



Frithwood Surgery PPG Newsletter

Thumbs up for Frithwood Surgery from patients

A staggering 96% of Frithwood patients contacted by the NHS GP-Patient Survey said their overall experience of the surgery was 'good'.

This resounding thumbs up for the GPs, nurses, specialists and admin staff compares with the Gloucestershire average of 81% and 77% nationally.

Frithwood scored highly on being easy to contact using the phone and the helpfulness of the reception and administrative team, with 97% rating it as 'good' for both.

Some 65% said it was easy to contact using the website. The national percentage was 58%.

Furthermore, 96% knew what the next step would be after contacting the practice.

Welcoming the results, GP Dr Will Nattrass said they placed Frithwood as the 'best practice in Gloucestershire'.

"We don't give our patients lots of forms to fill in and we still have a reception team that answer the phone and talk to people," he told Patient Participation Group members at their meeting in July.

"We believe the personal touch is important, with the reception team knowing people and their families.

"We are over the moon with the results of this survey and believe it reflects on the dedication of the entire team, including those who work upstairs whom patients don't see."

- To see the entire survey, visit:
Gp-Patient.co.uk/Patientexperience/Results?Code=L8016

Frithwood Surgery

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GP Partners

Dr Will Nattrass
Dr Debbie Vest
Dr Richard Hempson-Jones

GP Non-Partners

Dr Dawn Harper
Dr Allanah Webb
Dr Sarah Sullivan

Summer/Autumn 2026



Thank you

Grateful patients and their families have donated £2,306 to Frithwood Surgery PPG over the past year.

This money will be invested in equipment and facilities to improve the treatment of patients.

Many of the donations received by the PPG on behalf of the surgery come from collections at funerals and the practice thanks families for thinking of Frithwood during these sad times.

FIRST AID COURSE



The PPG held another successful First Aid training session earlier this year. Delivered by Sophie McCracken, ably assisted by her daughter who played a very willing 'patient' when needed, the evening covered lots of areas of first aid, including CPR (Cardiopulmonary resuscitation), the use of defibrillators, choking, head injuries, strokes, wounds and much more. Frithwood PPG hopes to run a specific CPR and defibrillator training evening later this year.



Younger patients

Are younger people adequately served by Frithwood Surgery? Have your say and help make a difference to patients of all ages by joining the surgery's patient participation group. Find out more by emailing: FrithwoodPPG@gmail.com

GETTING IT RIGHT WITH APPOINTMENTS

A good appointment book at a GP surgery is at the heart of running a good practice. Fairly straightforward you'd think? If only! What's more, no matter how well you set the appointment book up, ever-fluctuating demand for different types of care invariably mean you can never get it spot on.

Our aim at Frithwood is always to bring the safest and most effective possible care to our patients in the most appropriate timescale. Hence, our starting point is an appointment book which, each morning, opens up appointments on the day, one day ahead, two days ahead, etc. for up to seven days. In addition to these opening up each morning, there are appointments which are left open for longer term follow-ups such as a return examination in a fortnight.

We closely monitor demand, which follows similar patterns throughout a year – something that surprised me when I first worked in general practice. That said, a flu outbreak or 'a bug going around' can change the picture completely. I'm not mentioning who, but one of our fabulous reception team members reckons there's a spike in demand when we have really windy weather!

So, our appointment book is set and we look to match our GP's and clinical team sessions to meet the demand.

Karen and Lauren in Reception now have the impossible task of making things work from day to day. They are constantly looking ahead and optimising our best balance of appointments for any given week. On some days, the demand for on-the-day appointments is higher than expected and our clinical team end up seeing more patients than is ideal. On others, that same day demand doesn't emerge and we potentially have empty slots.

On our website, there is an option to send in online medical requests but we prefer to take most enquiries by phone. This is now considered a bit old fashioned with many practices operating systems where you have to fill in an online form before then receiving a callback on how your medical situation will be dealt with. As demand in healthcare grows, some sort of triage system seems inevitable soon – but not quite yet!

Thank you to all our patients that understand we are doing our best to bring the right care in the right timescale. I feel so lucky to work with the team at Frithwood who work with the flexes in supply and demand – seeing extra patients, phoning to change appointments when one of our team is sick, assessing which of the appointments is best for the patient and all the while, dealing with any stressful times with a smile and genuine empathy to our patients.

It was a credit to them that we were recently rated as the number one GP practice in Gloucestershire in the national GP survey.

