

The Acorn Group Practice 2026 Spring Newsletter

It's such a lovely time of year, with fruit trees 🌳 bursting into white and pink blossom 🌸. These small moments in nature can quietly lift our well-being and support our mental health as we move through busy days. 🌻

The Acorn Group Practice Patient Participation Group (PPG) has produced this newsletter to help keep our community informed and supported. We aim to engage with all patients including those who may not visit the Practice often and share updates on services, public health topics, and the PPG's work to enhance patient experience and overall, well-being. We hope you find it both informative and helpful.

GP's and clinicians consultation days

Dr Branko Momic – Male GP

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

Dr Barbara Christie – Female GP

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

Dr Aman Sharma – Male GP

Wednesday and Friday

Dr Hannah Lawrence – Female GP

Monday, Thursday and Friday

Dr Sabeen Faraz – Female GP

Monday, Tuesday and Friday

Zain Hashmi – Male Physician Associate

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

Sonia – Clinical Pharmacist

Wednesday and Friday

Esther – Clinical Pharmacist

Tuesday and Thursday

Gemma – Senior Practice Nurse

Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

Samia – Phlebotomist

Monday and Thursday

Locum Healthcare Associate

(a trained healthcare support worker who works on a temporary, flexible basis, to help the practice maintain smooth, safe patient care)

Tuesday and Friday

Bank Holiday closures

May Bank Holiday: May 4

Please order your prescriptions early & allow extra time for pharmacy to fill them.

Health and Wellbeing Calendar

April 2026

Stress Awareness Month: Increasing public awareness about stress & management strategies.

Bowel Cancer Awareness Month: 1-30 April
<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-awareness/bowel-cancer-awareness-month>

World Immunisation Week 24-30th April
<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-immunization-week>

Lesbian Visibility Day: 26 April
Transitioning into May campaigns.

May 2026

National Walking Month: Encouraging walking and physical activity.

Dying Matters Awareness Week:
4 to 10 May

Promoting conversations about end-of-life care stories

World Hand Hygiene Day: 5 May
Aiming to prevent healthcare associated infections.

Deaf Awareness Week: 6 to 12 May
focusing on hearing loss awareness.

Mental Health Awareness Week: 11 to 17 May, promoting mental wellbeing across the UK.

International Nurses Day:12 May, celebrating nursing contributions.

ME Awareness Week:
2 to 18 May, Raising awareness of Myalgia Encephalomyelitis.

Learning at Work Week:
18 to 24 May, promoting lifelong learning at the workplace the workplace.

Staff Spotlight: **Gemma, Senior Practice Nurse**

This month, we're delighted to shine a spotlight on Gemma, a delightful and dedicated senior practice nurse. Since joining Acorn in January, Gemma has been making a meaningful difference to patients and families alike, bringing compassion, experience, and an individualised touch to every appointment.

Q: What does a typical day look like for you? My day starts early with reviewing patient lists and preparing for a busy clinic. No two days are the same — I might be giving baby immunisations, supporting someone with wound care, or helping with contraception or long-term condition reviews. I work closely with the team to make sure everything runs smoothly and that patients feel cared for from the moment they arrive.

Q: What inspired you to become a nurse? I began by studying fine art and art history. It was only after working in a nursing home that I realised how much I loved caring for people. That experience changed everything for me, and I decided to train as a nurse. Since then, I've worked in school immunisation teams, specialist diabetic nursing, and family planning services.

Q: What skills do you think make a great nurse? Listening is key. Empathy, patience, and a genuine desire to help others matter just as much as clinical skills. I also think it's important to keep learning — healthcare changes quickly and staying up to date helps us give the best care possible.

Clinical Trials Day:20 May, celebrating research contributors.

Global Accessibility Awareness Day:21 May, promoting digital access and inclusion.

World Pre-Eclampsia Day:22 May, raising awareness of preeclampsia impacts and causes.

Q: Why are childhood vaccinations important? I work with many young families, and I know how reassuring clear information can be. The updated MMRV vaccine now includes protection against chickenpox (varicella), which is an important change. These illnesses can be more serious than people realise. Vaccination protects your child and, also vulnerable groups like babies and older adults.

Q: What advice do you give patients before an appointment? I always suggest writing down any questions beforehand. It helps you get the most out of your time with us. And support doesn't end when you leave — we're here for follow up calls or messages if you need them.

