

Aylesbury Surgery Health & Engagement Forum



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Building a Caring Community

A strong and thriving community is built on kindness, respect, understanding and a willingness to support one another. In a world where many people face different challenges in their daily lives, the importance of community spirit has never been greater. Whether it is helping a neighbour, checking in on someone who may be feeling isolated, volunteering your time, or simply offering a friendly smile, small acts of kindness can have a lasting impact.

Our community is made up of people from many different backgrounds, cultures, faiths and generations. This diversity is something to celebrate. It brings new ideas, experiences and perspectives that enrich our lives and help create a stronger, more vibrant community. By embracing our differences and treating one another with respect, we can build relationships based on trust, understanding and mutual support.

Community cohesion is about more than simply living in the same area. It is about creating an environment where everyone feels welcome, valued and included. It means ensuring that no one feels left behind or unsupported. Young people, older residents, families, carers, volunteers, community groups and local businesses all play an important role in making our neighbourhood a better place to live and work.

Empathy is at the heart of a connected community. Taking the time to listen and understand the experiences of others helps us build stronger relationships and encourages a culture of compassion. Sometimes, the smallest gestures can make the greatest difference to someone's day and remind them that they are not alone.

As we continue to move forward together, let us celebrate the positive contributions made by individuals, groups and organisations across our community. By working together, supporting one another and promoting kindness in our everyday lives, we can create a safer, stronger and more caring place for everyone.

A united community is a stronger community. Through understanding, respect and a shared commitment to helping one another, we can continue building a community where everyone feels they belong.

Mr Rajash Mehta

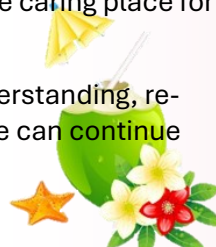


ABOVE : Mr Rajash Mehta—Chairman of the Aylesbury Surgery Health & Engagement Forum



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A message from Simon Foster, your Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands



Simon Foster, Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands

My role as Police and Crime Commissioner is to hold West Midlands Police to account on your behalf. I am elected to represent you and not the police. My plan for policing in the West Midlands is set out in my Police and Crime Plan. My Plan can be found here: [West-Midlands-Police-and-Crime-Plan-2025-2029-Final.pdf](#). I invite people to take a look.

Three of my priorities are:

Firstly, rebuilding community policing, because we need an accessible, reassuring and visible police presence out on the streets to keep people, families, businesses and local communities safe

and secure;

Secondly, preventing and tackling violence, including knife crime, youth violence, violence against women and girls and domestic abuse, because of the catastrophic and devastating impact it has on victims, survivors, families and local communities; and

Thirdly, reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads, arising from dangerous and reckless driving, due to excess speed or drink and drug driving, because road traffic collisions are tragic and avoidable.

Despite significant financial pressures and under resourcing, West Midlands Police have been achieving against the odds. We have one of the best 999 and 101 services in the country; faster emergency and priority response times; increased arrests; more people are being brought to justice; and we have been cutting crime across many different crime types.

However, as your Police and Crime Commissioner, I realise that more work is needed. I am committed to constant and unremitting action, to prevent and tackle crime, prioritise the rights and welfare of victims and make sure the people of the West Midlands are safe and secure.

Simon Foster





"Every child deserves a champion—someone who believes in them, encourages them and helps them reach their full potential."



Caring for Our Children: Supporting the Next Generation

Children are the heart of our community and the future of our society. The care, guidance and opportunities we provide today will help shape the adults, parents, workers, leaders and community champions of tomorrow.

Every child deserves to feel safe, valued, respected and encouraged. A strong community is one where children know they are supported not only by their families, but also by the wider community around them. Whether at home, school, sports clubs, places of worship or community groups, children should feel a sense of belonging and know that their wellbeing matters.

Often, it is the small acts of kindness that make the greatest difference. A smile, a word of encouragement, patience, praise or simply taking the time to listen can help build a child's confidence and self-esteem. Children remember how adults make them feel, and positive experiences can have a lasting impact on their development.

Young people today face many challenges, including academic pressures, social media influences and concerns about the future. This makes it more important than ever that we show understanding, offer reassurance and create safe spaces where children feel comfortable expressing themselves and asking for help when needed.