So as I said at the start, no matter how brilliantly you run an appointment book, it is impossible to get it right 100% of the time...but please be in no doubt, we'll always keep trying. **Clive Fenney, Practice Manager at Frithwood Surgery**

David Scott

Sadly, we have to report the sudden death of David Scott. David was a PPG committee member and trustee.

Positive and cheerful by nature, David brought much to the committee and its work. His depth of knowledge and experience in field of building architecture and planning proved invaluable on many occasions. To say will miss him is an understatement. We extend our very best wishes to his family for their loss.

Thank you Sue

Sue Korda has retired from her position of PPG committee member and trustee. We are extremely grateful for her help and support whilst serving on the committee and we will all miss her contributions and happy smile.

Join the 100 Club

Don't miss out on the Frithwood Surgery Patients' Participation Group's 100 Club.

Membership costs £24 annually, and not only could you win cash from the £300 prize pot, but you'll be helping the PPG raise money for new medical equipment too.

Blood pressure monitors, a specialist vaccine fridge and a dermatoscope are just some of the items that have been funded.

Take part by requesting a form from reception, or visiting:

<https://bit.ly/frithwoodfundraising>

Walking with friends

The weekly health walks organised by Frithwood PPG continue to attract good numbers of people each session. Join the walks every Wednesday from 10am, starting at Frithwood Surgery and ending at Chalford Parish Council offices, where refreshments are served. The route covers 1.5 miles over gentle terrain and there's much chatting and laughter along with the healthy exercise.

Find out more at reception.



Enjoy the summer!

Saturday August 29: Bisley Flower Show and Fete, Bisley from 1pm.

www.bisleyflowershow.com

Sunday August 30: Bisley Music Festival, in the flower show field.

<https://www.ticketsource.com/bisley-community-group/bisley-music-festival-2026/e-emblpd>

Saturday September 5:

Oakridge Village Show at the playing field from 12 noon
<https://www.oakridgevillage.org/watson.html>

Saturday September 12:

Hilltop Gardening Club's Autumn Show at Eastcombe Village Hall.
www.hilltopgardeningclub.org.uk

Patient participation: get involved!

Frithwood Surgery's Patient Participation Group committee is a group of volunteers who act as a liaison between the surgery and patients, organise health awareness and other events and raise money for new equipment. Anybody who is a patient of Frithwood Surgery can become involved with the PPG. All ideas for taking Frithwood into the future are welcomed and considered.

The committee consists of:
Chair: Jean Batten, Treasurer: Dr Tim Crouch, Secretary: Mary Brooks; Janet Cadman, Jane Gregg, Harry Joyce, Jenny Taylor, Sue Bradley, Dr William Natrass
The PPG has held first aid training evenings over the last couple of years, but are there any other health aspects that you would like covered?

Do you have any suggestions about activities that you think would be good for the PPG to organise?

Frithwood Surgery PPG is a Registered Charity: 1054582. Find out more by emailing frithwoodppg@gmail.com or contact any of our committee members.

Friend us!

Frithwood PPG is on Facebook! Get updates and read the PPG newsletter online.

<https://www.facebook.com/FrithwoodPPG/>

Get to know Frithwood Faces: Jane Gregg



Following my retirement in 2017, I joined Frithwood Surgery's PPG.

As part of this I help to lead the health walks each Wednesday morning. The aim of the walks is to improve the health and wellbeing of the participants, not just physical but mental as well. I have always been keen to try and promote good health in a preventative way.

I began my nurse career at Hammersmith Hospital London and Surrey University in 1969. This was a pioneering integrated course which included State Nurse Registration, District Nursing and Health Visiting. Later I moved to train and qualify as a midwife at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. After this I worked for Save the Children Fund travelling to South Vietnam to help with Child Health Programmes. This came to an abrupt end when the expat Save the Children staff were dramatically flown out of Saigon when the North Vietnamese reached the outskirts of the city. Very exciting when young and not averse to risk!

After this I was drafted to working in Bangladesh on a small island in the mouth of the Ganges where few people could read or write and where 46% of the population were under 15 years of age. As part of a medical team of doctors and nurses we set up child vaccination programmes, and feeding hubs to deal with malnourished and starving babies and children. We taught locally appointed staff the rudiments of nutrition in order that they could teach the population how to make the best of inexpensive local produce to prevent their children becoming malnourished. We set up Family Planning clinics to help families improve survival rates.

Returning to the UK, I got married and I began working in the NHS as a Health Visitor/ District Nurse in Gloucester city. Later working in various areas around Gloucester and Stroud.

