

NEWSLETTER

PPG QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER NO. 11 SUMMER 2026

1 - Meet The Team:

Louise Brunton

+Bonus Feature

2 - Flu Vaccine 2026



3 - All in a Day's Work

4 - Meet Balm!

5 - Suggestions Box

6 - Sensory Box



Meet The Team: Louise Brunton

Hello, I'm one of the secretaries at Midway and am part of a team of three. I have worked at Midway for the past three years, having previously spent five years working as a medical secretary in the Cardiology Department at Watford General Hospital.

It has been great to gain experience in both a hospital and GP setting, as it has given me the opportunity to see different sides of patient care and develop a broader understanding of the patient journey.

I enjoy helping people and being part of a team where I know the work I do makes a difference. I particularly enjoy the variety of my role and the opportunity to support both patients and colleagues every day.



WHAT DOES A SECRETARY DO?

As a GP secretary, my role is varied and involves supporting both the doctors and the wider practice team. I help with referrals to hospitals and other healthcare services, deal with correspondence and make sure important information is passed on to the appropriate people.

A big part of my role is keeping things organised and making sure referrals and other administrative tasks are followed up efficiently. Although much of the work happens behind the scenes, it plays an important part in helping the practice run smoothly and ensuring patients receive the care and support they need.

I also arrange annual health checks for patients with learning disabilities and mental health needs. I really enjoy speaking with patients and their families and helping them to arrange and attend their health checks.

A visitor from Down Under!



In May, we were delighted to welcome back former partner Dr Andy Cohen, who was visiting from Australia. Dr Cohen was a much-loved member of the practice, and it was wonderful to see him again.

Flu Vaccine 2026

Protect Yourself This Winter: Get Your Flu Vaccine!

Who can have a free NHS flu vaccine?

You may be eligible if you:

- are aged 65 or over, including anyone who will turn 65 by 31 March 2027
- are aged 18 to 64 with certain long-term health conditions
- are pregnant
- live in a care home
- are the main carer for an older or disabled person, or receive Carer's Allowance
- live with someone who has a weakened immune system
- are experiencing homelessness or staying in a hostel or night shelter.

Eligible long-term conditions include some respiratory, heart and neurological conditions, a weakened immune system, spleen problems, and a BMI of 40 or above. Please speak to the surgery if you are unsure whether you qualify.



When can I have it?

Most eligible adults can receive their flu vaccination from 1 October 2026. Pregnant people and certain other groups can be vaccinated from 1 September 2026.

The vaccine is safe and cannot give you flu!

Common side effects are usually mild and improve within one or two days. These may include a sore arm, a slightly raised temperature or an aching body. Injected flu vaccines do not contain live flu viruses and cannot give you flu.

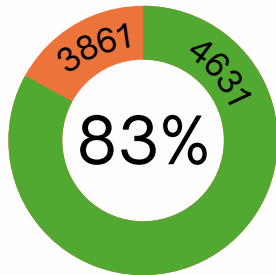
PLEASE NOTE:

While the official NHS guidance above has flu vaccinations starting on the 1st of September for eligible individuals, unfortunately due to supplier issues, we are only able to offer vaccination bookings starting from October.

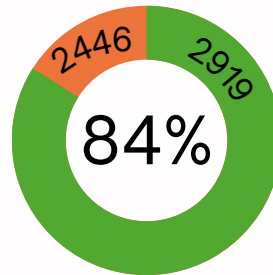
All in a Day's Work

Here are some statistics for the work we do, these figures are from 1st August 2026 to 28th August 2026.

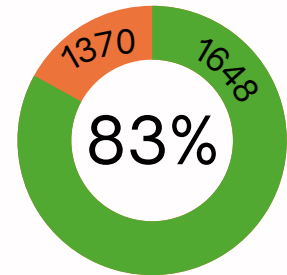
- Available Appointments
- Booked Appointments



Total Usage

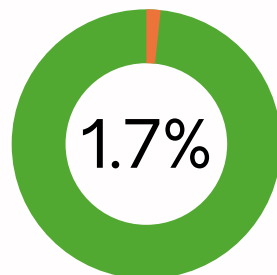


Face To Face



Telephone

- Booked Appointments: 3861
- Did not arrive: 68



New Registrations

96



Have you heard?

Between June and August 2026, there were 220 missed appointments, equal to approximately 2,220 minutes or 36 hours and 40 minutes of lost clinical time. DNAs reduce appointment availability, increase waiting times, and mean other patients may miss the chance to be seen sooner. Please cancel any appointment you no longer need as early as possible.

