

Patient Newsletter – September 2026

Flu and Covid vaccinations – Autumn & Winter 2026/27

Despite barely having said goodbye to summertime, the autumn and winter vaccination campaigns are already upon us.

We have recently started to take appointment bookings for our eligible patients for the Flu and Covid-19 vaccinations.

You may, if you haven't already, receive an invitation from the surgery and from the NHS to book your appointment. If you haven't received an invitation as yet, but are eligible for a vaccination, please do not wait to book. You can contact our reception team to book your appointment or to check your eligibility.

We will be vaccinating the following eligible groups:

Flu vaccinations from September:

- pregnant women
- children aged 2 or 3 years on 31st August 2026
- children with certain long-term health conditions (aged 6m to less than 18 years)

Flu vaccinations from October:

- everyone aged 65 years and over (including those who will be 65 by 31st March 2027)
- individuals aged 18 to under 65 with certain long-term health conditions
- carers in receipt of carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person
- those living with people who are immunocompromised
- frontline health and social care workers

COVID vaccinations from October (same as last year):

- adults aged 75 years and over (including those who turn 75 years old by 31st January 2027)
- residents in care homes for older adults
- adults who are immunosuppressed

Virtual Receptionist (trial)

We are soon going to begin trialling a 'virtual' receptionist, called EMMA, at the practice.

EMMA will primarily be available over the lunchtime period, from 1.00pm–2.00pm, with an additional 30-minute period at the end of the day.

This change has become necessary as a result of recent NHS contractual changes that have been imposed on GP practices. These are imposed contractual requirements, rather than changes that have been negotiated by GPs in England. As a practice, we have therefore had to look at how we can meet these requirements while continuing to provide patients with good access to our telephone service.

In particular, we did not feel it was fair or reasonable for our incredibly hard-working and dedicated reception team to lose their lunch break in order to provide continuous telephone cover. Our reception team work exceptionally hard for our patients, and we believe they are entitled to a proper break during the working day.

We therefore feel that using EMMA over the lunchtime period provides a sensible solution. It means our reception team can take their much-needed lunch break, while patients can still contact the practice by telephone and have their call dealt with appropriately.

EMMA is specifically designed for GP practices and approved for use by the NHS. She can answer your call and ask a series of questions to understand how we can help you, before directing your request appropriately.

On rare occasions, EMMA may also be used at other times if we find ourselves exceptionally short-staffed and need additional support answering calls.

If you would prefer not to speak to our virtual receptionist, you are of course welcome to call at another time during the day, when you will be able to speak directly with our usual team of receptionists.

We would like to reassure our patients that we are absolutely not looking to replace our wonderful reception team. This is not about reducing our reception service. Rather, we are using EMMA as a practical response to contractual changes that have been imposed upon GP practices, while protecting our small reception team's ability to take a proper lunch break and continuing to provide patients with access to the practice.

We hope this solution will help us to maintain telephone access while also looking after

the dedicated team who provide this service every day.

We would very much welcome feedback from anyone who experiences using EMMA during the trial.

Thank you for your understanding, patience and continued support.

Appointments and the Impact of Missed Appointments (DNAs)

Like many practices across the country, Jubilee Field Surgery continues to experience increasing demand for appointments. Our population is growing, people are living longer with more complex health needs, and we are all encouraged to seek help earlier for physical and mental health concerns. All of this means that every appointment matters.

One of the biggest pressures on our capacity is the number of DNAs (Did Not Attend)—appointments where patients do not attend and do not let us know in advance. When this happens, the appointment cannot be offered to someone else who may urgently need to be seen. The time is simply lost.

Below is a snapshot of the impact in recent months:

Month	GP DNAs	GP Time Wasted	Nurse DNAs	Nurse Time Wasted*
June 2026	23 appts	6 hours	17 appts	4 hours
July 2026	23 appts	5 hours and 45 minutes	29 appts	7 hours and 10 minutes
August 2026	12 appts	3 hours	20 appts	4 hours and 45 minutes

**Nurse appointment lengths vary and may include shorter vaccine appointments.*

These missed appointments add up to many hours of lost clinical time, reducing the number of patients we can help and contributing to longer waits for those who need care sooner.

How You Can Help

If you no longer need an appointment, or if the time is no longer convenient, please cancel as early as possible. Even returning a single unused appointment to the system can make a meaningful difference to another patient.

You can cancel by:

- Clicking the link in your text message reminder
- Using your NHS app or online service provider
- Telephoning or speaking to our reception team

Thank you for helping us reduce DNAs and improve appointment availability for everyone.