

WOOLER HEALTH NEWS

SPRING 2026

The 2026 Team

Doctors

Elizabeth Batley	Partner
Vikki Long	Partner
Toby Cockill	Salaried GP
Stephen Foley	Salaried GP
Dr Patrick Brien	Salaried GP
Dr Stuart Child	Late night Thursday GP locum
GP Registrars	Temi Wiito, Mohamed Elkhaliq

Nursing Team

Maureen Birdsall	Practice Nurse
Rachel Byers	Practice Nurse
Harriet Richardson	Healthcare Assistant
Harriet Murray	Trainee Nursing Associate/HCA
Emma Stanfield-Wilkinson	Phlebotomist

Admin Team

Christine James	Manager
Susan Purvis	Office Supervisor/Secretary
Gemma Bolam	Medicines Manager/Dispenser
Vera Skeen	Senior Care Coordinator
Isabel Herdman	Care Coordinator/Dispenser
Harriet Richardson	Care Coordinator/Dispenser/HCA
Alison Price	Care Coordinator/Dispenser
Hazel Cowens	Care Coordinator/Dispenser
Amy Scott	Care Coordinator/Dispenser
Dawn Dunn	Care Coordinator
Linda Bertram	Care Coordinator
Emma Stanfield-Wilkinson	Care Coordinator/Phlebotomist
Lynn Cowe	Care Coordinator
Sam Hook	Network staff coordinator

Domestic team

Hilda Brier & Danielle Morrison

Attached network staff (see page 3)

Rebecca Mather	First Contact Physio
Judith Sefton	Mental Health
Carol Gunn	Social Prescriber (Dementia)
David Cantlay	Pharmacist
Shannon Catling	Pharmacy Technician
Maxine Shell	Bereavement counsellor

Opening & Clinic Times

Reception is open 8.00am—6pm
(Late night Thursday 6.30-8pm)

GP CLINICS

Dr Batley	Mon, Weds, Thurs
Dr Long	Tues, Thurs, Fri
Dr Foley	Tues, Weds, Fri
Dr Cockill	Mon, Tues, Fri
Dr Brien	Mon, Thurs
Dr Stuart Child	Thursday late night

NURSE & HCA CLINICS

Maureen Birdsall	Weds, Thurs
Rachel Byers	Mon—Weds
Harriet Murray	Mon, Weds, Thurs
Harriet Richardson	Thursday & Friday
Emma Stanfield-Wilkinson	Tuesday morning
Nurse on duty	Thursday late night

NETWORK STAFF (See page 3)

Judith Sefton	Monday
Rebecca Mather	Tuesday
David Cantlay	Tuesday & Friday
Carol Gunn	Thursday
Shannon Catling	Tuesday & Thursday
Maxine Shell	arranged via referral

Late Night Clinics Thursday 6.30-8pm

We hold an evening clinic each Thursday between 6.30pm and 8pm. We hold these predominantly for patients who are unable to make an appointment during normal surgery hours. A GP and either nurse or healthcare assistant is on duty and appointments are made by calling reception in the usual way.

Flu Vaccinations 2026

During the last flu vaccination season over 300 patients who had previously had their vaccine at the surgery had it elsewhere. Because we order in advance, this meant we were left with those vaccines and we can only return a certain percent of the order.

The surgery has to pay for the flu vaccines unlike the covid vaccines which the NHS provides to us free of charge. Unfortunately, they make us order a year in advance so we have already ordered the vaccines for the 2026 flu season, including vaccines for those who we now know have had it elsewhere. So that we aren't left with unused vaccines, we ask that you support us by having your vaccine at the surgery but, if you prefer to continue having it elsewhere, then would you let us know please and we can reduce our order so we aren't left with these vaccines and potentially out of pocket. Thank you.

What does your GP do during the day apart from seeing patients?

Our doctors have very busy days and spend significant time on other tasks that patients don't see that they need to do on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

Administration and documentation— this takes up a large proportion of a GP's working time.

