

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2026 YOUR Benfleet Primary Care Network patient group representing YOUR seven local surgeries (~48,000 patients), highlighting health updates, local news and support groups.

A New Year, New Style celebrating 7 for 7!



Welcome to the Benfleet PCN PPG e-newsletter. This is the year of 7 for 7, as our PCN Benfleet has partnered with our seven local surgeries for seven years. During that time, we hope that you have met some or all our members of PCN patient group (PCN PPG) either at local community events or directly.

It will always be a priority for our PCN PPG to continue raising awareness and encouraging the public to join their own surgery PPG.

This way you can ensure that your surgeries remain connected with their patients. Contact your surgery or email us if you are interested in joining your PPG.

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NHS News

SAVING MORE LIVES FROM BOWEL CANCER



NHS England has now lowered the threshold to apply for a home-screening kit. This will enable more urgent cancer testing by the NHS to check thousands more people identified, with even smaller traces of blood in their poo.

The home-testing kit, known as the faecal immunochemical test (FIT), is offered to all people over 50 years old and checks for blood in a small stool sample, which can be a sign of bowel cancer.

By reducing the level at which traces of blood in a FIT test trigger further investigation – from 120 micrograms of blood per gram of poo down to 80 – the NHS will offer 35% more screenings each year to help diagnose or rule out bowel cancer. [Find out more.](#)

IS YOUR CHILD ELIGIBLE FOR THE MEASLES VACCINATION?



Vaccination is important to ensure the long-term health of your child, and of the nation as a whole and since the introduction of the measles vaccine in 1968, more than 20 million measles cases and 4,500 deaths have been prevented in the UK.

Sadly 2025 saw an increase in measles cases, taking the number to the highest it has been in decades so if you or your child are not yet vaccinated, you should make an appointment to see your GP practice. [Find out more.](#)

TRANSFORM A STRESSFUL HOSPITAL VISIT INTO A CALM AND ACCESSIBLE EXPERIENCE



Few things are more frustrating than visiting a hospital, like knowing the building but not the department, or struggling to find parking, especially with mobility issues or supporting someone who does.

AccessAble solves these problems. Just enter the department and venue to get detailed info on its location, accessibility features, and nearby toilets.

Their Detailed Access Guides provide comprehensive facts, figures, and photos about a venue's accessibility, including restaurants and hotels, so you can easily determine if a place meets your needs. [Find out more.](#)

Your Surgery News

UPDATE: RESTORING SERVICES TO THE HOLLIES BUILDING



We are pleased to confirm progress in restoring services at the Hollies GP Surgery building. Subject to final legal confirmation and safety checks, the practise team is working with NHS Mid and South Essex to begin restoring services before the end of March. As part of this transition, the practice intends to change the name from Hollies surgery to Rectory Road Surgery, marking a fresh start as services return.

Full services are still ongoing during this period, which includes face-to-face appointments at various locations such as GPHA (opposite Lidl Hadleigh), Leigh Primary Care Clinic, and Rushbottom Lane Surgery.

The Hollies phone lines are open as normal on 01702 416966 and non-urgent online consultations are available using Accurx's online consultation tool. You can also request repeat prescriptions through the NHS App. [Find out more.](#)

NEW FUNDING FOR RUSHBOTTOM SURGERY ENABLES APPROX. 8000 ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENTS A YEAR



Patients at GP practices across Mid and South Essex will benefit from improved access to care and improvements in their local surgeries, thanks to over a quarter of a million pounds of national investment.

Eight local GP practices successfully applied for the national funding from NHS England to support improvements to their buildings.

Rushbottom Lane Surgery was one of the successful practices and are now able to convert existing space into one additional clinical room and one virtual consulting room. This enables staff to offer more face-to-face, video and telephone consultations. [Find out more.](#)

HADLEIGH LIBRARY DIGITAL SKILLS SESSIONS



In liaison with The Hollies and the ICB, Hadleigh Library recently hosted free digital skills sessions aimed at boosting people's digital confidence. These sessions covered setting up an email address, staying safe online, and navigating app stores, including the NHS App. The initiative was a great success, and more sessions are expected to be planned in the future.

Some of our PCN PPG members booked sessions and found them useful, here's what they had to say:

Rob Lillis, PPG Member, Essex Way: "All quite straightforward. I had already downloaded the NHS app, so this was a great refresh."

Cheryl Kirby, PPG Member, St George's Medical Practice: "The training enabled my husband to appreciate the benefit of using the NHS App including how it links with notification of hospital appointments provided through Patient Knows Best portal."

Community Support

#REFLECT ON YOUR BEHAVIOUR



If your behaviour has crossed a line, it's time to #Reflect and make a change. In partnership with Southend, Essex, and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB), Essex Police's #REFLECT campaign is here to help tackle domestic abuse across Essex.

Since launching, over 2,000 people have asked for advice, and 40 have taken the step to self-refer to a behaviour change programme.

Break the cycle of abuse and visit [Essex Compass](#). Seek help today.

NEW COMMUNITY HUB FOR WOMEN'S WELLNESS



The Benfleet PCN Social Prescribing Team is proud to host the Women's Wellbeing Support Group, designed to nurture and support women on their journey to better wellbeing.

Attendees will hear from clinicians, holistic and wellness experts on the topics that matter most. From navigating the complexities of the menopause and mental health to practical sessions on nutrition, exercise, and mindfulness, you'll leave with the tools to take charge of your own health journey.

The group meets fortnightly on Wednesdays, 12:30pm to 2:30pm at the Burrell Wellbeing Centre (formerly known as Thunderley Methodist Church). For further details, please contact the Social Prescribing Team on 07762945927 or social.prescriber1@nhs.net.

HHH: Hopefully Helpful Hints!

HOW TO USE A QR CODE



For this guide you can use the QR code above to practice on, it leads to the Benfleet PCN website.

1. Open the Camera app on your smartphone or tablet.
2. Point the camera at the QR code so it fits within the frame.
3. Wait for a notification or link to appear on the screen.
4. Tap the notification or link to access the associated content.

HOW TO DOWNLOAD ANY APP ON YOUR PHONE



For this guide we will use the NHS app as an example.

1. Open the Camera app on your smartphone or tablet.
2. Point the camera at the QR code so it fits within the frame.
3. Wait for a notification or link to appear on the screen.
4. Tap the notification or link to access the associated content.

You can also access NHS services through a web browser by logging in via the NHS website.