Supporting children also means providing opportunities for them to learn, grow and discover their talents. Activities such as sports, music, arts, reading, volunteering and community events help develop confidence, skills and friendships while encouraging a sense of responsibility and belonging.

As parents, carers, teachers, neighbours and community members, we all share a responsibility to nurture and protect the next generation. By leading through example and demonstrating kindness, respect and compassion, we pass on the values that help build stronger communities.

Our children are not only the future—they are an important part of our community today. By investing in their wellbeing, encouraging their potential and supporting their families, we are helping to create a brighter, kinder and more hopeful future for everyone.

Looking Out for Our Elderly in the Community



Our elderly residents are an invaluable part of our community. Through years of hard work, dedication, family life, volunteering, service and life experience, they have helped shape the neighbourhoods we live in today. Their wisdom, resilience and contributions deserve not only our respect, but also our continued support and appreciation.

Looking out for our older residents is about much more than offering assistance when it is needed. It is about creating a community where every person feels valued, included and connected. For some elderly people, daily life can be challenging. Living alone, coping with health conditions, reduced mobility or being far from family and friends can sometimes lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation.

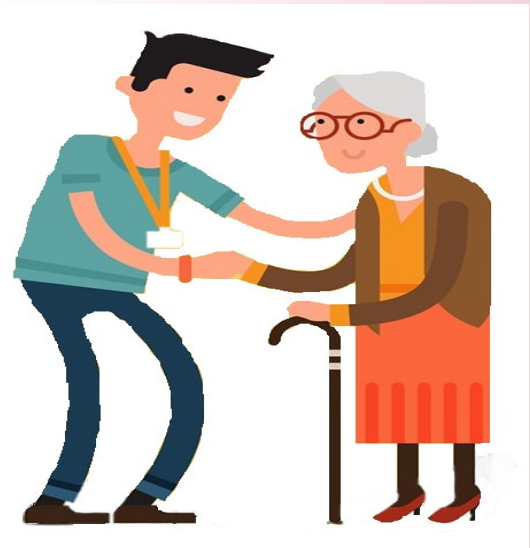
companionship, support or simply a friendly face. By taking the time to notice those around us and reaching out when we can, we help build a stronger and more caring community.

Practical support can be equally important. Helping with shopping, collecting prescriptions, putting out bins, assisting with technology, or offering transport to appointments are all thoughtful ways to lend a hand. During colder months, checking that older neighbours are warm, safe and have access to essentials can be particularly important. Likewise, during periods of hot weather, ensuring they stay hydrated and comfortable can help protect their health and wellbeing.

"A community is judged not by how it treats the strongest among us, but by how it cares for those who may need support."

A simple act of kindness can make a significant difference. Taking a few moments to stop for a chat, making a phone call, checking in on a neighbour, or offering practical help can brighten someone's day and provide reassurance that they are not alone. Often, it is the small gestures that have the greatest impact.

Loneliness is not always visible. There may be elderly residents in our streets and neighbourhoods who would welcome





Families, neighbours, volunteers, local organisations and community leaders all have an important role to play. By working together, we can help identify those who may need additional support and ensure they are connected with the services and assistance available to them. Whether it is practical help, emotional support or simply companionship, every act of kindness matters.

Looking out for our elderly residents is also an expression of gratitude. It is a way of recognising the generations who came before us and acknowledging the

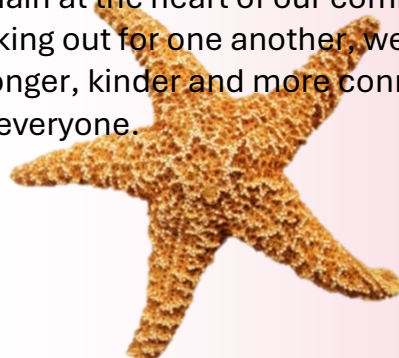
Respect and dignity should always remain at the heart of any support we offer. Many older people value their independence and wish to remain active members of the community. Support should therefore be offered with kindness, patience and understanding. Taking the time to listen is just as important as providing practical help. Their stories, experiences and perspectives enrich our communities and help strengthen the connection between generations.

