



THE VILLA MEDICAL CENTRE

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2025

Welcome to our Summer newsletter! As we enjoy the longer days and (hopefully!) some sunshine, we want to keep you up to date with the latest news from the surgery. Inside, you'll find updates on our services, important reminders, and information about upcoming seasonal campaigns. As always, we're here to support your health and wellbeing—so whether you're heading off on holiday or staying local, we hope you have a safe and healthy summer!

Included in this newsletter is information on:

- Prescribing weight loss medication
- Health and Wellbeing Service
- Travel Vaccinations
- NHS App
- Medicines waste campaign
- Private prescription prescribing
- Gluten free prescribing
- Flu clinics
- Additional blood test clinics
- Cervical Screening (Smear) recall changes

Prescribing of weight loss medication

From 23rd June 2025, the prescribing of Mounjaro (tirzepatide) in General Practice will follow updated NHS criteria.

Are you eligible for Tirzepatide through the NHS to support weight loss?

The NHS is using a gradual approach to prioritise treatment for certain patient groups who should be able to access this medication first. To be able to access the drug in the first 3 years, patients must meet the criteria we have outlined below.

Cohort 1 (from 23rd June 2025) eligibility criteria are:

- A BMI of at least 40
- AND at least 4 of the following:**
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Heart disease (cardiovascular disease)
- Obstructive sleep apnoea
- Abnormal blood fats (dyslipidaemia)

We are also able to refer any of our patients into Brighter Birkenhead PCN Health & Wellbeing service, who can provide support with weight management.

Cohort 2 will begin as of 23rd June 2026 under the following criteria: At least 4 of the 5 health conditions listed above plus a BMI of 35 to 39.9.

Cohort 3 will start from 1st April 2027 under the following criteria: At least 3 of the 5 health conditions plus a BMI of at least 40.

Our practice has been receiving requests from private providers to review patient notes to ensure it is safe for them to prescribe weight loss medications. Your prescriber is responsible for examining and monitoring you to ensure prescribing this medication is safe.

For further information please visit our website:

<https://villamedicalcentrewirral.nhs.uk/private-weight-loss-prescribing/>

Health and Wellbeing Service



We offer a health and wellbeing service to our patients to help connect them with non-medical support available in their community. Rather than just focusing on medications or clinical treatments, the team looks at the wider social, emotional, and practical needs that might be affecting someone's health. The team can help with problems such as stress, low moods, feelings of loneliness, anxiety, poor sleep and weight worries. We can offer a referral to them team for one-to-one support as well as group support which is listed below:

- **Weight Management:** 3-week course for individuals trying to lose weight, going over lifestyle changes & resources to help with weight loss.

This is held in Birkenhead Library every Monday (first course: 28/07 - 11/08)

- **Self-Management:** 4-week course for individuals living with long-term health conditions, or low-level mental health problems who are looking to improve their wellbeing and take back control of their daily lives. We go over coping strategies, stress management, lifestyle changes and useful resources.
- This is also held in Birkenhead Library on Wednesdays (next course is planned to go ahead for 16/07-13/08 - with a one-week gap in between)
- We are also planning on starting a **Women's Health group** in a few months to support women with areas such as menopause, via coffee/ drop-in sessions (location TBC)

If you feel like one of these groups would be useful for you, please contact reception via PATCHS for a referral.

Travel Vaccinations

With the summer holidays fast approaching we are receiving more requests for Travel Vaccinations.

Travel Vaccination Forms are available from reception and must be returned to us **at least 8 weeks before travel**. Our Practice Nursing Team will determine what vaccinations are required depending upon which countries and areas you are visiting.

Alternatively, private travel clinics also offer travel vaccinations.

Not all travel vaccinations are included in the services provided by the NHS such as Malaria tablets and Yellow Fever vaccinations.

We are unable to issue prescriptions for Diazepam or any other sedatives due to fear of flying.

For further information please see our website:

<https://villamedicalcentrewirral.nhs.uk/diazepam-for-a-fear-of-flying/>



NHS App

Using the NHS App is the best way to manage your healthcare efficiently and securely. It allows you to book appointments, order repeat prescriptions, access your medical records, and receive important health updates all in one place.



The app saves time, reduces the need for waiting in phone call queues or visiting reception, and gives you more control over your health, anytime and anywhere. If you experience problems when registering with the NHS App, or do not have photo ID, please let us know.

Please do not contact the GP surgery by telephone to order repeat prescriptions. To help us process requests efficiently and reduce phone line congestion, please use the NHS app or designated prescription ordering services. If you need assistance, feel free to ask at reception or via email. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Medicines waste Campaign



The Medicine Waste campaign is a UK-wide initiative aimed at reducing the estimated £300 million lost annually due to unused or over-ordered prescription medicines. This wastage not only strains NHS resources but also poses safety risks and environmental concerns.

How can you help?

There are several ways that you can help to reduce the issue of wasted medicines and save money for your local NHS.

Only order the medicines that you need

- Please let your GP or Pharmacist know if you've stopped taking any of your medicines
- Check what medicines you still have at home before re-ordering
- Discuss your medication with your GP or Pharmacist on a regular basis
- Think carefully before ticking all the boxes on your repeat prescription forms and only tick those you really need
- If you don't need the medicine, please don't order it! If you need the medicine in the future, you can still request it.
- If you need to go into hospital, please remember to take all your medicines with you in a clearly marked bag.
- Please also remember that your medicines are prescribed only for you; it's not safe to share them with anyone else.

