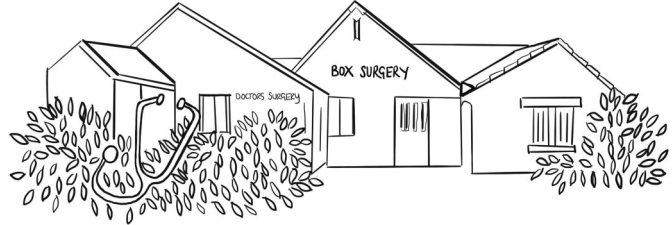


# Box Surgery Newsletter

WINTER 2024



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## 45 years of LINK Box Colerne Rudloe A Remarkable Story

**The idea of LINK** was founded by a young doctor in Box Surgery, John McQuitty, in the village of Box in 1979. He recognised after the harsh winter of 1978/79 the vulnerability of the elderly, infirm and those people of limited resources or transport, coupled with the reduction in public transport, shops and general facilities in rural communities.

One of John's patients, Jacky Nicholas, thought the same and together the seed of a volunteering service was sown. Tragically, John suddenly died of an undiagnosed brain tumour and Jacky continued to develop LINK in his memory. With her dedication and commitment and with a band of volunteers the service has grown to a local organisation carrying out around 2000 tasks a year. Not only that, but with Jacky's help and enthusiasm further LINKs were founded through Wiltshire.

In Box, Colerne and Rudloe there are now 40 volunteers on call to carry out tasks mainly health related, eg. to Box Surgery and local hospitals including the RUH, Bristol Hospitals and the Great Western in Swindon.

To enable LINK to continue to provide its service to the local community, **we regularly need to recruit volunteers**. It is an interesting, enjoyable and rewarding role, commitment in terms of time is totally flexible, so if you or you know anyone who might volunteer tell them to contact LINK on 07970 617617. There are leaflets in the Surgery which give more information on LINK.

*Chris Ward, LINK*

## Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays

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Please note that the surgery will be closed on the following dates over Christmas and New Year, in line with the Bank Holidays:

Wednesday 25th December **CLOSED**

Thursday 26th December **CLOSED**

Wednesday 1st January **CLOSED**

Our telephone lines and Patient Triage will be off on the above dates and the emails will not be monitored. If you need urgent medical assistance, please call OOH 111, Accident & Emergency Department, Minor Injuries Unit, or in a medical emergency dial 999.

If you take regular medication, please ensure you have enough stock or order your next prescription early to cover the bank holidays.

Please speak to your local pharmacy or click the following link to see when they are closed over Christmas or if they are open on reduced hours: [Find a pharmacy - NHS](#)

## Winter Tips and Advice

- Take up the opportunity for flu and COVID-19 booster vaccinations when offered to protect yourself and others.
- Look out for any vulnerable family or friends – is there anything you can do to help them? Are there any hazards in their homes? Do their slippers need replacing?
- Wear appropriate shoes when outside especially during icy weather.
- Heat homes to at least 18C (65F). You might prefer your main living room to be slightly warmer
- Keep your bedroom at 18C all night if you can – and reduce drafts – if you're under 65, healthy and active, you can safely have your home cooler than 18C, as long as you're comfortable
- Keep active when you're indoors. Try not to sit still for more than an hour or so
- Wear several layers of light clothes. They trap warm air better than one bulky layer
- Check your home medicines cabinet – is everything in date? Restock with essentials including cold remedies, pain killers, indigestion tablets and diarrhoea and constipation remedies
- Keep up to date with any repeat prescriptions you or your family or friends need
- When was the last time your vehicle was serviced? If your car is safer, so are you
- Carry some useful items in your vehicles such as a blanket and a spade for colder and possible snowy weather
- Wear bright colours at night. Can you be clearly seen as a pedestrian or cyclist? If walking at dusk or at night use a torch.

## Fit Notes

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### GETTING A FIT NOTE

#### When You Need A Fit Note

You might need a fit note if you're unwell and cannot work for more than seven days, including weekends and bank holidays. You do not need a fit note if you cannot work for seven days or less, you can self-certify to your employer in writing or using an Employees Statement of Sickness form, which you can download here: [www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/sc2.pdf](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/sc2.pdf)

#### After 7 Days

Once you have been off work sick for more than one week you can obtain a fit note from a doctor. If this is your first fit note for this illness you will need to consult a doctor by submitting a [medical request](#). You may not need to be seen in-person. If you have already spoken to one of our clinicians about this episode of illness and need to obtain a fit note, please submit an [admin request](#) and complete the fit note form. Please complete all the details to enable us to process your request.