Q: What do you enjoy outside of work? I love walking, going to the theatre, painting, sculpting, and spending time with my family. I'm originally from Madrid, so I treasure trips back to Spain to reconnect with friends and family.

MMRV Vaccine NHS Poster content information

From January 2026, the MMRV vaccine will be part of the routine childhood immunisation schedule.

It protects against:

- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Chickenpox (Varicella)

Who needs it?

Children born on or after 1 January 2025 should receive:

- 1st dose: at 12 months
- 2nd dose: at 18 months

This schedule gives the strongest protection against all four diseases.

Vis-à-vis update

We welcome any families with visually impaired children who would like to connect, learn, and share experiences in a warm, supportive space.

This year's meetups have already been full of energy and insight:

January – Celebrating World Braille Day:

Anna Newson, QTVI from ESSI, delivered a brilliant talk on Braille, its history, its future, and how it empowers independence.

February – Independent Living Skills:


Sarah Harvey, Habituation Officer from ESSI, shared strategies for building confidence at home and beyond. One of our VI teens joined her, giving a fantastic first-hand account of preparing for university life. From cooking meals to tackling chores with humour and pride.

March – EHCP Reform Through Creativity:

We enjoyed a hands-on, interactive session where we built “trees” to explore the current EHCP reform in a tactile and approachable way.

April – Achieving for Children

Sarah Pearce, Parent/Carer Engagement Lead, guided us through the local support

 Our next meeting is Tuesday 12th May 2026 6-7pm

What's new on the NHS

App

Growing Features & Easier Access

The NHS App now has nearly 40 million registered users, with record numbers logging in each month to manage their health.

Patients can now track their prescriptions Amazon style at almost 2,000 pharmacies — seeing when medication is being prepared and when it's ready to collect.

A new family access feature allows parents and carers to manage health tasks for loved ones more easily.

🕒 Better Appointment Management

Over 400,000 GP appointments are booked or cancelled through the app every month.

The NHS is improving the GP booking journey to make it clearer, smoother, and more reliable.

Patients on certain hospital follow up pathways (PIFU) can now request follow up appointments directly through the app, with this feature expanding nationally.

💊 Repeat Prescriptions Made Even Easier

NHS App users now make over 6 million repeat prescription requests every month, a 38% increase since 2024.

Each digital request saves GP practices around 3 minutes of admin time, helping surgeries like Acorn Group Practice free up staff for patient care.

❤️ Access to Your Health Information

Patients viewed their GP health records 20.8 million times in November alone.

The government plans to introduce a single, unified patient record by 2028, viewable in the app.

Coming Soon

The NHS App is evolving into a complete digital front door to the NHS, allowing: Self-referrals to services like mental health support and physiotherapy remote consultations.

How to order prescriptions on our website

<https://theacorngrouponpractice.co.uk>

Select "Prescriptions" from the main menu.

Click "Order a Repeat Prescription"

Log in using your Patient Access details.

Choose the medication you need and submit your request.

- Allow 3 working days for the prescription to be processed.
- processed to your nominated pharmacy
- The pharmacy will let you know when it is ready to collect.

Prefer apps to websites? You can order your repeat prescriptions quickly and securely through the NHS App — anytime, anywhere.

Our local digital care co-ordinator, Patrick Okoye, provided an update on the latest improvements to the app. Patients who need help registering or using the app can contact him directly:

Patrick Okoye

Digital Care Co-ordinator

Southwest London Integrated Care System

Working days / hours:

Tuesday - Thursday 09:00 – 17:00

T: 020 3922 1544

E: Patrick.Okoye@swlondon.nhs.uk

Practice update

The Spring COVID-19 vaccine has been a great success. If you have not received an invitation, please contact the practice and ask to be added to the list for the next round in the Summer. You can get a COVID-19 vaccine if you:

- are aged 75 or over (including those who will be 75 by 30 June 2026)
- are aged 6 months to 74 years and have a weakened immune system because of a health condition or treatment
- live in a care home for older adults.

You can also book through the app or call local pharmacies or go to a walk-in clinic near you.

Our team remains highly motivated and dedicated to providing excellent care to all our patients. We look forward to continuing to support your health and wellbeing.

Thank you for reading our Spring Newsletter. We wish all our patients a happy, healthy, and uplifting season ahead.

If you are interested in becoming a PPG member, we would love to hear from you. Simply visit our website at <https://theacorngrouponpractice.co.uk> & navigate to the PPG link at the bottom of the homepage