



Welcome to our Patient Newsletter

Welcome to the latest edition of our patient newsletter. Each issue is aimed at keeping you informed about the latest updates, services, and the dedicated team at Chillington Health Centre.

Happy New Year from Chillington Health Centre

As we begin the New Year, we would like to wish all our patients and families a happy, healthy year ahead.

Over the coming weeks, we will be introducing some important updates at the practice, including changes to our dispensary opening times and the installation of a new telephone system. These improvements are being made to help support patient access, safety and the long-term sustainability of the practice.

We appreciate that changes can take time to settle, and we thank you for your patience and understanding while these improvements are implemented. Further details can be found in this newsletter.

Thank you for your continued support.

*Chillington HC
Team X*

In this newsletter you can expect:

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Updates

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Respect and
Courtesy at the
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Dispensary Updates

The Importance of Our Dispensary to the Future of the Practice

Our dispensary is at the heart of Chillington Health Centre, and it plays a far more important role than many people realise. As a rural GP practice, our ability to dispense medication directly to patients is what enables us to remain financially viable. Quite simply, without our dispensary, the surgery would not be able to continue operating.



Dispensing income supports essential services across the entire practice, including staffing, patient care, clinical equipment and the ability to maintain a full primary care team here in the village. If a large proportion of eligible patients choose to collect prescriptions elsewhere, the dispensary becomes unsustainable — and with it, the future of the practice is put at risk.

By choosing to use our dispensary, you are directly supporting the continued presence of your local GP surgery. You help us remain open, staffed, and able to provide the high quality care our community depends on.

We are also proud to be the first GP surgery in the South West to install a 24-hour prescription collection machine. This allows you to pick up your medication at a time that suits you, without needing to queue or visit during opening hours. It is secure, convenient, and extremely easy to use — simply speak to one of our Dispensary team if you wish to use this service.

If you are eligible to use the dispensary and able to do so, please consider choosing us for your medication. Your support truly makes a difference and helps keep healthcare local.

New Dispensary Opening Hours from Monday 16th February

From the week commencing Monday 16th February 2026, our dispensary will be moving to new opening hours:

 **New Opening Times**
Monday – Friday
08:30 – 11:00
15:00 – 18:00

The dispensary will now be closed between 11am and 3pm every day.

These changes come after careful discussions with our Patient Participation Group (PPG) and Start Circle of Friends (SCOF) to ensure the new system works best for patients and the practice.

Why are we making this change?

This change gives our dispensary team protected time each day to focus on dispensing work without interruption.

These changes are designed not just for the dispensary team, but to ensure a smoother, safer and more efficient service for all our patients. This will help us to:

- Dispense prescriptions more safely and accurately
- Reduce waiting times at the counter, particularly during busy periods
- Improve turnaround times for routine prescriptions
- Maintain a reliable and sustainable dispensary service for our local community



The middle of the day is our busiest and most complex time behind the scenes. This is when our dispensary team must manage:

- Ordering and checking stock
- Preparing prescriptions safely
- Completing medication queries
- Organising deliveries
- Liaising with GPs
- Ensuring the safe, accurate, and legal dispensing of medicines

These tasks require concentration and uninterrupted time to maintain patient safety. By closing during these hours, we can work more efficiently, reduce errors, and ensure your prescriptions are ready when you need them.

How does this benefit patients?

- ✓ Faster turnaround for prescriptions
- ✓ Shorter queues during opening hours
- ✓ More accurate dispensing
- ✓ A more stable, sustainable service for the long term
- ✓ Better use of staff time to support the growing demand in general practice

And remember — our 24-hour prescription collection machine means many patients won't need to visit during opening hours at all.

Important reassurance for patients

- Urgent prescriptions issued following an appointment (for example, pain relief or antibiotics) will continue to be supplied on the same day. Patients will not be asked to return later in these circumstances.
- End of Life and "Just in Case" medicines will always be prioritised and supplied promptly.

Thank you for your understanding and support as we make these improvements.

Update to Our Telephone System

We would like to let patients know that we will be introducing a new telephone system, which will go live on Monday 17 February.

There will be no disruption to our phone service, and patients should not notice any change when calling the practice. Our telephone number will remain the same, and calls will continue to be answered in the usual way by our reception team.

This upgrade is part of our ongoing work to improve reliability and support patient access, particularly during busy periods.

If you experience any unexpected issues when calling us on the first day, please bear with us while the system settles.

Thank you for your patience and continued support.

Cervical Screening Awareness Week – 19–23 January 2026

Cervical Screening Awareness Week is a reminder of the importance of attending your cervical screening appointment when invited. Cervical screening saves lives by helping to prevent cervical cancer through the early detection of high-risk HPV (human papillomavirus).

If you are aged 25 to 64 and have a cervix, you will be invited for screening at regular intervals. Even if you feel well and have no symptoms, screening is still important — cervical cancer often has no early warning signs.

Why attend cervical screening?

- It helps detect high-risk HPV before it can cause changes
- Early detection means problems can be treated before cancer develops
- The test is quick, free and usually takes only a few minutes

If you are feeling unsure

It's completely normal to feel anxious or embarrassed about cervical screening. Our nursing team is experienced, supportive and happy to talk through any concerns you may have. Please don't let worry or uncertainty stop you from attending.

Book or check your appointment

If you think your screening is due, or if you have missed an appointment, please contact the surgery to book, or check via the NHS App.

Attending your cervical screening is one of the most important things you can do for your health.

RESPECT



👉 Treating Each Other with Respect

At Chillington Health Centre, we are committed to providing safe, compassionate care in a respectful environment for both patients and staff.

The vast majority of our patients are kind and understanding, and we thank you for this. However, we would like to remind everyone that abusive or aggressive behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated.

Unacceptable behaviour includes shouting, swearing, threats, personal insults, discriminatory language, or repeated unreasonable demands. Our staff are here to help and deserve to be treated with courtesy and respect.

We understand that healthcare can sometimes feel frustrating or stressful, particularly during busy periods, but aggressive behaviour does not improve access to care and can have a serious impact on staff wellbeing.

We operate a zero tolerance approach to abuse. In serious cases, this may result in calls being ended, patients being asked to leave the premises, or further action being taken in line with NHS guidance.

Thank you for your understanding and for helping us keep Chillington Health Centre a safe and welcoming place for everyone.

Thank you for reading!

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