- Checking and actioning letters arriving daily from hospitals and other NHS bodies who share patient care ie contacting patients with the outcome, adding new medication to their records, arranging blood tests and follow up appointments.
- Writing referral/follow up letters for patients who need to be seen by a consultant or other health professionals.
- Writing and updating medical records
- Writing clinical plans for patients with complex needs
- Completing paperwork and legal tasks, insurance forms, DVLA reports, shotgun and firearms licences, blue badge applications.
- Dealing with email correspondence

Care co-ordination and communication

- Communicating with patients and families outside normal consultations: medication changes, result explanations, care plans, follow up, responding to patient messages, emails and phone calls.
- Communication and care planning with other clinicians, specialist, pharmacist, practice and district nursing services.
- Reviewing, interpreting data and communicating to patients— checking the hundreds of laboratory tests that come back to us twice a day, action and follow up
- Arranging xrays, scans and other tests

Medication concordance and issues

- Check and sign dozens of repeat prescriptions requested each day.
- Deal with medication queries
- Carry out medication reviews by reviewing patient records and/or contacting the patient.
- Medication audits

Professional development and education

- Continuing personal medical education, reading literature and staying up to date with current clinical guidelines.
- Undertaking clinical audits and research.

Meetings, teaching and leadership

- Multidisciplinary meetings with other members of the team, ie district nurses, midwives, health visitors, pharmacist, physiotherapist.
- Daily clinical meetings with the doctors on duty and nursing team
- Monthly adult and child safeguarding meetings
- Administrative meetings, in-house whole team, and management meetings looking at planning, finance and quality improvement.
- Network meetings with the other 6 practices in the Well up North network
- Governance meetings with our partner practice
- Teaching the GP Registrars and medical students

Procedures and clinics

- Minor surgery clinics
- Coil and implant clinics
- Medical examinations, ie HGV, PSV, Taxi medicals

NHS APP— ORDER MEDICATION, VIEW YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

Download the **NHS App** from Apple App Store or Google Play Store and then set up your account by creating a login with your email and verifying your identity using your NHS Number or GP surgery login details. Reception can give you your NHS number if you don't already have it.

WHAT YOU CAN DO WHEN THERE ARE NO ROUTINE APPOINTMENTS LEFT

There are times when we are at full capacity and can't take any more routine appointments that day. If we are full and your problem is not urgent, then we will offer you the next available appointment but there are also other options open to you:

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week. If they feel you need to be seen that day by a GP, they will make you an appointment with us or make arrangements for you to be seen elsewhere.

The local pharmacy

They can deal with many minor illnesses such as rashes, coughs and colds, cystitis, conjunctivitis and minor eye irritations. The pharmacist is trained to advise and give medication where necessary.

Self help

There is a very good self-help A-Z guide for all ailments on our practice website on the home page under Self Help and Wellbeing.

(www.woolerhealth.nhs.uk)

Surgery closure

Team Meetings

Last Thursday of each month 1-4pm

The surgery will be closed during this time to allow the entire practice team to get together for training and planning of services. A GP will be on call for urgent problems which cannot wait until we re-open and a contact number will be given on our telephone answering machine. For non urgent advice, please call 111 and, in an emergency, dial 999.

Dispensing patients will be unable to collect their medicines during this time.

Change of personal details Got a new mobile number?

Please remember to let us know if you change your name, address, email or telephone contact details.

We use mobile numbers to send out messages to remind patients of pre-booked appointments, to ask patients to make appointments, during flu and covid seasons so that you can make online appointments and for sending you general medical information and leaflets.

Other professionals in the practice that you may see:

Rebecca Mather—First Contact Physio. Rebecca is a specialist physiotherapist with expertise in the assessment and management of all musculoskeletal conditions. She is able to refer onto other appropriate services using the same referral methods as the doctors. You do not have to see a doctor first to ask for an appointment with Rebecca and will be offered an appointment with her instead of a doctor if you have a problem which she is able to help with.

David Cantlay—Pharmacist. David is our in-house pharmacist and works with us twice a week. David undertakes a lot of work for us which involves medication, whether starting it, changing it or even stopping it and helps us treat patients with raised blood pressure, raised cholesterol, and some long term conditions such as hypertension, diabetes and heart disease. David is available to speak to should you have any queries about your medication and he liaises with the GPs daily when he is on duty.