Remember that unused medicines cannot be recycled

- Even if you never open them, once medicines have left the Pharmacy, they cannot be recycled or used by anyone else.
- Please bring your unused medicines to the Pharmacy for safe disposal.
- NEVER dispose of your unused or unwanted medicines down the toilet

Unused medicines are a safety risk

- Return out of date medicines to your pharmacy or dispensary for safe disposal
- If your medicines change - return your old medicines to the pharmacy for safe disposal to avoid mixing them up with your new medicines
- Don't stockpile medication - it is a safety risk for children and others who might take them
- Store medicines in an appropriate place out of reach of children

Private medication prescription

Please note that we are unable to prescribe private medications such as period delay tablets (e.g. norethisterone) or malaria prevention tablets.

These types of medications are classed as private prescriptions as they are not considered essential treatments under NHS guidelines.

They are usually related to personal choice (such as travel or event planning) rather than medical necessity. As a result, they must be obtained through a private consultation with a pharmacy or travel clinic.

We understand this can be inconvenient, but we thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Gluten Free Prescribing

Following a recent public consultation, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board has agreed that prescribing of gluten free bread and bread mixes will stop for adults aged over 18.

However, prescribing can continue for under 18s (until 28 November 2025) with coeliac disease or another diagnosed condition which means they need to follow a gluten free diet



Flu Campaign

This autumn we are once again urging eligible patients to get their flu vaccine. **Flu vaccines are safe and effective.** It is best to have your flu vaccination in the autumn or early winter before flu rates increase. Remember that you need it every year, so don't assume you are protected because you had one last year.

From 1st Sept we will be offering flu vaccination to the following:

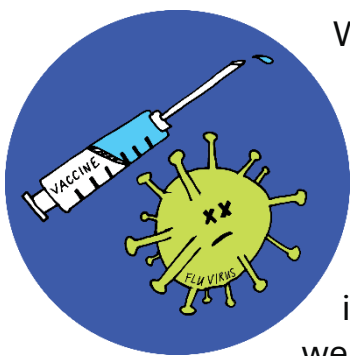
- Pregnant women
- All children aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2025

From 1st October we will be offering flu to the following:

- Those aged 65 years and over
- Those aged 18 years to under 65 years in clinical risk groups
- Those in long-stay residential care homes
- Carers in receipt of carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an elderly / disabled person
- Close contacts of immunocompromised individuals

From 1st October, we will also be offering winter covid boosters to:

- Adults aged 75 years and over
- Residents in care homes for older adults
- Individuals who are immunosuppressed aged 6 months and over



We will be holding clinics Flu vaccination clinics on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays throughout October.

Please support your surgery by having these vaccinations here, keeping much needed funds inhouse. General Practice is severely underfunded; we do not get the increase in NHS funding that is announced in the press.

Help us to help you by supporting us during these campaigns.

In addition to the phlebotomy (blood test) appointments we provide at the surgery, our patients can access the following services who offer a range of dates and times:

Clatterbridge Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC)

GP patients aged 16+ can now book in for blood tests at the Clatterbridge Diagnostic Centre.



It is based at [Clatterbridge Hospital Clatterbridge Road, Wirral CH63 4JY](#)

They accept blood forms which have been issued by General Practice or hospitals. Please ensure your blood test has been requested before booking an appointment.

Appointments can be made via the link below

<https://wuthnhs.simplybook.cc/v2/#book>

Brighter Birkenhead PCN Phlebotomy



Blood tests are provided from [St Catherines Health Centre, Derby Road, Birkenhead CH42 0LQ](#).

They accept blood forms which have been issued by General Practice or hospitals. Please ensure your blood test has been requested before booking an appointment.

Appointments can be made by our reception team.

Home visits can only be arranged for patients who are **housebound**.

Important changes to smear recalls

The NHS Cervical Screening Programme saves thousands of lives every year by checking for high-risk Human Papilloma Virus (hrHPV) which causes almost all cervical cancers.

All women and people with a cervix between the ages of 25 and 64 should go for regular cervical screening. You'll get your first invitation a few months before you turn 25.

In England, women and people with a cervix are currently invited every 3 years between the ages of 25-49 and every 5 years if aged 50-64 years.

From 1 July 2025, there will be changes to some of the recall periods for cervical screening (smears).

Routine cervical screening intervals will be extended from 3 to 5 years for participants aged 25-49, who test **negative** after attending cervical screening on or after 1st July 2025.

You'll get an invitation through the NHS App, by text or by letter asking you to make an appointment.

Please see overleaf for details of our Brighter Birkenhead PCN smear drop-in clinics. Appointments are also available with our Practice Nursing Team.

SMEAR TEST DROP-IN CLINIC

at St Catherine's Surgery, 2nd floor St
Catherine's Health Centre
every Wednesday 2pm-6pm

We can provide advice and support for you to have
your smear test.

NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED.

Cervical Screening Saves Lives #DontFearThe Smear



This clinic is provided by Brighter Birkenhead PCN and is for Devaney MC,
Hamilton MC, St Catherine's Surgery, Riverside Surgery, The Villa MC and
Whetstone MC patients only