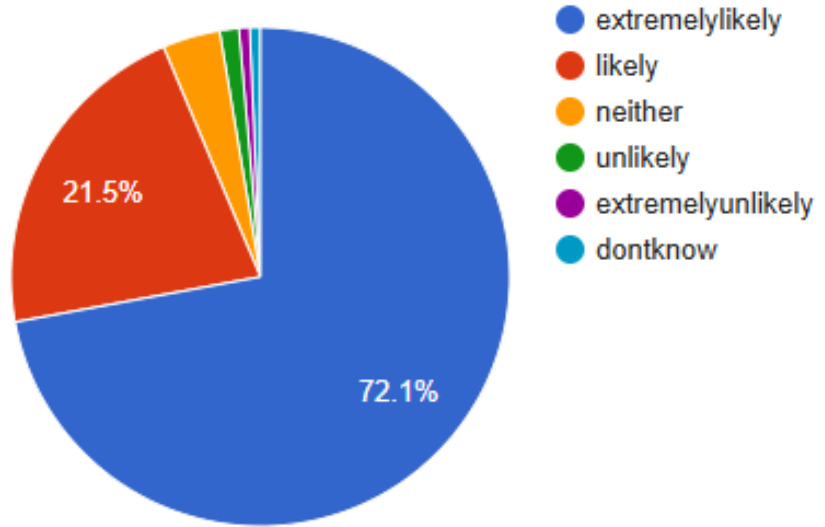
I recently attended the launch of The Chestnut Appeal for Men’s Health Guide for men recovering or dealing with prostate, penile or testicular cancers. There is currently no NHS screening programme for prostate cancer. I would encourage any patients who are concerned about prostate symptoms to have a look on the NHS website or contact their GP for advice. You may be offered a blood test called a PSA test if a doctor thinks you have symptoms that could be prostate cancer. If your symptoms are caused by cancer, finding it early may mean it's easier to treat.

David Jones  
PPG Chair

# March 2026 Feedback

*How likely are you to recommend us to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment?*

*We are continually looking to turn our patients' feedback into real improvements in the services we provide. We use it to focus on the things that matter most to our patients, carers and their families. Please use the form on our website for suggestions and feedback.*



*Please let us know as soon as possible if you change your address, telephone number or name. It is important that we have up to date contact details in case we need to contact you.*



*Contact us online, provide feedback, complete travel risk assessments and find all of our practice information on our website.*



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




Oaktree Pensilva



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