We can also encourage older residents to stay involved in community life. Local groups, social clubs, coffee mornings, faith organisations and community activities provide valuable opportunities to meet others, build friendships and maintain a sense of belonging. A thriving community is one where people of all ages feel welcome and included.

lasting contributions they continue to make. Their knowledge, memories and life experiences are a valuable part of our community's story.

Let us continue to build a community where older residents feel safe, respected, supported and appreciated. A kind word, a helping hand or a few moments of our time can make a meaningful difference.

Together, we can ensure that our elderly neighbours know they are not forgotten. They remain at the heart of our community, and by looking out for one another, we create a stronger, kinder and more connected future for everyone.



Sun-Kissed, Not Sun-Scorched: Your Guide to Holiday Sun Protection



Many of you have already been on holiday and for others the countdown is on! You've got your flights, your swimsuit, and a good book. But have you packed your best defence against the sun? While we all love a healthy-looking glow, unprotected sun exposure is the leading cause of skin ageing and, more seriously, skin cancer.

A sunburn can ruin a holiday in hours, but smart protection lets you enjoy the sunshine safely. Here's your essential guide to staying protected while you soak up the fun.

Why Go Beyond Sunscreen?

Sunscreen is vital, but it's just one part of a full sun safety strategy. Think of it as your last line of defence, not your only one. A multi-pronged approach is the most effective way to protect your skin.

Your Holiday Sun Protection

Toolkit

1. The Right Sunscreen: SPF is Your BFF

- **SPF 30 or Higher:** Choose a broad-

spectrum sunscreen with at least **SPF 30**. "Broad-spectrum" means it protects against both UVA (ageing) and UVB (burning) rays.

- **Water-Resistant:** This is crucial for swimming or sweating. Remember, "water-resistant" doesn't mean "waterproof"—you must reapply after drying off.

- **Generous Application:** Most people apply only 25-50% of the recommended amount.

You need about **a shot glass full (35ml)** to cover the average adult body. Don't forget ears, the back of your neck, and the tops of your feet!

- **Reapply, Reapply, Reapply:** Every two hours, without fail. And immediately after swimming, sweating, or towel-drying.

2. Seek Smart Shade

The sun's rays are strongest between **11 am and 3 pm**. This is the perfect time to enjoy a long lunch, explore a museum, or simply relax under a sun umbrella, wear a sun hat or sit under the cover of a beach parasol. Natural shade is your best friend.

3. Cover Up in Style

- **Clothing:** Loose, long-sleeved shirts and

long trousers or maxi dresses made from close-weave or specialist UPF (Ultraviolet Protection Factor) fabric offer excellent protection.

- **A Legendary Hat:** A wide-brimmed hat (at least 3 inches/7.5cm) protects your face, ears, and neck far better than a baseball cap.

- **Sunglasses:** Protect your eyes with UV-blocking sunglasses. Look for a CE or UV 400 mark, which means they block nearly 100% of UVA and UVB rays.

Holiday-Specific Tips

- **Water & Snow Beware:** Water and sand reflect and intensify the sun's rays, meaning you can burn faster. Snow is also a highly effective reflector. Be extra vigilant with your SPF at the beach, on a boat, or on the ski slopes.

- **Cloudy Days are Deceptive:** Up to 80% of UV rays can pass through clouds. Don't be fooled by an overcast day into skipping protection.

- **After-Sun Care:** If you do get a little too much sun, soothe skin with aloe vera gel or a fragrance-free moisturiser and drink plenty of water to rehydrate.

Debunking a Common Myth

Myth: "I need to burn first to get a tan."

Fact: A tan is a sign of skin damage. There is no such thing as a "safe" or "healthy" tan from UV exposure. The only safe tan is a fake tan from a bottle.

A Final Thought

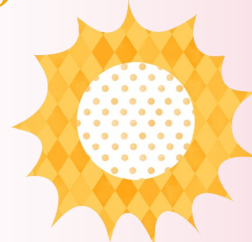
Sun protection isn't about hiding from your holiday; it's about ensuring you can enjoy every moment of it—from the first morning swim to the last sunset stroll—without the pain of a burn or the long-term risk to your health.

