

# Nightingale News

**THE NEWSLETTER FOR PATIENTS AND STAFF AT THE NIGHTINGALE PRACTICE**

Welcome to our Autumn 2023 edition! Read about what's going on at the Nightingale practice and about the Together Better project that offers a variety of social events and classes.

This is *your* newsletter. We want to include information that's relevant to you, so tell us what you think. You can leave a note at the Nightingale Reception, marked 'FAO Practice Manager Jill White' or email Jill at the following address: [nelondon.nightingalepractice@nhs.net](mailto:nelondon.nightingalepractice@nhs.net)

**NIGHTINGALE IS VOTED ONE OF THE BEST HACKNEY PRACTICES – AGAIN!**

Nightingale staff can take a pat on the back! Our surgery, together with Stratham Grove surgery in Stoke Newington, is one of the two best surgeries in Hackney. That's according to patients who took part in the latest GP Patient Survey.

NHS England commissions the GP Patient Survey annually. This year's results show 71% of patients nationally describe their GP as 'good'.

But, for the Nightingale and Stratham Grove, 93% of patients who responded to the survey said their overall experience of their practice is 'good'. That's a whopping 22% above the national average! And, for the Nightingale, it's an encouraging 6% increase since the previous survey.

The Nightingale is said to be better at ensuring patients usually get to see or speak to their preferred GP (49% compared to 35% at Stratham Grove). But 81% of patients at the Stoke Newington practice say they find it easy to contact the surgery by phone, compared to just 72% at the Nightingale.

In summary, looking at six core questions asked about 'accessing the practice' and a further six core questions asked about 'the appointment experience', the Nightingale scored above the national average on all 12.



On 28 September, we held a Macmillan Coffee Morning at the Nightingale surgery and raised more than £400 this very worthwhile cause. Thank you so much, if you took part!



\*\*\*\*\*

Details about the best and worst Hackney GPs, as rated by patients, are on the Hackney Gazette website. The link is also available from the Nightingale website.

At the last Friends of the Nightingale meeting, Doctor Nisha Patel presented the latest survey results and said the practice was, of course, delighted. However, she acknowledged there are still areas that require work at the Nightingale. One of those is providing better telephone access.

Dr Patel said the Nightingale is recruiting for two receptionists. This will help reduce the length of time it takes to answer calls. We will also be changing from an analogue phone system to a cloud-based system with features that will offer improved access to patients. (See article over.)

## CLOUD-BASED TELEPHONY IS COMING

All GP practices must have switched to cloud-based telephony by March 2024. Cloud-based telephony is a phone system that operates through the internet as opposed to using traditional 'copper wire' phone lines. It offers the practice more options around various services that can help both patients and staff.

At the last Friends of the Nightingale meeting, Dr Nisha Patel spoke about the Nightingale's new cloud-based telephony contract. She said, after many meetings and quotes from the nominated suppliers, we have shortlisted two companies. Each offers a couple of extra services we like.

One offers a 'jump to the head of the queue' service for palliative patients. The other offers call back for queue positions. We are asking both companies for more information and a decision will be made soon.

The Friends' meeting also heard that the Nightingale's telephone messages can be confusing for patients. Practice Manager Jill White said we are aware of this. Jill said she had recently attended a Hackney Healthwatch meeting about practice telephone messages and that Hackney Healthwatch had prepared a list of important items to be added to those messages. The Nightingale will liaise with Hackney Healthwatch before changing our messages or ask members of the group to listen to new messages for their advice before they are used.

Healthwatch Hackney is our local health and social care champion. They make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. Find out more at [www.healthwatchhackney.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchhackney.co.uk)

## DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THE HEARING AID CLINIC AT THE NIGHTINGALE?

Did you know there is a hearing aid clinic held at the Nightingale every month? It's run by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID). The clinic provides advice and support for people who wear a hearing aid.



Hearing aids can be quite difficult to manage and they take some getting used to. Don't worry. We can help you with basic maintenance of your hearing aid, battery replacement, new tubing, ear mould cleaning and minor repairs.

The clinics are free. They are held on the 1st Wednesday of each month from 2pm - 4pm at the Nightingale Practice in Kenninghall Road.

Please note: you can't just walk in. You need to book an appointment with **Sharon James** by calling her on 020 3227 6044 or 07551 063 742. Sharon also has an email address if you prefer to contact her that way: [sharon.james@rnid.org.uk](mailto:sharon.james@rnid.org.uk)

The RNID is a national charity that supports people who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus. There's a lot more information on their excellent website at [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

## A BOLT FROM THE BLUE – OUR NIGHTINGALE IS STRUCK BY LIGHTENING

On the August Bank Holiday weekend, a bolt of lightning struck the main entrance to the Nightingale Practice and blew our alarm system. Thankfully, nobody was hurt and damage was minimal but Practice Manager Jill White was working until past 10pm on the Saturday, making sure the building was safe and secure.

