

Your monthly patient bulletin from SHP Patient Participation Group (PPG)



## Patient Corner

Thank you to Marie for this...

*The U3A (University of the Third Age) meet on Thursday, twice a month 2-4pm at Shirley Methodist Church on Stratford Rd Shirley.*

*On the first and third Thursday they have a speaker, tea or coffee, biscuit. It's a very friendly space with lovely, welcoming people.*

*They also have special interest groups and meals out. There's a walking group, a book group and a games group. Shirley Centre and Shirley Institute are re starting. Solihull College offer course and there's also British Red Cross Volunteering.*

## Community Pharmacists- patient feedback

Asterwell's (Longmore Road, Shirley)  
**'a very good service'.**  
<name supplied>

**Heart and circulatory disease, also known as cardiovascular disease,** causes a quarter of all deaths in the UK and is one of the largest causes of premature mortality in deprived areas. The NHS is encouraging everybody to recognise the potential signs of a heart attack, so if you or somebody you're with experiences any symptoms, you know how to access help as quickly as possible. The early signs of a heart attack can vary and may not always feel severe. The most common symptoms include squeezing across the chest and a feeling of unease. New research reveals that just 41% of those surveyed knew sweating was a sign of a heart attack, and only 27% of people knew feeling weak, lightheaded or a having a feeling of general unease were also symptoms. In addition, 75% of those surveyed thought a heart attack could be referred to as a cardiac arrest, and 46% did not recognise squeezing across the chest as a symptom of heart attacks. It can be easy to

dismiss the early signs of a heart attack but **it's never too early to call 999 and describe your symptoms.** The faster you act, the better the chance of a positive outcome.

**Feeling lonely** is something that all of us can experience at any point and it can have a huge impact on our wellbeing. It's important to remember that these feelings can pass and that there are lots of ways we can help each other too.

Fancy a cuppa? Fancy a walk? Sometimes reaching out to each other with as little as three words can make a big difference.

As part of the Better Health: Every Mind Matters campaign, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport are encouraging people to 'Lift Someone Out of Loneliness' by taking a simple action to help someone who may be feeling lonely. If we do this regularly, we can all help to lift each other up.

[Find out how you can help to lift someone out of loneliness](https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/life-challenges/loneliness/)  
[www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/life-challenges/loneliness/](https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/life-challenges/loneliness/)

## SIGN UP!

**What does your PPG do for you?**

**What could you do for your PPG?**

If you want to make a difference and be involved in SHP development and service delivery, please **complete the form available on the PPG space on SHP web site.**

For further information please email  
[shp.ppg@nhs.net](mailto:shp.ppg@nhs.net)

**The next PPG Committee meeting will be held online on Thursday 16th March 2022**  
**Notes of the meeting will be sent to all patients on our PPG database.**  
**The next full online PPG meeting is 3 March 2022. Details will be sent to the PPG database shortly once the agenda has been finalised.**

## Primary Care Networks- what are they?

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/primary-care-networks-explained>

SHP is a Primary Care Network... one of five in Solihull. use the link above to find out what they are and why they were developed by NHS England.

## A Day in the Life of... our Social Prescribing Link Worker

My name is Sharon Gates, and I am a social prescribing link worker for Solihull Healthcare Partnership (SHP) patients. I am also employed by Citizens Advice Solihull.

I started in December 2019 and I receive referrals from GPs, admin staff, care navigators and pharmacists.

Link workers take a holistic approach to people's health and wellbeing, giving people time to focus on 'what matters to me'. We connect people to community groups and Council services for practical and emotional support. We work within the community and if there is a need for a particular service we work with the local community to provide that service. For example, due to COVID-19 many activity groups stopped, so we started a coffee morning for those socially isolated patients who were very scared about going out. This has been a great success, people have made friends and are socialising outside of the coffee morning now!

Prior to starting my role, I worked in residential care as a support worker, senior and care home manager. I have also worked and volunteered for Citizens Advice and trained as an adviser. This has given me great knowledge of the care system, and also how to help and listen to the needs of the patients I support. I have referral pathways available to me that many patients need and great knowledge of the local services in the area.

My typical day starts at 8:30am where I check my referrals for the day. I will have two new referrals and up to 10 follow up calls to complete. I also have a team meeting to attend every morning for 15 minutes.

I spend one hour on my first call to a patient where I work together with the patient to develop an

action plan to help improve their health and wellbeing. I will deal with any urgent issues straight away and then spend 12 weeks working with that patient looking at all aspects of their life and discovering what the barriers are that are impacting on their health and wellbeing.

An example of a first call could be a patient who has mental health issues but they may not be getting the support they need. I take the time to listen and find out what is important to them. I would then liaise with the local services they are involved in and help find new services that can support them. I would find out if they needed additional support with benefits, debt, housing, etc, and refer them to the relevant support services. I would also discuss the importance of being active and socialised, and help find the patient something that they would be interested in taking part in. I would also help them access and attend any activity group if this is what is needed.

After completing my two new referrals I would then do my follow up calls, I will phone patients for an update and see what further support is needed. For example, if I have referred someone to a service and they have not heard from that service within a reasonable period of time, I would chase this up for the patient. I may also have news regarding a club or activity they may be interested in. They can update me on any benefit gains and successes they have had.

During COVID, I lead a project called 'The Tree of Reflection' that is now on display in Solihull Library. This project was aimed at helping people who had lost a loved one during the pandemic, and it was an opportunity for people to come together and start a conversation about the impact COVID-19 has had on all our lives. I worked with the local council, care homes and support services to bring this project to the community, and it will be going on a tour of Solihull with its next venue at the Library in Chelmsley Wood.

I really feel honoured have this vital role. It is a pleasure to help people overcome the many challenges they face in their lives. It is very demanding, but when a patient thanks me for the time I have given them it makes it all worthwhile.