Pack your protection, be sun-smart, and have a wonderful, safe holiday!

Stay Safe in the Sun: Quick Checklist

- ♦ • Broad-spectrum sunscreen SPF 30+
- ♦ • Wide-brimmed hat
- ♦ • UV-blocking sunglasses
- ♦ • Cover-up clothing or a light shirt
- ♦ • Seeking shade during peak hours (11am-3pm)

Have a fantastic trip!



Don't Ignore Your Cervical Screening Invitation

Cervical screening (also known as a smear test) is a vital health check that helps prevent cervical cancer. It is offered to people with a cervix aged 25 to 64.

The purpose of cervical screening is not to diagnose cancer, but to detect certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV) that can lead to abnormal changes in the cells of the cervix. If these changes are found early, they can be monitored or treated before they develop into cancer.

Why cervical screening is important

Cervical cancer is often preventable. Regular screening is one of the most effective ways to reduce your risk. Many people with early changes will not have any symptoms, which is why screening is so important even if you feel well.

Who is invited

- Ages 25–49: every 3 years
- Ages 50–64: every 5 years

You will automatically receive an invitation when your screening is due.

What happens during the test

The test is usually carried out by a practice

nurse and takes only a few minutes. A small sample of cells is gently taken from the cervix using a soft brush. Some people may find it slightly uncomfortable, but it should not be painful and it is very quick.

You may feel more at ease if you:

- Book at a time when you are not on your period
- Wear comfortable clothing
- Let the nurse know if you feel anxious

HPV and prevention

Most cases of cervical cancer are linked to HPV. Many HPV infections clear on their own, but some can cause changes to cervical cells over time. The screening programme helps identify these early.

Please do not ignore your invitation

Even if you feel healthy, screening is still essential. If you are overdue or unsure whether you are due, please contact the practice team who will be happy to help.

Diabetes Awareness: Know the Signs and Take Control



Diabetes is a long-term condition that affects how the body regulates blood sugar (glucose). If not managed properly, it can lead to serious health complications, but with early diagnosis and the right care, many people live well with the condition.

There are two main types of diabetes:

- **Type 1 diabetes**, which is not preventable and usually develops in childhood or young adulthood
- **Type 2 diabetes**, which is more common and often linked to lifestyle factors such as weight, diet, and physical activity

- Blurred vision
- Unexplained weight loss

Slow healing of cuts or wounds
These symptoms may develop gradually, particularly in Type 2 diabetes.

Why early diagnosis matters

Early detection of diabetes is important as it helps prevent complications such as heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, nerve damage, and vision problems. Many of these complications can be reduced or avoided with early treatment and regular monitoring.

Reducing your risk

The risk of developing Type 2 diabetes can often be reduced through lifestyle changes, including:

- Eating a balanced diet with less sugar and processed foods
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Being physically active (such as walking, cycling, or swimming)

Attending NHS Health Checks when invited

Common signs and symptoms

It is important to be aware of the early signs of diabetes, which can include:

- Feeling very thirsty
- Needing to pass urine more often than usual
- Feeling tired or lacking energy

Living well with diabetes

If you are diagnosed with diabetes, regular reviews, medication (if needed), and healthy lifestyle choices can help you manage the condition effectively and reduce long-term risks.

If you are concerned about symptoms or your risk of diabetes, please contact the surgery for advice. Early action can make a significant difference.



Why Is Water So Important?

Since water makes up around 60% of our total weight, it is the primary component of our body. It is vital for many important body functions, from flushing out waste to lubricating your joints.

All body cells, organs, and tissues require water to function. Generally, a person can only survive without water for a few days

Water regulates our internal temperature by distributing heat throughout the body and cooling it through perspiration (sweat)

As a major component of blood, water helps transport nutrients and oxygen to cells throughout the body.

Water also helps carry waste from the body for excretion through perspiration, urination, and bowel movements.

The Kidneys need water to effectively filter waste from the blood and flush it from the body as urine. Staying adequately hydrated helps prevent Kidney stones and urinary tract infections (UTIs), which can harm the kidneys.

Drinking water daily can help prevent dehydration, a condition that occurs when you lose more fluids than you absorb.

