

The Grove MEDICAL GROUP

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2025



Over the last few months we have employed three new Apprentice Receptionists, Lola, Hanna and Josh. We are very excited that they have chosen ourselves to work with while they gain a qualification in Business Administration.

We said goodbye to Dr Hanafy in October and are currently actively recruiting a new GP.

We welcomed our new GP Registrars earlier this year, Dr McDowell and Dr Longley.

We have employed Sophie, our new receptionist who works Monday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday.

We said goodbye to Practice Nurses Joanne and Amie and have welcomed Laura and Jordan to our nursing team.

Step Into Better Health -Walk to Your Appointment!

Whenever you can, we encourage you to walk to the surgery for your appointments. A short walk not only helps reduce traffic and parking pressures around the practice, but also gives you a simple, healthy boost to your day. Even 10 -15 minutes of gentle walking can improve mood, increase energy, and support overall wellbeing.

If you're able, why not leave the car at home next time and enjoy the fresh air on the way to see us? It's a small change that makes a real difference, for your health and for our community.

During the months of August, September and October, 526 appointments were missed at the practice. This is a huge waste of GP, Practice Nurse, Healthcare assistant and Pharmacist time and has a significant impact on waiting times for appointments.

Please use our new telephone option to cancel your appointment without having to wait in the telephone queue.

The quickest and most convenient way to request a repeat prescription is through the NHS App. While other apps are available, the NHS App allows you to manage your own login details so if you forget your username or password, you can reset them yourself without needing to contact the practice.

Requests made through the NHS App go directly to your clinical record for review, making it the safest and most accurate way to order the correct medication. The app is free and available on all smartphones, allowing you to request prescriptions in just a few easy steps, anytime without needing to call the practice.

A reminder that to support this digital shift, our prescription answerphone line will be available from 10:00am to 2:00pm only, and we kindly ask that this service is used only by patients who are unable to use the NHS App.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OPENING HOURS 2025/2026

Wednesday 24th December—8am—5pm

Thursday 25th— Sunday 28th December— CLOSED

Monday 29th December - 8am—6.30pm

Tuesday 30th December - 8am—6.30pm

Wednesday 31st December - 8am—5pm

Thursday 1st January—CLOSED

Friday 2nd January - 8am – 6.30pm

Monday 5th January - 8am – 6.30pm



Our website:

Please scan the QR code below on your Smartphone to be taken directly to our Website. You can fill in health forms, submit feedback, register as a new patient, seek advice and much more.

Alternatively you will find it at:

thegrovemedicalgroup.nhs.uk



Grove Patient Voice

Would you be interested in joining the Grove Patients' Voice? Our own patient group members are registered patients at the practice who meet multiple times throughout the year, working collaboratively with staff at the practice to help plan and improve services.

Our last PPG meeting was held in July and was attended by our PPG members, our Business Manager Louise and our Deputy Practice Manager Rachel. We discussed a range of topics including an overview of what's been happening at The Grove, an update on flu vaccinations, our online requests system and our PPG chair Judith gave an extremely interesting update on Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospital trust, including a update on the Urgent Care Centre being built at the RVI. We will be discussing the high number of DNAs we are experiencing at the moment at our next meeting on Wednesday 7th January,

The Grove consults the Patients' Voice when they want feedback on practice services, forward planning and continuous improvement. We would like to add your voice to this group and hear what you have to say. You will be very welcome.

If you would be interested in coming to a meeting, please call the practice or email us at ngccg.reception@nhs.net

During the months of August, September and October the practice took 31,063 telephone calls. On average, inbound calls were answered by our reception team within 5 minutes. Please be patient with our staff when you call, they are doing an exceptional job under very high pressure.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY TEST

Please scan this QR code to provide feedback for the practice. We really value your opinions at The Grove.



On behalf of all of the staff at The Grove Medical Group, we hope you have a lovely Christmas



Changes to the childhood immunisation schedule:

From January 2026, the NHS will update the childhood vaccination schedule in England based on recommendations from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). These changes aim to improve protection for children while simplifying the timing of immunisations.

New 18-month Vaccination Appointment:

A new fourth dose of the 6-in-1 vaccine will be introduced at 18 months. This strengthens immunity against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, hepatitis B, and Hib.

The second dose of the MMR vaccine will be moved earlier to 18 months, which has been shown to improve protection during measles outbreaks

The introduction of a routine varicella (MMRV) vaccination programme for children at one year and at 18 months, with a catch-up for children aged up to 6 years in England.

Scan the QR code for more information:



An open letter to our patients

Dear our patients:

We want to be open with you about the challenges The Grove Medical Group is currently facing, and to ask for your patience and support while we work through a particularly difficult period.

At present, we are experiencing exceptionally high demand for appointments. Many more people are living with long-term or complex conditions, which increases the level of care and follow-up our clinicians need to provide. As always, the winter months bring added pressure, with colds, flu, and other infections circulating widely.

Staff sickness is naturally higher at this time of year. Even just having one member of staff unwell has a huge impact on the team. When clinical staff are unwell, the effects are even more noticeable - fewer GPs available to review patients, fewer Nurses to complete blood tests, vaccines, or health reviews. And when Admin colleagues are off sick, the processing of prescriptions, results, and other essential tasks slows down.

We understand how frustrating this can be - we feel it too. Our whole team is here to provide safe, timely care, and we are working hard to maintain this despite the pressures.

To strengthen our capacity, we want you to know that we are actively recruiting for a new GP to join the team. This will help us manage demand more effectively in the months ahead.

How We Prioritise Care

Our priority is always to ensure that patients with the greatest clinical need are seen as quickly as possible. Every request submitted through our online triage system is assessed by one of our Doctors, and we regularly review our processes to keep things fair, safe, and consistent.

How You Can Help

Using online services whenever you can helps us care for everyone more efficiently:

- **Submitting an online triage request sends your query straight to the practice.**
- **Ordering repeat prescriptions or requesting fit notes through the NHS App enters our system automatically.**
- **The NHS App also lets you check test results and track your hospital referrals.**
- **Chase any hospital investigations with the consultant team who organised them.**
- **Contact your dentist or 111 with dental problems.**

For many minor illnesses, your local community pharmacy can provide quick, expert advice without the need to see a GP first. Pharmacists can help with coughs, colds, sore throats, aches, minor infections, rashes, and other common concerns as part of the Pharmacy First scheme.

Our Resources page on our website also includes useful guidance on a range of topics, including self-help advice, practice policies, referrals, and information in accessible formats.

A Kind Reminder

Please continue to be patient and kind to our staff. Every member of the team - clinical, reception, and administrative are working under considerable pressure to support you. Your understanding and courtesy truly make a difference.

Thank you for your ongoing trust and support,

The Grove Medical Group