Month	Number of DNA Appointments
June 2026	79
July 2026	78
August 2026	63
Total	220

Meet Balm!



Looking for helpful information or support?

Balm is the virtual agent available on the Hertfordshire and Mid Essex Talking Therapies website.

Balm can help you:

**find helpful resources and advice
explore information on a variety of topics and conditions
discover available webinars
navigate the website
begin a self-referral**

Balm is available by selecting the virtual agent in the bottom-right corner of the Talking Therapies website.

Please remember:

Balm is an automated virtual agent. There is no human interaction within the chatbot, and Balm cannot provide immediate help during an emergency or mental health crisis.

If you feel unsafe please do at least one of the following:

Speak to someone you know and trust

Call 999

Visit your nearest A&E department

Start a conversation

Visit:

www.hpft-talkingtherapies.nhs.uk

Select the Balm avatar in the bottom-right corner of the page to get started.

By selecting “Start a conversation”, you confirm that you have read and understood the website’s privacy policy.

Suggestions Box

We have received various suggestions from our PPG meeting and have tried to address each one below!

You said!	Our response
Anima is a fantastic utility to get across your health BUT its very long winded for just simple ailments ie headache, stomach ache etc. Could make it Anima more simple for simple problems. I love the fast response from Anima once I have completed all the questions.	Patient concerns regarding Anima are fed back to the company. Anima has considered the feedback and has reviewed the questionnaire. The current version should be more user friendly.
Water fountain for hydration.	There was a water fountain in the reception area, but unfortunately this was abused. The receptionists will happily provide patients with a cup of water. We will put a sign up in the waiting room to this effect.
Please train your receptionists not to be so aggressive. This is an ongoing issue with several staff members. Would have more relaxed patients.	Our receptionists are a friendly hardworking team who all endeavour to provide an excellent service. If you have a problem with a specific member of staff or have a specific example please do ask for a call from a practice manager to discuss.
I am unsure of the radio station you have playing in the waiting room area. It does help the atmosphere but I find the adverts irritating. I suggest you could try BBC Radio 3 u (unwind). No adverts. Very little speech. Usually relaxing but sometimes too sombre, which may annoy or upset. Could be worth a consideration.	The radio is played to provide distraction from any conversations that may possibly be overheard from a consulting room. Radio reception is very poor so we go with whatever station we can get!
Make the place way more colourful and play calming music. People would be happier as people here are usually worried.	Thank you for your suggestion. We appreciate that visiting a GP surgery can sometimes feel worrying, and we agree that the surroundings can make a difference to patients' experience. We will consider whether there are appropriate ways to introduce more colour and create a calmer atmosphere, while ensuring that the surgery remains a suitable, professional and accessible healthcare environment.
Please amend the online questionnaire. There is one sentence "we shall get back to you once your form is reviewed". Having twice completed the form, no one "gets back to you". Obviously all ok but an expectation of a response. Benefits: People will not be expecting a response unless a problem has been shown. Thank you for the excellent service you give us, in professional, friendly environment. You are all appreciated.	The online process is working well with patients being happy with the prompt response to their forms. Without more details I am unable to investigate what happened on this occasion.

by Emma Day



At Midway, we want to do everything we can to support our patients, and make attending our surgery as stress free as possible. We have put together a 'sensory box' that is available upon request from reception. Within the box there are ear defenders, dark glasses and fidget toys for our patients who find waiting in bright, busy areas challenging. The box also contains a range of picture and easy read cue cards to assist with communication and consultations.

In addition, we have 'time out' passes available - if you need to wait outside for any reason, please ask the reception team to let your clinician know you are waiting elsewhere.

If you would like to use any of these resources, please ask our receptionists when you visit us.

If you can think of anything else we can do to help make your visit easier, please let us know!

Consider joining our PPG
Can you help us?

From the Chair of the PPG

The Midway PPG (patients participation group) is now well into its second year. It has been an interesting experience for all of us on the committee, and hopefully helpful to the practice. We only meet 3 monthly so it is not a huge commitment. What we now need is more diversity within our group. We would particularly value input from younger patients, especially if you can help us move forward with social media. Can you help us? There is information available about PPGs on the [Midway website](#) or if you'd like to talk to one of us, please complete the [form](#) which is also on the site and we'll get back to you.

Join Here