Early signs of dehydration include:

- **Feeling thirsty**
- **Dry Mouth**
- **Dry skin**
- **Dark coloured urine**
- **Urinating less than usual**
- **Fatigue**
- **Dizziness**

Because water is involved in so many body functions, dehydration can eventually cause life-threatening symptoms, including:

- **Confusion**
- **Rapid breathing**
- **Fainting**
- **Inability to urinate**
- **Shock**
- **Rapid heartbeat**



For healthy individuals, the adequate daily water intake is around 11.5 cups for women and about 15.5 cups for men. This includes fluids consumed from all foods and beverages.

Experts estimate that most people get around 20% of their daily water intake from food. This means women should drink about 9 cups of fluid daily, while men should aim for 13 cups to maintain adequate hydration.

One easy way to see if you are properly hydrated is to check the color of your urine. If you are drinking enough water, your urine will be pale yellow. If it is dark, you may need to increase your consumption.

Individuals with heart failure or kidney disease may need to limit their fluid intake.

Can You Drink Too Much Water?

Drinking too much water can lead to water intoxication, which occurs when the kidneys can not flush out excess water. This can cause a medical emergency due to decreased sodium concentrations in the blood known as Hyponatremia



RED FLAG Symptoms

Chest Pain

- discomfort that feels like squeezing, pressure, or heaviness
 - pain and sweating, nausea, or a feeling of dread
 - difficulty breathing
 - any change in the pattern or frequency of "normal" pain
 - pain or pressure that gets worse with exertion and improves with rest
 - pain associated with passing out or feelings of light-headedness
 - pain or shortness of breath in anyone with a swollen or painful leg
- feeling like their heart is fluttering or beating quickly

Shortness of Breath

- difficulty breathing that worsens when they lie flat or when you exert themselves
- feeling like they are breathing faster than usual or are having difficulty talking
- difficulty breathing that starts suddenly
- worsening of formerly stable shortness of breath, such as is seen in an acute asthma attack
- shortness of breath with fever
- coughing up blood

difficulty breathing in anyone with a swollen or painful leg

Symptoms of Stroke or TIA

Any of these symptoms are concerning even if they are transient or improve:

- weakness, numbness, or inability to move any part of their body
- any changes in vision, including double vision, blurry vision, or loss of vision
- difficulty speaking
- confusion
- feelings of dizziness, loss of balance, un-

steadiness, or difficulty walking

- recent head injury (such as a fall) or stroke seizure.

Abdominal and Gastrointestinal Symptoms

- bloody stools or bloody diarrhoea
 - diarrhoea associated with severe abdominal pain
 - new onset of constipation, or stools that look darker than normal
 - vomiting blood or vomit that looks like coffee grounds
 - history of heavy alcohol use
 - vomiting or pain that is keeping you from taking your regular medications
 - abdominal pain associated with fever, vomiting, diarrhoea, or lack of appetite
 - abdominal pain that becomes worse after meals
 - abdominal pain in the presence of chronic ibuprofen (or any other NSAID drug) or aspirin use
 - abdominal pain that starts suddenly
 - abdominal pain that doesn't resolve
- any of the above symptoms associated with a history of heavy alcohol use.

Loss of Consciousness or Significant Light-headedness

- passing out associated with chest pain, palpitations, abdominal pain, shortness of breath, or headache
 - passing out associated with the presence of any symptoms concerning for stroke or TIA
 - passing out without preceding warning symptoms
- passing out during exercise.

Severe Headache

- headache that starts suddenly (you can pinpoint the exact moment your headache began), like a "thunderclap"
- headache that you would describe as the

"worst headache of your life"

- headache associated with confusion, fever, stiff neck, vomiting, seizure, weakness, numbness, visual changes, or pain with chewing recent trauma or fall.

Visual Changes

- double vision, blurry vision, or loss of vision (even if transient)
 - history of glaucoma
 - history of diabetes, high blood pressure, or atrial fibrillation
- changes in vision associated with severe eye pain, headache, scalp or jaw pain.

Allergic Reaction (Following an insect sting or ingestion of any substance such as a food or medication)

- feeling like it is difficult to breathe
- hoarseness

- swelling of lips, face, tongue, or throat
- redness, rash or hives over the body.