Shannon Catling—Pharmacy Technician. Shannon works alongside David and contacts patients on our behalf to discuss further care and lifestyle advice when they have had health checks and have a resulting raised cholesterol level or raised blood pressure which may give them a higher risk of heart disease and stroke.

Judith Sefton—Mental health worker. Jude works with us on a Monday each week. She is a professional who specialises in mental health services and provides timely, person-centred support for patients with mental health needs that do not require specialised secondary care but who require more than the other traditional 'talking therapies'. You need to see a doctor first who will refer you to Jude if they think that she is the best person for you to see. Jude can also signpost or refer you onwards to other services.

Carol Gunn— GP Link Worker (Dementia & Veterans)—Carol is trained in this role to provide support for people living with dementia and their carers and for veterans who have served in the armed services. Carol will visit patients at home and discuss their health needs as well as navigating them through health, social care and voluntary sector services. She will facilitate discussions on care and attends our Thursday clinical meeting and also fortnightly frail elderly meeting in order to share information with the wider healthcare team. If you are a veteran and need some help or if you have any concerns about yourself or someone with dementia and need advice, please contact Carol at the surgery.

Maxine Shell—Therapeutic bereavement counsellor who works for North Northumberland Hospice. Maxine is able to offer counselling in the practice and can offer up to 6 sessions fortnightly. You can self refer but must also be willing to travel to Alnwick or Berwick as there is currently a waiting list in Wooler.

OTHER PRACTICE NEWS

CHANGE OF PRACTICE BOUNDARY

We have applied to the ICB to change our practice boundary by reducing some areas to the east and south and extending the boundary to the north to include Carham. Areas which will be affected are Duddo, Ancroft, Belford and the outskirts of Alnwick to the south of Eglington and Abberwick. The patients who are already registered in those areas will not be affected and will remain registered with the practice as will any additions to their families. The change will only affect anyone moving into those areas and requesting to register with us. If you have any concerns then please let us know.

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG)

We have a PPG whose aim is to bring patients and the practice together to share information, discuss what's working well and what can be done better for both the practice and for patient experience. The Group meets quarterly and acts as a forum not just to air views but to hear about people's real experience and feed them back to the health team as a way of improving services.

The Group is seeking to include more people from the widest possible cross section of patients so that it is aware of and can include every conceivable need in its planning and processes. Solutions can be found only for issues or problems that are known about.

How can you help? The Group wishes to hear from teenagers; young mums and dads; working and retired people, and those in between; people with disabilities or learning difficulties; rural dwellers, and anyone who has a special medical need. This is your opportunity to be part of an important and effective way to contribute directly so that the Practice can provide and be responsive to the needs of all the population it serves. To find out more, call Chris James on 01668 263852.

CRYOTHERAPY

We no longer offer the removal of skin tags in the surgery. Skin tag and wart removal pens and kits can be bought relatively cheaply at pharmacies or online.

EQUIPMENT LOAN

Purchased from the Wooler Doctors' Fund (a charity run by the Patient Group which accepts donations from the public to use for patient equipment that isn't available on the NHS), we have a variety of equipment which we loan to patients on a short-term basis. This includes wheelchairs, home blood pressure machines and, recently purchased, two wheeled walkers for anyone who has had an injury or surgery and is unable to weight bear. We are extremely grateful to those who have made donations to the Fund to enable us to offer this very valuable service. Thank you.

PRIVATE MEDICALS AND FORMS

As a GP practice, our primary responsibility is to deliver NHS services to our registered patients. We are committed to ensuring that our time and clinical resources are focused on providing safe, timely, and high-quality NHS care.

As a consequence, we do not undertake occupational health assessments or sports and activity medicals, or completion of these forms. These types of assessments require specialist training and qualifications that fall outside the scope of NHS general practice. By not providing these services, we are able to concentrate fully on meeting the medical needs of our NHS patients.

For other medical forms and reports:

Routine requests take up to 28 days to complete.

Medically urgent requests will be processed within 7 days

For medical examinations such as HGV, PSV and taxi medicals, these should be booked well in advance of being required to ensure we can arrange an appointment at a time suitable to the GP and patient.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation