



An Apple A Day

Newsletter for patients registered at GP Surgeries in Hitchin and Whitwell

HWPCN

**Hitchin & Whitwell
Primary Care Network**

Welcome to the third newsletter from HWPCN!

Since our last newsletter Dr Tara Belcher has returned to the role of Clinical Director and we are reviewing the way in which the PCN will be run in the future. In the meantime, we continue to work with all of our PCN surgeries in delivering services such as physiotherapy, social prescribing and coaching to patients.

We are also looking at how we will deliver the increase in appointments and capacity outlined in the Government's proposals on Enhanced Access from October this year. Watch this space!

As always, we would value your feedback on this issue as well as ideas on what you might like us to cover in future. Please do get in touch:

Clinical Director – Dr Tara Belcher (Portmill Surgery) hwpcn.cd@nhs.net

PCN Manager – Angela Garrod hwpcn.admin@nhs.net

So far this year...

Covid vaccine update: As a PCN we vaccinated vulnerable 5-11 year olds in the area and provided Spring boosters for care home residents. Housebound patients were served by Bridge Cottage Pharmacy from Welwyn, and others who were eligible have been invited to book via the National Booking Service.

Social prescribing: Referrals to our Social Prescribers are on the rise and this may be linked to the pressures that many people are facing with the cost of living crisis. The service can provide practical, social and emotional support with non-medical issues, helping people with their long-term goals towards improved wellbeing (see purple boxes below). For more information visit HertsHelp at <https://www.hertshelp.net/>, email info@hertshelp.net or call 0300 123 4044 Monday - Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday - Sunday 10am to 6pm. You can also ask your GP for a referral.

Surgery staffing: Portmill and Whitwell surgeries have new Practice Managers and we are delighted to welcome them!

Portmill – Lindsey Wright

Whitwell – Geoff Bartram



Support in a crisis	Help to manage at home	Advice on funding your care
Help explaining a problem or having your say	Finding the right care and support	Hospital and Community Navigation Service

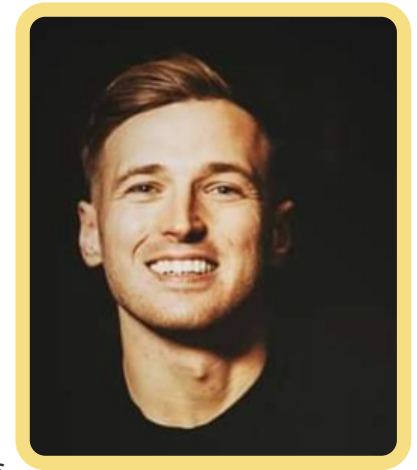
Service Spotlight

In this issue, we talk to one of our new Health and Wellbeing Coaches for Children and Young People – Conor Macken about his work and its impact.

"I love seeing a change"

Who are you?

My name is Conor Macken and since November I have been working for the PCN as a coach for young people. My role is to help them fulfil their potential and provide some guidance along the way. I work alongside GRIT, a local charity which supports teenagers – see NHS Partnership - Grit (gritcharity.org).



How did you get here?

I have always worked as a fitness coach and personal trainer (I also run a gym in Offley). In that role I was able to help young people facing challenges to work through them using fitness as a tool. I got involved with GRIT via their boxing programme and heard about this role, so I applied. I have since completed training in both coaching and safeguarding, and I am supported by fantastic colleagues who have helped me to develop my skills.

What does a Health and Wellbeing Coach do?

There are two of us and we get referrals from secondary schools as well as GPs. A patient can have 6-8 sessions with me, during which I get to know them and find out what they are dealing with, before we set some goals to work towards. Some young people want a safe space and a listening ear; others will want specific strategies to help them overcome difficulties. I will help them identify tools and resources to help them, and if they are interested, I also use physical exercise – such as boxing – to help with anger issues and to build discipline. I encourage them to build support around them, particularly from their parents if that's possible.

We understand that not all young people will want to seek help through their school or GP so we are introducing a QR code which will enable self-referrals as well as a form on the GRIT website.

The best part of your job so far?

I love seeing young people realising that they can rise to the challenges in their lives. One patient came to us with no direction or self-esteem, which was impacting his engagement with school and decisions about the future. That changed over our sessions as he worked through his goals and he has now applied for an apprenticeship!

Is there a highlight you would like to share?

Just the message that no young person should feel they have no-one to talk to. Our service is here for them and they can contact me on conor.macken@nhs.net or via GRIT <https://gritcharity.org>.



Positive Movement – award-winning exercise programme for over 60s

Thanks to funding from Herts County Council, the Letchworth Centre for Healthy Living is now offering FREE online classes in Positive Movement. Positive Movement is a very gentle exercise approach which combines techniques drawn from Adaptive Yoga, the Alexander Technique and Mindfulness. Comprising 2 sessions a week for 20 weeks, this enjoyable programme is open to anyone living in Herts who is over 60 and has mobility problems or is living with a long-term condition. The classes provide an hour of gentle exercise, followed by 1/2 hour of optional time to chat over Zoom. Reported benefits include improved mobility, balance and self-confidence alongside reduced stress and fear of falling.



To enrol or enquire further, email PositiveMovement@letchworthcentre.org including your phone number and best times to reach you.



Healthy Memory Café reminder: This is a monthly meet-up for people with memory loss or dementia and their carers. These sessions offer a cuppa, chat, information and support from professionals, and are held in the Create Community Hub Letchworth from 10-12 on the last Thursday of every month.

For more info contact 01462 792190.

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