

STW GP NEWSLETTER

MEET A LOCAL
GP

WHAT'S NEW IN
GENERAL PRACTICE

NETWORKS FOR
ALL GPs



A WARM WELCOME TO HEALTH HERO

On the 1st October, HealthHero became the new provider of Out of Hours services for STW, taking over from Shropdoc after many years of valued service to our communities. We would like to acknowledge the significant contribution that Shropdoc and its teams have made locally over the years, and to thank them for their dedication to both patients and colleagues. As we move forward, we warmly welcome HealthHero into their new role.

Dr Sue Lavelle (Medical Director) has shared this message:

“As the new provider of STW’s GP Out of Hours service, we’re excited to begin this journey and are committed to ensuring a smooth and safe transition for both patients and system partners from October 1. Continuity and stability are key priorities for us, and as we settle into our new role, we’d like to become active system partners. We’re genuinely interested in hearing your thoughts on how the service could evolve to better meet the needs of your patients and teams. Your insights are invaluable, and we’d welcome any feedback or suggestions you may have. Please feel free to contact me sue.lavelle@healthhero.com

We're also very keen to engage with local clinicians to deliver the service. If you're interested in working with us, please do get in touch, or apply via this link <https://apply.workable.com/healthhero/j/F8EDF785F6/>. For those of you already working within the OOH service locally, we offer a speedy onboarding process”





GP FLEXIBLE CAREER PATHWAY MEET DR ROSS WILKINSON GP UTC

If you'd told my 8-year-old self, wide-eyed in front of the TV watching Paras and Commandos race across the Falklands, that I'd end up as a portfolio GP in rural Shropshire, I'd have laughed. Back then, the plan involved playing action man and adventure. Yet after nearly a decade in the Army, two degrees, overseas deployments, and two kids along the way, I've found myself somewhere unexpected and surprisingly perfect. General practice in Shropshire has become my home, both professionally and personally.

I've been living and working in Shropshire since 2010, drawn north from the South East by the unbeatable combination of Shropshire Hills, family ties and reasonably priced housing. After completing my medical degree at St George's, London, I moved to Shropshire for my Foundation Years and GP training – and managed to work in all three Oswestry practices before qualifying. I now split my time between Caxton Surgery and the Urgent Treatment Centre at RSH, and have developed several Lifestyle Medicine-focused roles along the way. But the route here was far from straight. Before medicine, there was psychology and then the Army, a long-standing itch I had to scratch. I served just shy of nine years, starting with an infantry battalion – cue much fun with armoured vehicles on the Canadian plains, and less fun in the -20° Polish winter. Deployments took me to Northern Ireland, Macedonia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. I completed both Commando and Parachute training, and once spent four glorious weeks as a ski instructor in Bavaria. There were surreal highlights too: using a Finnish Army deployable sauna on operations, buying rugs in Kabul, and living (briefly) in Saddam Hussein's palace – though sadly the looters got there first.

Surviving Army life more or less unscathed, I returned to a second childhood dream of medicine, first cemented at 18 while volunteering in a children's hospital in Jerusalem. By the time I finished med school at 36 (with two kids born during training), it was clear that GP offered the stability, flexibility and scope for lifestyle-focused care I was looking for – if only there was more time with each patient. That interest led me to Public Health England, where I was essentially paid to promote physical activity – something I'd already been doing enthusiastically (to the annoyance of friends and family) for years.

The PHE role brought me into a community of 'Physical Activity Champions' – led by Dr Zoe Williams, once ITV's Gladiator 'Amazon' – and inspired me to help found the British Society of Lifestyle Medicine. Meeting such like-minded, progressive clinicians was uplifting and has become a thread running through much of my clinical work. Since then, I've run Diabetic Group Consultations for Shrewsbury PCN, authored a Healthy Lifestyle app for people with Learning Disabilities, and created a COVID vaccination website for minority groups.

This same passion led me to co-found Oswestry Parkrun in 2018, supported by funding from the three Oswestry practices. I still volunteer as a Run Director every six weeks or so. It's free, it's friendly, and it's every Saturday at 9am – so come along, whether you walk, jog, or just want to feel smug for the rest of the weekend. I regularly "prescribe" it to patients.

Shropshire has given me the space to explore, reset, and reinvent. It's not only been a great place to work – in practice, urgent care, or public health – but also a wonderful place to live and raise a family.



GP LOCUM BOOKING PLATFORM UPDATE

Launched in June 25 we now have 32 practices and 77 GPs signed up to the Platform with many practices and doctors connecting through it.

A resurvey within SSGPN was conducted in August 2025 with two additional questions surrounding the locum booking platform.

The feedback was positive and many GPs confirm finding work through it and find it easy to use.

Although we have seen some improvement in availability of locum and salaried posts, what is still concerning is the amount of GPs struggling to find work.