The next week, however, the lighting-related troubles continued when the automatic door at the main patient entrance refused to work. This meant patients had to walk round to the back of the building to get in. A big shout out and many thanks to **Jill**, **Jeanette** and **Olga**, whose Bank Holiday was disrupted but who rose to the challenge.

## PLANS TO IMPROVE NIGHTINGALE RECEPTION AREA

The Nightingale has been given a pot of money by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to spend on small practice adjustments and improvements.

We would like to spend the money on making the Perspex screen in Reception a permanent feature, using glass. This will help prevent infection. It will also ensure patient confidentiality while the receptionists at the front desk are on the phones or talking to patients in person. We would also like to update the blinds in the building. The ones we have now are old and broken.

The Friends of the Nightingale meeting in August welcomed this good news and agreed to the ICB money being spent on these items.

One of the patients at the meeting commented that the practice Reception has limited space for patients with small children. We used to have a designated area for children. Unfortunately, new regulations mean we can no longer have books and toys in the waiting area because of infection control. However, we will look into possibly providing small chairs and a table for children.

## A MESSAGE FROM DR NISHA PATEL



“From the beginning of September, I’m taking a sabbatical for six months so I won’t be working at the practice for that time.

“I have decided to take some leave, to spend a bit more time with my family, and I will also be doing some work supporting other local practices with their appointments planning.

“I’ve been at the practice for 19 years now, and I’m going to miss being there for the six months I’m away! But I’m sure the time will fly by and I look forward to seeing you again at the end of February.”

## AND A MESSAGE FROM DR JAMES FORDHAM

Dr Fordham is also leaving us for a while but, like Dr Patel, he promises to be back.



“It has been a huge privilege to be a part of this special practice for the past six and a half years but 17 October will be my last day working here (for now) as I am going abroad with my young family for six months, before the oldest starts school.

“But I will hopefully be back at some point, so this is goodbye and not farewell!”

## HOW TO HELP YOUR DOCTOR HELP YOU

A question some Nightingale patients have been asking is: why don't the doctors like us to come to see them with more than one thing wrong at a time? We think we are saving the doctor's time if we come with a whole 'shopping list' of things that are wrong with us, but that approach doesn't always seem to be welcome. What's the reason behind that, please, and how can patients help the GPs to help them?

We put this question to Dr Nisha Patel and she said: "It is sometimes possible to deal with more than one thing during an appointment - and it is important for us to hear the list of things that are wrong, because they may be issues that are related. However, there will be times when we can't deal with lots of issues in one consultation, if we are to deal with them properly. We see 38 patients a day, as well as going on home visits and actioning the paperwork we have to do. So, unfortunately, we just don't have enough time. We could rush through each thing on your list, but that wouldn't be the best care we can give you."

"The best approach is to have your list, consider what you might think of as priorities, and then ensure you consult again for the other issues. It is important to remember that some issues are better dealt with by other health care professionals who are more qualified than GPs in particular areas eg physiotherapists and pharmacists."

## LOST PHOTO SPEAKS OF STRONG WOMEN – BUT WHO ARE THEY?

We've all seen old photos in junk shops. Smiling faces from years gone by. Holidays, long gone. Weddings, now forgotten. Children proud in their 'Sunday best'. Before Instagram, these images were treasured by families. Now it's just someone's life in a box.

Who cares? Well, one Hackney resident does. Jane Elliott says: "I was looking for photo frames in the RSPCA charity shop in Clapton, near the surgery, when I came across this beauty. I was so intrigued

by the image I couldn't destroy it for the frame. These women look so determined and proud."



Jane has approached **Nightingale News** in the hopes someone will recognise this group above and get in touch. Who are they and what were they doing? Was it a paid job or are they volunteer workers, perhaps during World War II? Jane says: "Surely somebody knows them and we can return the photo to where it belongs."

If you can throw light on this forgotten piece of Hackney history, please email Practice Manager Jill White via [nelondon.nightingalepractice@nhs.net](mailto:nelondon.nightingalepractice@nhs.net) or leave a letter for Jill in Reception and we'll pass the message on to Jane.

## FRIENDS OF THE NIGHTINGALE – PLEASE JOIN US

The latest Friends of the Nightingale meeting was held on 17 August. This was an opportunity for patients to talk directly to a doctor at the practice, as well as to the Practice Manager and other staff. Sadly, only a few patients turned up. Even though it was the middle of the summer holidays, this was still disappointing.

