



The Winchcombe Medical Centre
Patient Group

Newsletter

Welcome to our Winter Edition 2025

How Can I Become A Member?

All patients of Winchcombe Medical Centre are eligible to become members of the Patient Group. There is no membership or joining fee and no training is required.

We undertake various activities throughout the year including the support of vaccination clinics, helping to arrange events such as men's and women's health talks, school health awareness days and we are soon to start fundraising for the Practice. We currently have a vacancy and would be delighted to hear from anyone who is interested in joining us.

A "Winchcombe Live Longer Better" event is being held at Abbey Fields Community Centre on 16th May 2025, where people will be able to talk to a variety of organisations that provide support in the community. The session is available from 11.00am to 3.00pm so please come along. Abbey Fields is at Back Lane, Winchcombe, Cheltenham GL54 5QH.

As always, we welcome any views you have on the services offered by the Medical Centre. Please let us know at wmcpgenquiries@gmail.com

Graham Ogden
Winchcombe Medical Centre Patient Group



Winchcombe Medical Centre News

Update from Winchcombe Medical Centre

To all our patients,

We wanted to update everyone about the 'Anima' access system that is in use at the surgery. We realise some people are unhappy with the new system and hopefully, it will be helpful for us to share with you some of the differences we have noticed since making the change and the reasons for these.

The simple truth is that our previous access model was not working for patients, doctors or clinicians. It was causing long delays for appointments, reduced continuity of care, patients being seen in the wrong type of appointment and unmanageable workloads for staff within the practice.

Why were things not as good?

We are busier than ever:

- Medicine is always advancing and GPs can now perform a greater range of tasks.
- People's problems are more complex as society ages and more and more is expected within GP surgeries.
- The Winchcombe population continues to grow.

Consequently, demand on your surgery has sky-rocketed. We estimate that we are seeing 40-50% more patients in 2025 than we were in 2018/9. However, NHS and Government has not increased funding for us. Indeed, we receive **less funding** in real terms than we did in 2018/19.

Unlike other types of business, more activity does not bring more funding. We can't raise income by introducing fees or charges (nor do we want to). The NHS caps funding to GPs at around 31p per patient per day on average. This is less than most people pay for their pet insurance. We are given a fixed sum to cover our 8000 patients whether they come in once a year, once a month or every day!

This is why there has been a change. We are not funded to offer the level of service we used to although we desperately want to do so.

Why Anima?

Since we only have a finite number of appointments, we need to make sure they are used as effectively as possible. Anima helps us ensure those with the greatest need are seen first. When it is safe to wait a bit longer, patients are seen by the best person who can help.

Since introducing Anima

We have been able to reduce the proportion of our daily appointments that are used for urgent problems – many urgent queries are now dealt with by the local pharmacy, the respiratory hub or by email. These released appointments have been converted to routine appointments.

Routine appointments

The wait for routine appointments has reduced and we have better continuity of care and we are now more often able to get patients to see their usual doctor or the doctor who has been looking after a particular problem. The wait time on our phone system has reduced significantly. We are able to arrange useful tests and investigations BEFORE your appointment which makes your appointment more useful and frequently saves you time waiting for further follow up appointments



We need good information from you to make decisions about your care and strongly encourage you to use the online system. It can seem tedious but it gives your doctor the information needed to give you a speedy and safe response.

No system is perfect, but 'Anima' lets the doctors see in detail the nature of your request and how help can best be given. That means urgent matters are prioritised and there is less chance of them being missed.

It also frees up our phones for people who need to access services this way. For people who cannot use an online system our reception team are still on hand to help complete the questions over the phone.

Requests per day

We can only safely deal with a limited number of requests a day and 'capacity' is reached at some point. The system has to close when the maximum safe number of requests have been received for which we can offer appointments. Our phone lines are open all day for very urgent contacts that really cannot wait until the next day. We are always working on ways to increase our capacity so that our system can be kept open for longer periods. For instance, we have recently set up new skin clinic where more patients are seen in shorter appointments. We are hopeful of further investment from NHS England and the Department of Health to allow us to increase staff levels and appointments.

We know that the system is not perfect and that some of our patients find it frustrating. We continue to try and provide the highest level of care and remain very grateful for your support.

Melissa Parsloe
Practice Manager

You don't always need to see a GP

#RightCareFirstTime



Armed Forces veteran
friendly accredited
GP practice

OTHER NEWS

Stay well in winter

Winter conditions can be bad for our health, aggravating any existing health problems and making us more vulnerable to respiratory winter illnesses. It's not just your physical health that can suffer during cold weather; it's important to think about your mental health too. Lack of sunlight, miserable weather and the cost of living can put a strain on our wellbeing. Have a look at these tips on practising self-care this winter.



<https://www.andovermind.org.uk/5-top-tips-to-take-care-of-your-wellbeing-this-winter/>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-rea...well-this-winter-transcript-of-audio-version/>

For older patients



With the withdrawal of the winter fuel allowance, you may be feeling extra financial pressure when it comes to keeping warm this winter. If you're in receipt of a means-tested benefit, you can still receive the winter fuel payment. But if you're not, or even if you'd just like to save some money while warming up, have a look at these cost-effective tips to warm you up during the cold winter months.

If you have health or mobility issues, it can be very difficult to get out and about to see people. Loneliness can take its toll on their mental health. No one deserves the sadness of feeling lonely. Find support here:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/benefits-entitlements/winter-fuel-payment/>

<https://www.redcross.org.uk/stories/health-and-social-care/health/tips-on-keeping-warm-this-winter>

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/benefits-entitlements/winter-fuel-payment/>

NHS App

If you're new to using the NHS App and you're not sure how to access the information, there is lots of information around to help you. Download the NHS App on your smartphone or tablet via the Google play or App store. You can also access the same services in a web browser by logging in through the NHS website.

Did you know that using the NHS App can help you access lots of information about your health?

Request repeat prescriptions

Check the status of your prescriptions

See upcoming appointments

View your health records

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/nhs-app-help-and-support/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0SCcLtw8JA>

Find your NHS Number

Need to know your NHS number but can't remember where you wrote it down?

Don't worry! Find it here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/online-services/find-nhs-number/>

Eating Disorders Awareness

In the UK, at least 1.25 million people are living with an eating disorder. That's at least one in 50 people, and the signs can be really difficult to spot. Although eating disorders are complex mental illnesses, they can affect anyone of any age, ethnicity, gender or background, and early intervention is essential. Discover more about how you can help those around you who may be suffering. #EDA aims to improve awareness and help save lives. If you're worried that you're suffering from any form of eating disorder, we're here to listen and support you. Please make an appointment with our (Nurse/GP).

Useful telephone numbers			
Winchcombe Medical Centre	01242 602307	School Nurse	0300 421 6161
District Nurses	0300 421 6070	Children's Helpdesk (Child Protection)	01452 426565
Cheltenham General and Gloucester Royal Hospitals	0300 422 2222	Childline	0800 1111
Tewkesbury Hospital	0300 421 6100	Relate—Relationship Support	01242 523215
Ambulance/Police/Fire Emergency Service only	999	Gloucestershire Carers Hub	0300 111 9000
Police Non-Emergency Helpline	101	Cheltenham Samaritans	<u>116 123</u> free from any phone
NHS Non-emergency service	111	Gloucestershire Adult Helpdesk (Social Services)	01452 426868
Physio	0300 422 2507 (Cheltenham), 0300 421 6133 (Tewkesbury)	CRUSE Bereavement Counselling	01242 252518
Health Visitors	0300 421 6166	Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board	0300 421 1500