SPRING 2025

GREYSTOKE GAZETTE

The daffodils are out and spring is in the air. Hopefully the winter bugs have passed for another year!

Here at Greystoke, we have some new staff and services to introduce….

**Dr Yusra Abdalla** has now finished her GP training and we are very pleased to wecome her as a permanent part of our Greystoke Team. Yusra enjoys……

**Dr Adam Vaughan** is due to finish his GP training in August andwill be joining us a permanent GP at the practice in September. Dr Vaughan can fit contraceptive implants and will be restarting our minor surgery service in September.

*'I am excited to be restarting Greystoke's Minor Surgery Service this year! This will be a valuable service for patients, offering local treatment without the need for referral elsewhere. A waiting list will open in June, with the first minor surgery clinic scheduled for September.*

*Procedures will include removal of warts, moles, skin tags, and cysts. Please note we will not be offering cryotherapy as this is not funded, lesions will be removed by excision instead. The NHS does not fund cosmetic treatments, so to qualify for removal at Greystoke, it must meet one of the following criteria: Causes pain or discomfort; Bleeds regularly (e.g. if caught on clothing); Gets infected when traumatised; Obstructs vision. If your skin lesion does not meet these criteria, or you wish to explore cryotherapy, you will need to seek private treatment options. More complex procedures will still be referred to the hospital for treatment.'*

**Amy Stewart** is our new Practice Nurse

 **Liz Brown** is out new Healthcare Assistant

**Kate Stephenson** is due to finish her Nurse Associate training shortly. Having worked as an HCA at Greystoke for 20 years, she will now be able to extend her scope of practice and work closely with practice nurse team.

We have a number of new administrative staff including **Hayley Jones** and **Rachel Taylor** who will be working in the reception area.

We continue to work with a wide range of allied health professionals. Many of you will have met **Kayleigh and Rachael**, our Advanced Nurse Practitioners. They have undergone extensive training in order to provide a wide scope of independent practice. When a triage is received by the duty doctor, they will decide who the most appropriate clinician is to see that patient, and this may not be a doctor. We have some patients that feel they may only want to see a doctor, but this is not always possible, nor necessary.

**Sophie and Miles**, our musculoskeletal practitioners are specially trained, beyond the expertise of most GPs in this area of medicine. They can assess and advise, arrange investigations and interventions and refer onto orthopaedics if required.

We also have **Jack Lees**, our Clinical Pharmacist and our Pharmacy Technician team including **Louise Davison, Lucinda Hornsby and Shannon Catling.** Their scope of work includes medication reviews, managing medicine requests and queries and primary prevention work with high blood pressure and cholesterol.

For mental health support, we have **Bev, Nic and Kerry**, our mental health practitioners who can arrange telephone or face to consultations. There is also a very useful resource called 'The Bothy' which is based in Ashington. Open daily, no appointment is required and there is lots of practical support including finances and housing:

<https://www.everyturn.org/crisis-support/safe-havens/>

**Healthy Living and Lifestyle Changes**

The good weather makes many of us decide to start a health kick and we have a whole team of people here to help you:

**Helen Hindhaugh** our Health and Wellbeing Coach. Helen can talk through a wide range of health challenges, creating personal goals in a sensitive environment.

Health Coach – particularly helpful for patients wanting to lose weight or target health issue such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Our clinicians and nurses can refer you.

**Weight drop-in** – 8.15-9.15am every Wednesday at the surgery

**Exercise on prescription** – you can be referred by our health and wellbeing coach or one of the other healthcare professionals.

**Healthy eating** – <https://selfhelp.cntw.nhs.uk/self-help-guides/food-thought/useful-organisations>

**Stop Smoking** – <https://www.stopsmokingnorthumberland.co.uk/support>

Our link worker, **Lisa Baker** is available for dementia support.

*'I'm part of the Social Prescribing Team at Well Up North Primary Care Network covering Greystoke Surgery.*

*I provide ongoing support to patients and their families through the diagnosis of Dementia and living with the condition. As well as offering signposting advice and guidance to all Carers and Veterans.*

*I help patients identify ways that could benefit their health and wellbeing. It's a listening ear and helping hand to link you to appropriate services, groups and professional assistance, such as social activities, peer support groups, benefit advice, bereavement support, or anything else when you just don't know who to ask for help.*

*To request support please speak to reception or a member of staff at the surgery.'*

**Veterans**

We are a veteran friendly practice and keep a register of patients who have trained or served at any point during their lives. Veteran status can be noted on referrals to provide priority appointments. Please let our reception know if you would like to be added to our register.



**Hayfever Season**

With the good weather, however, comes the pollen count! If you are prone to hayfever, it is a good idea to start treatment now, before your symptoms become too manifest. Your local pharmacists can advise regarding the best treatment for you, including antihistamines, nasal sprays and eye drops. We would ask that you try to buy these treatments over the counter wherever possible, as this can save the NHS large amounts of money every year. The supermarkets often have generic, cheap versions of these preparations which work just as well.

**Opiate and Gabapentinoid Drugs**

A number of patients receive prescriptions for these medications every month and there is a national policy to try to reduce prescribing due to side effects and risk of patient harm. There are occasions where strong painkillers are necessary, such as for cancer pain, or after surgery, but they generally do not work for chronic pain and can cause unpleasant symptoms and dependency. Initial benefits tend to wear off, as the pain receptors soon become accustomed to the drug and the body requires more and more to achieve the same effect. This then becomes an unhealthy reliance. We will be seeking to limit and reduce prescribing, with the support of our pharmacy team. Non-pharmaceutical options for pain relief can be explored, including the Living Well With Pain Service.

**New Website**

The new website should be up and running from May. We hope this will be easy to navigate and we will continue to develop this over the coming months.

**Helping us to help you**

We conducted an anonymous survey with our admin staff to see how it felt to work here as a GP receptionist. We know it is a very difficult job. Comments included:

*'I find it really difficult when a patient will not give me any information as I am just trying to help'*.

**If the receptionist is asking about your symptoms, it remains confidential within the team and helps speed up the triage process to get you the help you need. They are not being nosey.**

*'It can be really difficult when we are trying to get through to hospital departments on behalf of patients'.*

**A lot of our work involves liaising with other services and hospital departments. This can take time and we will always try to keep you updated.**

*'I felt supported by the GP Partners when I had a difficult patient experience'.*

**Unfortunately, our staff sometimes face unpleasant or intimidating interactions. This is infrequent, but please speak to them as you would your own family. Without them we have no practice.**

*'Patients can be frustrated when their prescription is not ready, even though we have sent it'.*

**We aim to turn prescriptions round within 48hrs. It should show on the NHS App if items have been issued. Please try to keep your contact details up to date.**

*'ANPs have extra training and qualifications and are a vital part of the primary health care team. They boost capacity significantly and avoid more patients being asked to attend other services'.*

**It is disheartening when our ANPs are told that patients don't want to see them, or that they are 'just a nurse' (demoralising comment for any nurse also!). A doctor will triage the request, but the appointment will be with the most suitable person in the team that day. Without ANPs, the waiting time for appointments would go up and access would e reduced. ANPs are not Physician's Associates and are not 'nurses doing doctor's work'. They are trained specifically in the advanced role to allow them a great breadth of independent practice.**

*'Please allow plenty of time for car parking'.*

**Unfortunately, we are not sure we will find a solution to this one! If you are able to, please park off site locally, or arrive early for appointments. If we can all be mindful of the elderly patients, pregnant ladies, small children, those acutely unwell or disabled people, that really need to park here. Thank you.**

**Drs Marshall, Shaw, Jerram and Willey**