Remember all our patients, family members and carers are most welcome to attend meetings of the Friends of the Nightingale (formerly the Patient Participation Group). It's a great opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns or share ideas. Scroll down the Nightingale website home page [ [www.thenightingalepractice.co.uk](http://www.thenightingalepractice.co.uk) ] and click on 'Friends of the Nightingale' for more information, or ask at Reception. **The next meeting is on 9 November.**

The August meeting heard from Dr Nisha Patel about the 2023 Patient Survey results and plans for cloud-based telephony. There are articles in this newsletter about both of those topics. Practice Manager Jill White also shared ideas about what the practice could do to improve the patient waiting area. Again, see the article on page 3.

## TOGETHER BETTER – WHAT’S HAPPENING AT YOUR SURGERY

**The Together Better project is based at many GP surgeries across Hackney and we have a group here at the Nightingale Practice. All the classes and sessions we offer are FREE! Our aim is to help to make Hackney a happier and healthier place!**

Here’s what’s going on at the Nightingale currently:

### On Tuesdays

Seated Dance: 11:30am – 12:30pm

Boccia (seated bowls): 12:30pm – 1:15pm

Walking group: 2pm-3pm

### On Wednesdays

Step Aerobics: 10:30am-11:30am

### On Thursdays

Coffee Morning: 10am-11:30am

Crafts groups: 11:30am-12:45pm

Tai Chi: 5:30pm – 6:30pm

Times are accurate at publication but check in with our Together Better Co-ordinator, Tom Fearon, if you are interested in any of these - as things can and do change. Tom is on **07305 617 421**.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Do you have a skill or an interest that you would like to share with, or teach to, other people? If so, Together Better can support you in setting up a new group or activity.

If you’d like to volunteer (or for details of any the existing activities) contact Tom Fearon on 07305 617 421 or via the following email address:

[Togetherbetter.nightingale@nhs.net](mailto:Togetherbetter.nightingale@nhs.net)

## PLEASE WELCOME TOM – OUR NEW TOGETHER BETTER CO-ORDINATOR

Tom Fearon is the new Together Better Co-ordinator at the Nightingale practice, replacing Emily-May.



“Hello, I’m Tom and I’m working at the Nightingale from this autumn, supporting volunteers and patients in the Hackney Downs area.

“I’m really looking forward to joining some of the Together Better activities – maybe even getting fitter – and I’m looking forward to meeting everyone.”

## THE TOGETHER BETTER CODE OF CONDUCT – A REMINDER OF HOW WE ASK YOU TO BEHAVE

Everyone is welcome to join the Together Better group at the Nightingale but please be aware that we have an agreement about how to conduct ourselves and how to behave with others. This code of conduct applies to all staff, volunteers and participants involved with Together Better project.

We are accountable for the ways in which we work and we have a duty to keep ourselves and others safe. This is achieved by maintaining a respectful, caring and professional approach to those we come into contact with and by conducting ourselves in a way that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

Below is a summary of the most important points for anyone coming to our meetings and classes. Please make sure you are aware of this code of conduct to ensure our gatherings are happy and safe for everyone who attends.

### **As a volunteer or a participant with the Together Better project at the Nightingale you must:**

**Be friendly, courteous and kind at all times.**

**Treat everyone with dignity and respect.**

**Respect other people's privacy and boundaries.**

**Communicate with others in an open and respectful way.**

**Complete the Together Better registration form, before attending any activity.**

**Be aware of any language you use that could be deemed offensive or disrespectful to other people.**

Please inform a member of staff immediately if any inappropriate behaviour has happened or been observed, so it can be addressed.

If at any time it is brought to our attention that anybody is not adhering to the code of conduct, they will be spoken to and given a warning. If this behaviour continues, they will be asked not to participate in any Together Better projects in the future.

*This is a fairly good summary of the key points you need to know if you plan to attend any of the Together Better activities at the Nightingale.*

*But if you would like to see a full, unabridged version of the code of conduct, please ask our Together Better Co-ordinator, **Tom**, for a copy.*

**TOGETHER BETTER CAN OFFER YOU COMPANIONSHIP, EXERCISE, ACTIVITIES LIKE CRAFTING, OCCASIONAL DAYS OUT AND ALSO THE CHANCE TO GET INVOLVED IN CHARITY FUND-RAISING**

We also have well-established connections with the **Nightingale Estate Community Garden Project**. If you are interested, contact us.

Meanwhile, our most recent activity together with the staff at the Nightingale practice was supporting the **Macmillan Coffee Morning** at the Nightingale – see pictures below.



\*\*\*\*\*



**YOUR VIEWS ARE MOST WELCOME**

Give us your views about the Nightingale Practice. On our website, click 'Suggestions, Comments and Complaints' and then click on the '**Care Opinion**' button in the page heading. Contributions to **Nightingale News** are also very welcome. Email Jill White via [nelondon.nightingalepractice@nhs.net](mailto:nelondon.nightingalepractice@nhs.net) or leave a letter for Jill in Reception.