

**Dear VMC and LPMC patients,**

Newsletter readers will be aware that all patients automatically belong to the Patient Participation Group and are welcome to attend PPG events in the VMC Group Room. You can also receive newsletters by text message or by picking up a printed copy from reception. Please make sure that the practice has your up-to-date mobile phone number so that you do not miss important updates.

The PPG resists the tyranny of Apps that increasingly exclude many patients from the very best medical care. Together the practice teams and the PPG strive to reach out to all patients regardless of their age, state of health or ability to navigate the internet. If you want to leave a message for someone on the VMC team whether it is updating your contact details or enquiring about a service, or queries about your medication, you can either phone 020 7834 2298 and press option 3 for Reception, or hand a note in person to a receptionist, post a message in the letterbox on the new VMC notice-board next to the pharmacy or email the practice on [nhsnw1.vmc@nhs.net](mailto:nhsnw1.vmc@nhs.net).

Over the last few months there has been an increase in aggressive behaviour by a few angry patients. Remember that we are privileged to be in the care of one of the finest GP practices in Central London and should treat all staff with respect. We understand that patients are often in a state of anxiety, but the practice cannot tolerate rudeness and aggression to its staff. Let me make it clear that persistently rude and disruptive patients risk being removed from the patient list.

Following the theft of valuable interactive screen and audio equipment from the Group Room, security has been ramped up at VMC with more CCTV throughout and locks on internal doors. The toilets continue to be vandalised in spite of a 'Patients Only' notice on the doors. As a result they are now monitored by CCTV. Please note that the street doors are now locked and alarmed at 6.00 sharp every day and the practice is not open at weekends.

With best wishes, **Mary Orr, Chairman, Victoria Medical Centre Patient Participation Group**

### VMC FACE-TO-FACE APPOINTMENTS

Sometimes it is important for patients to set up face-to-face appointments. The practice welcomes requests for in-person consultations, which could be with another health care practitioner rather than a GP if appropriate. There are excellent nurses with special interests, and dedicated clinics for various conditions as well. Nurse Practitioner Ruth Thurlow provides Asthma and COPD services every Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon. Patients who are struggling with their condition or medication are welcome to request a face-to-face appointment with Ruth.

We have just had this feed-back from a patient who had problems with a new type of inhaler. "The nurse was brilliant. She listened patiently and gave me time to talk about the problem, then explained that I had the option to keep my old-style inhaler but it would contain a new recipe without CFCs. All my worries have gone away."

Another patient fell over whilst running and sustained a deep cut to her chin. She sent photos and was seen within a few hours by Dr. Thakore who successfully stitched the wound back together in the minor surgery clinic, saving the patient a long wait in A and E. The result was very good indeed and the patient was most grateful.



My name is Hanna-Kay Henry. I am a Health-Care Administrator at VMC. In addition to my core administrative responsibilities, I also have to troubleshoot wherever there is a crisis in order to keep the practice running smoothly behind the scenes. One of my most rewarding jobs is to welcome and train all new non-clinical staff until they have settled into their roles. I am passionate about creating a positive workplace and enjoy organising staff social events. I also work with the PPG whenever they need help. In my spare time I am a trustee of a charity that provides support for the education of children and the well-being of vulnerable elderly people in the most poverty-stricken countries in the world.

Best wishes, Hannah-Kay

## COVID BOOSTERS

Free NHS Spring 2025 Covid-19 vaccine boosters are now available for patients aged 75 or over (or who will turn 75 soon). Covid-19 infections occur all year round and can be hard to avoid. It is important to top up your protection because it fades over time and variants can change. Older people are at increased risk of getting seriously ill. Having the spring COVID-19 booster will reduce your risk of severe symptoms. The final date to get your vaccination is 17 June. Don't delay, book an appointment at a local pharmacy offering vaccine boosters today.

## LUNG DISEASE

The nationwide charity Asthma and Lung UK helps people with lung disease. It offers services and support so no-one has to face it alone. It funds vital research into understanding, treating and preventing lung disease, it promotes greater understanding of the disease and campaigns for positive change to the nation's lung health. Their helpline is 0300 222 5800. **Breathe Easy Westminster** is its free Support Group for people who are affected by lung conditions. Friends, family and carers are all invited for activities and socialising. The Support Group holds two monthly meetings:

**IN-PERSON** Top floor, Ada Court, 10–16 Maida Vale, W9 1TD on the 3rd Monday of every month from 11.00 am – 2.30 pm. Refreshments are available.

**ONLINE** A meeting on Zoom on the 1st Friday of every month from 12.30 – 1.30 pm

Ring Megan on 079548 641438, or email [breatheeasywestminster1@gmail.com](mailto:breatheeasywestminster1@gmail.com) for more information.

## THE FALLS TEAM

Feeling wobbly or a bit frail? Why not self-refer to the Central London Falls Team. The NHS Falls Prevention Service aims to prevent falls and unnecessary admission to hospital by seeing older people before a bad fall occurs or after a fall to rebuild strength, balance and confidence. The Falls Team investigates your needs thoroughly, including memory and balance checks. You need to have the ability to leave home, and willingness to engage in a group physical activity programme. If you are unable to complete a self-referral form digitally you can contact the Falls Team by phone or email and someone will help you. Their helpline is 020 8102 5555 – option 0, or email: [clcht.spa@nhs.net](mailto:clcht.spa@nhs.net).

### LASTING POWERS OF ATTORNEY LPAs

Whatever your age, everyone should set up two LASTING POWERS OF ATTORNEY in order to appoint someone you trust to make decisions (1) about your health care and (2) about your financial matters. A legally valid LPA is an insurance in case you lose your mental capacity for whatever reason.

For instance, whether as a result of a car crash, a sporting accident or the onset of dementia you know that your finances and care will be in safe hands.

If you leave it too late you will lose control of your decision-making with potentially disastrous consequences on the quality of your care.

**Age UK Westminster offers a full LPA service, guiding you step-by-step through the entire process. This is a paid service. For more information phone 0203 004 5610.**



**WITH WEIGHT-LOSS  
MEDICATIONS**

**WATCH THIS SPACE!**

as we will be holding a PPG event with experts ready to help everyone who is considering using these medications