#### Backdating A Fit Note

Fit notes can be issued at a later date and backdated, so you do not need to be seen urgently for a fit note or on the day your current note expires. Backdating fit notes is at the discretion of the doctor.

#### Extending A Fit Note

If you wish to get a further fit note, or an amended fit note, please submit an [admin query](#) and complete the fit note request form.

#### Private Fit Notes

Fit notes are normally free of charge, however if you wish to have a **private** fit note completed by a doctor and have been absent from work for less than seven days there is a charge of £25. Private fit notes are at the discretion of the doctor.

### Fit Notes After Hospital

If you have been treated in hospital or seen in an outpatient clinic and require a fit note, it is the responsibility of the hospital staff to provide you with this before you leave. If you did not receive a fit note, please contact the department whose care you were under. The RUH Bath has more information here [Hospital Fit Notes](#).

## Changes within the Practice

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### Reception Area

As you may have noticed when attending the surgery, we have had some renovation work carried out in our reception and admin area. We have previously received feedback from patients that the reception space can appear “unwelcoming” and we hope the new changes have made our reception area more welcoming for patients and visitors. The changes include a new front desk space, from which our reception team can help patients and answer any queries you may have.

As a reminder, most people can use the online form on our website to submit medical or admin queries, which is often faster than waiting on hold or in queue. Of course, for those unable to use the online form, please call our reception team who are happy to help you.

### Staff

We are delighted that Dr Lucy James, who many of you will have met in the last year as our GP registrar, has joined our team of salaried GPs.

## Statistics

The waiting room does not always reflect how busy the surgery is. We offer many telephone consultations, with both our nursing team and GPs. Our duty team are always busy dealing with incoming triage requests through Patient Triage and also urgent telephone consultations.

In November 2024...

- We received 1,687 medical requests via Patient Triage and 421 admin requests.
- Reception took 4,228 incoming calls with the average queue time being 3 minutes and 7 seconds.
- Our clinical and reception team combined completed 3,266 outbound calls.
- 3590 appointments were attended, 1048 of those appointments being telephone calls.
- **Unfortunately 125 people were unable to attend their booked appointments and failed to inform the surgery, which reduces our capacity to offer appointments to other patients who need them. Demand for GP appointments is very high. Please always inform us if you can no longer make an appointment so that it can be reallocated – thank you.**

## Patient Feedback

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After attending for certain appointments in the surgery, you will receive a text message with a link to complete a Family & Friends Test (FFT). This is a contractual requirement that all GP practices undertake and the first two questions are set by NHS England.

If you receive this message, please complete it where possible as this is a great way of obtaining feedback from our patients.

Periodically NHS England send out surveys to our patients requesting feedback on the services and staff on our Surgery. Please see the below latest comments which we are happy to share:

### “What does the surgery do well?”

Excellent communication with patients. Understanding receptionists.

Very Responsive to nhs app requests for triage. Welcoming environment.

Initial response is timely and when one actually sits down in the surgery interaction is good

Prompt and thorough responses to queries and appointment requests. Excellent communication with a friendly yet professional tone

Contact by SMS works very well

I get timely appointments with an appropriate person

Clinical staff are always friendly and efficient

Good communication and good advice

Triage works well for me

I have had exceptional support in last 2 years for some complex and unexpected problems.

## Hospital Medication Changes

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If a doctor or other clinician in hospital has advised a change to your medication, please allow 14 days before contacting the surgery to obtain this. If the medication is required within 14 days, it should be provided by your specialist so please contact them directly. Upon discharge from hospital, you should be given at least a 14-day supply of your regular medication. In exceptional circumstances when urgent medication changes are required, we must have a written request from your specialist.

## Health Campaign Information

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Dry January: [Dry January® in your workplace](#) | [Alcohol Change UK](#)

LGBT+ History Month, Feb: [LGBT+ History Month](#)

World Cancer Day, Feb 4th 2025: [Official website of World Cancer Day by UICC](#) | [4 February](#)

Time To Talk Day, Feb 6th 2025: [Time to Talk Day](#)

Eating Disorders Awareness Week, Feb 28th—Mar 6th 2025: [The UK's Eating Disorder Charity - Beat](#)

Rare Disease Day, Feb 28th 2025: [Rare Disease Day 2025](#)



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