Depression

- feeling that they want to hurt themselves or someone else
 - history of abuse or feeling that they are unsafe at home
 - persistent sadness
 - loss of interest in normal activities
- increased use of alcohol or substances.

Back Pain

- incontinence or retention of stool or urine
- weakness or numbness of the legs or groin area
- persistent pain that comes on with no history of falls or other trauma
- history of osteoporosis
- history of cancer

Stay Connected with Your GP Practice

To make it easier for you to manage your healthcare, we encourage all patients to use our online services:

☒ Accurx Patient Triage

Submit routine appointment requests, medical queries, and administrative requests online quickly and safely.

<https://accurx.nhs.uk/patient-initiated/M85779>

☒ NHS App

You can use the NHS App to order repeat prescriptions, view test results, and manage appointments.

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/>

Help Us Help You

Where possible, please use online services instead of calling the surgery. This helps our phone lines stay free for patients who need urgent assistance.

Community Support in Kingstanding (Birmingham)

A simple guide to local services you can access for health, wellbeing, housing and support.

START HERE (Local Walk-in Hub)
Witton Lakes Eco Hub (Witton Lodge)
Faulkner's Farm Drive, B23
Tel: 0121 382 1930

Walk-in for advice on jobs, wellbeing, food support, and community services.

Mental Health Support

Birmingham Mind
Tel: 0121 262 3555
Self-referral available

24/7 Mental Health Helpline

Tel: 0121 262 3555
Health & Care Needs
Adult Social Care (Birmingham City Council)
Tel: 0121 303 1234
Request a care assessment

NHS 111

Tel: 111 for urgent advice
Money, Benefits & Housing
Citizens Advice Birmingham
Tel: 0808 278 7999
Walk-in available in Erdington

Shelter Tel: 0808 800 4444

Older People Support
Age UK Birmingham
Tel: 0121 437 0033

Family & Community Support

Compass Support
Tel: 0121 748 8111

Forward Carers (Carers Hub)

Tel: 0333 006 9711
Drug & Alcohol Support
Aquarius
Tel: 0121 622 8181

Community Champion Spotlight

This edition we would like to recognise the valuable contribution made by local volunteers who help make our community a better place.

Volunteers give their time freely to support residents, charities, community groups and those who may be vulnerable or isolated. Their dedication helps strengthen community spirit and provides support where it is needed most.

If you know someone who deserves recognition for their volunteering efforts, please let us know. We would be delighted to feature them in a future edition of our newsletter. Email us at ashiforum@outlook.com

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Global Events, Local Impact: Why World News Matters to Our Community

It is easy to think that events happening thousands of miles away have little connection to our everyday lives here at home. However, recent world events have shown just how interconnected our world has become. International conflicts, economic uncertainty, rising energy costs, climate-related events and global trade disruptions can all have a direct impact on local communities across the UK.

One of the most noticeable effects has been the continued pressure on the cost of living. Global tensions and disruptions to energy supplies have contributed to higher fuel and energy prices, which in turn affect transport costs, food prices and household bills. Many families are still feeling the strain, with food shopping, fuel costs and day-to-day expenses remaining a significant concern.

Local businesses are also facing challenges. Many report ongoing concerns about rising costs, economic uncertainty and increased operating expenses. These pressures can affect the services available within our community and make it harder for businesses to grow and invest.

The recent extreme weather experienced across parts of the UK and Europe serves as another reminder that global issues can quickly become local concerns. Heatwaves and changing weather patterns can affect health, particularly for older people, young children and those with long-term medical conditions.

Despite these challenges, our community continues to demonstrate resilience, kindness and support for one another. Local organisations, charities, healthcare services, volunteers and community groups work tirelessly to help those in need. Neighbours continue to look out for one another, and many residents give their time to support community initiatives.

While we cannot control world events, we can control how we respond to them. By supporting local businesses, checking on vulnerable neighbours, volunteering where possible and staying connected as a community, we can help ensure that our area remains a safe, welcoming and supportive place for everyone.

Together, we can face global challenges with local strength.

Mr Rajash Mehta–