The system is basic but effective, we have many identified areas of improvement that we will do as and when funding permits! We are always open to more thoughts and ideas.

Please contact info@ssgpn.org.uk with any ideas/suggestions or to join the locum platform as a GP or Practice.



Diary Dates:

Exemplify Course (Type 2 Diabetes)

Monday 10th + 17th November,
Monday 15th December

Understanding PCN sessions: 5/11/25
or 20/11/25 at 13.00 webinar.

1 x evening meeting with food for
Locum, Mid GP and Wise Fives in
November or January tbc imminently.

For all events Email [Serena](#) to book.

First 5 Network

Has been developed to create a community for, and to provide support to, early year GPs in the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin localities, regardless of where you have trained, what role you currently have, or what your plans are for the future. We want to support you in your continuing professional development, feel at home in the local area, and know where to turn for guidance. We achieve this through educational and networking events, online and in person social groups, linking you up with local employers, and being a point of contact for any concerns you may have. If you are within your first 5 years of CCT, working in STW as a GP, and wish to join, we would love to hear from you by [emailing](#)

Wise 5 Network

For all our 'wiser' GPs, those within 5 years of possible retirement/ leaving the profession (we won't hold you to that) - a group to share problems and access to educational and support events. If you would like to join this group, please [email](#).

Locum Network

For anyone that does regular or ad hoc locum sessions in STW. The locum list is regularly shared with the local practices. It also offers training, case discussions and networking.

Meetings this year will include BLS, safeguarding, case discussions and networking events. [Email](#) if you would like to join.

Mid GP Network

A brand new network group for those of you who are no longer a First 5 nor yet a Wise 5! A group for support, education and networking.

If you would like to join this group please [email](#).

UNDERSTANDING PCNS – A LUNCHTIME BRIEFING SESSION FOR GPs

You're invited to a short online session for GPs explaining the purpose and value of Primary Care Networks (PCNs), and how to work effectively with your local PCN for the benefit of your patients.

The session will be led by Caroline Brown, Chief Operating Officer, Shrewsbury PCN. Choose one date:

- Wed 5 Nov, 1–1.45pm: [Register here](#)
- Thu 20 Nov, 1–1.45pm: [Register here](#)

A Teams invite will be sent before the session.

These sessions are designed mainly for recently qualified GPs, but are open to any GP interested in understanding PCNs.

DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS FOR GP'S IN STW

Newly-Qualified GPs – Leadership and Development Programme.

With many newly-qualified GPs in STW, and the end of the NHSE GP Fellowship scheme, the ICB is funding a new Leadership and Development Programme for post-CCT GPs. Full details are yet to be confirmed, but it will likely include modules on supervision and leadership skills, practice management, GP partnerships, and the local health system. One-to-one confidential mentoring will be offered, plus regular sessions with a skilled facilitator to share learning and progress. The ICB is currently seeking expressions of interest for this programme from GPs (partners, salaried or locums) who qualified in the past nine months, and ST3s due to qualify over the next few months.

Contact Phil Morgan (philip.morgan3@nhs.net) for more information, and to express interest. This does not commit you to the programme; formal applications will open later in the autumn.

GP Partnership Programme

To address the decline in GP Partners across STW practices, the ICB is funding a programme for salaried or sessional GPs interested in partnership. This will include online sessions led by subject experts covering all aspects of the role (details tbc), plus opportunities for one-to-one buddying/supervision to understand the day-to-day responsibilities of GP Partners. Expressions of interest are invited from:

- Salaried/sessional GPs interested in partnership
- Experienced GP Partners to act as buddies to the GPs, providing supervision and support (funding will be provided)

Contact Phil Morgan (philip.morgan3@nhs.net) for more information, and to express interest. This does not commit you to the programme; formal applications will open later in the autumn.

Key contacts for GPs in STW:

- Recruitment and Retention Lead: Dr Serena Jones stw.gprecruitmentandretentionlead@nhs.net
- Marketing Lead: Dr Rachel Sissons stw.gpmarketinglead@nhs.net
- GP Trainee Differential Attainment Leads (role share): Dr Rachael Hayhurst rachaelhayhurst@nhs.net & Dr Gideon Eyitemi gideon.eyitemi@nhs.net
- Education Leads: Dr Melanie Thompson melanie.thompson20@nhs.net and Dr Damien Thompson damien.thompson@nhs.net
- Mentor Leads: Dr Melanie Thompson melanie.thompson20@nhs.net and Dr Rachel Taylor rachel.taylor3@nhs.net
- GP Fellowship Clinical Lead: Dr Priya George priya.george4@nhs.net
- GP First 5 Network Lead: Dr Helen Lloyd stw.first5@nhs.net
- STW ICB Primary Care Workforce Lead: Phil Morgan philip.morgan3@nhs.net