My husband's job took our family, with two small children, to Australia for three and a half years where our third child was born. We spent a month travelling back to the UK with three children in tow, visiting India, Nepal, Thailand and Singapore. After our fourth child was born, in the UK, I returned to working in the NHS ending up working at Frithwood Surgery before my retirement.

I enjoy gardening, swimming, playing walking netball, rambling in our wonderful county and, on cold winter days, exploring my family history. Grandchildren are an important part of my life and keep me on my toes. I enjoy folk music. Fairport Convention and Fleetwood Mac from years back. Coldplay, Snow Patrol and Elbow are some of my favourites. I enjoy classical music: Henrik Chaim Goldschmidt performance of Gabriel's Oboe sends me into a trance.

Help for young people

Don't suffer in silence if you're experiencing problems with your mental health.

Gloucestershire has several organisations that want to help.

Let's talk well: online and face-to-face counselling for those aged nine to 25.

07520 634063

www.letstalkwell.org.uk

CandO (Connect and Offload)

Helpline to help adults with mild to moderate wellbeing difficulties.

Helpline: 0808 801 0606

www.gloucestershireselfharm.org

Young Gloucestershire:

This organisation offers counselling programmes and practical support.

www.youngglos.org.uk

Seniors' Christmas party

Plans are well underway for the Frithwood PPG Christmas Party for patients who are over 75.

This event, which was revived last year after a hiatus caused by the pandemic, takes place at Eastcombe Village Hall on December 12.

If you would like to go, booking forms will be available at Frithwood's reception in October.

If you'd like to help, provide entertainment or make a donation, do send an email to frithwoodppg@gmail.com

Humour corner

Patient: Doctor, doctor, I think I am a pair of curtains.

Doctor: Pull yourself together man. **Dr Tim Crouch**

Low Income Scheme

Many people on low incomes are delaying or avoiding healthcare because they believe they cannot afford it or wrongly assume they are not entitled to help with NHS health costs.

The NHS Low Income Scheme (LIS) provides financial help with a range of NHS charges and can significantly reduce the cost of healthcare for people on modest incomes. It covers NHS prescriptions, dental treatment, sight tests, glasses or contact lenses, travel to receive NHS treatment and certain hospital costs, including wigs and fabric supports.

If a person has already paid for NHS treatment, they may also be able to claim a refund when they apply for the scheme.

Applicants who qualify receive either an HC2 or HC3 Certificate.

Universal Credit claimants do not automatically qualify for free NHS prescriptions, dental treatment or other health costs.

If in doubt, pay the charge, keep receipts and check entitlement before making a claim.

Find out more: www.patients-association.org.uk or visit the Citizens' Advice Bureau.



'Skinny jabs' – GLP1

The so-called skinny jabs, aka GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide-1) cause appetite suppression and a rise in insulin, which makes them particularly useful in the management of diabetes. They have caused a revolution in the treatment of obesity.

Commonly used examples are Semaglutide (Wegovy/Ozempic), available as a weekly injection or tablet, Tirzepatide (Mounjaro/Zepbound) weekly injections and Liraglutide (Saxenda/Victoza) daily injections.

GLP-1 drugs are only available on prescription. For an NHS prescription, only patients with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater will usually be considered for treatment. It is possible to obtain these drugs from a private clinic or an online pharmacy, which must be registered with General Pharmaceutical Committee. The eye-watering cost is between £150 and £350 a month.

Like every drug, there are potential side effects, including nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and constipation. A rare but serious side effect is acute pancreatitis, causing severe pain and in some cases death. GLP-1s should not be used if there is a history of pancreatitis or kidney failure. Because of insufficient data, GLP-1s should not be used in pregnancy or breast feeding and therefore contraception is an important issue.

GLP-1 drugs are started at a low dose and if necessary titrated up until the required effect is achieved. For severe cases of obesity and diabetes, they are usually continued on a long-term basis. In other cases, the usual time on the drug is approximately two years at which point the dose is slowly reduced and stopped. In these cases, the traditional means of weight control, that is to say diet and exercise, must be observed. If not, the original weight will be regained after one or two years. **Dr Tim Crouch**

- Are there any drugs or conditions that you'd like Dr Crouch to look at in future newsletters? Send an email to: frithwoodppg@gmail.com

Help for hearing aid users

Frithwood Surgery has installed induction loops to assist hearing aid users.

They amplify sound on a specific frequency which hearing aids can be "tuned" into, allowing the wearer to hear the person they are talking to more clearly.

These loops will help hearing aid users to hear reception staff more clearly. There's also a detachable handset which anyone can use – even if you don't wear hearing aids. Holding the handset to your ear will help you to hear what the receptionist is saying.