



**Darwen Healthcare**

*"Where your health matters"*

## Newsletter Winter 2020

**Welcome** to a long-overdue Practice update. The last 9 months have certainly been the strangest in living memory. We can only express our deepest sympathy for those who have lost a loved one through COVID, as well as those who have suffered a loss through any other reason. We hope that if you have had COVID that you regain your health once more.

We would like to thank all our patients who have worked with us in the roll out: as shown in our annual survey earlier this year, the majority of those using the remote services were satisfied with their appointment. Many said they felt there would have been no different had they been seen face to face.

The Annual Flu vaccination programme saw Darwen Practices working together to deliver a safe, social distancing service, we will expand on these items further in the newsletter.

### Remembering those that have been lost during COVID and the dedication of our NHS workers during this time

A bench has been erected in Sunnyhurst Woods to commemorate those who have lost their lives in the coronavirus pandemic.

A petition was started by Pauline McLoughlin from Darwen which was noticed by Darwen West Cllr Brian Taylor who helped Pauline's idea come to life. Cllr Taylor spoke with Darwen Town Council for funding and Blackburn with Darwen Council for permission to have it installed, while Pauline contacted WEC Engineering who built the bench.

Pauline said: "Six months ago I witnessed first hand the effects of the death of a loved one, in my case my mum, not only on myself and my family members but also on my fellow health professionals."



**Wishing you a happy Christmas & Healthy New Year**

## Hi everyone



This has been an incredibly tough year mainly due to the restrictions of Covid but as a practice we have continued to provide quality care to our patients.

Our practice team remains relatively unchanged but we are working across the Darwen GP Network to increase capacity with the recruitment of Clinical Staff such as Pharmacists and Physician Associates. The network has also engaged Social Prescribing Link Workers who will help guide patients to non-clinical support to help improve their health.

We continue to encourage and support our team to upskill and develop further within their roles and we are pleased to announce Katrina and Raesa, our practice nurses, have completed and passed their Non-Medical Prescribers and therefore can now prescribe for medical conditions they deal with. Simon (Practice Paramedic) has also just completed his Non-Medical Prescribing Course and is awaiting his exam results.

Terri (previously Healthcare Assistant) has completed and passed the Assistance Practitioner Course. Eliot who many of you will know from reception is undertaking Training as a Health Care Assistant.

Kim, Nichola, Sue and Craig support me in my role as Business Manager and we have an amazing Non-Clinical Team of Care Navigators/Reception Staff, Prescription Clerks, Medical Secretaries and Clinical Coders and as you will see further on in the newsletter they have handled over 84,000 calls within the last 7 months.

A huge element of our work at the practice involves completing clinical audits and quality improvement plans so that the quality of our care remains that of a high standard and allows us to continue to ensure that all our staff continually increase their knowledge and skills, both clinically and non-clinically, which improves patient care.

I want to personally thank all our Patient Participation Group who once again provided the questions for the annual survey and continued to assist with the quarterly newsletter.

I cannot express how proud I am of my practice team and how fortunate I am to work with them all.

It just remains for me to wish you all the best for the season and a healthy New Year. Please keep safe – and remember Hands, Face, Space.

*Ann Neville* **Business Manager**

## Message from Dr Ninan Senior Partner

They say 'time flies' and this has been quite true for 2020. What a year it has been! Dr Penny Morris retired from our Practice after being a GP Partner here for 23 years at the end of March. Our plans for giving her a fitting retirement 'do' were scuppered by the national lockdown, and it was a hasty goodbye. Our whole practice team rallied around to new ways of working including telephone and video consultations. After the initial shock of seeing an always busy waiting room being empty, the practice was soon delivering health care safely and effectively with barely a pause.



The GP partners could not be more proud of the way everyone in the Darwen Healthcare Team pulled out all the stops to maintain "service as usual". I cannot thank our clinical and administrative teams enough for their hard work and keeping a positive spirit throughout this period, which has been quite hard on all concerned. The amount of contacts shown on page 4 indicates just how busy we have been, yet we still maintained a good level of satisfaction in the Patient Survey at the peak of the first wave of COVID.

The three GP Practices in Darwen had already started to work together with other services, both in the community and health centre, under the Darwen Primary Care Neighbourhood Banner, this allowed us to co-operate in delivering the largest Flu vaccination programme we have done up to date. We had considerable input from the patient participation group, members also helping to arrange the use of community facilities and planning the logistics. We are grateful to all those who took part and helped increase the vaccination uptake. Within the next few weeks, we will see the largest ever vaccination programme being rolled out across the nation and with it, light at the end of the tunnel.

I would like to wish you all a blessed and peaceful festive period over Christmas and a healthy and safe New Year

*Dr Mammen Ninan*

Merry Christmas to everyone. I hope that you have managed to cope with this difficult year. As my first full year since retirement it has been a huge personal change. I have often thought about you as former patients and colleagues.



I have visited the Practice when social distancing has allowed and carried out a little work in Darwen. I have also joined the NHS 111 Covid Assessment telephone service. During the year I have enjoyed gardening, dog walking and cycling in the district particularly the former railway lines and canals of our industrial heritage.

The best news we could have this Christmas is the vaccine which is starting roll out on the 14<sup>th</sup> December and we can hope for life to return to some form of normality. I hope you can stay safe until then.

*Dr Chris Dalton*

### **Hello Everyone**

It was with a degree of sadness that I retired from the practice in April without being able to say personal goodbyes to patients and colleagues alike. I often find myself wondering how everyone is managing in the difficult year we have all had.



I had planned in the short term to continue with ad hoc work at the practice but COVID put paid to that.

The year has developed into one of great personal change for me. Retirement gives me the time to do all the things I enjoy - walking our border collie, cycling, gardening and cooking. Wellies have become my favourite footwear!

We have moved to Nottinghamshire to be nearer our children and a highlight of our week is looking after our 18 month old grandson. 2 weeks self isolation with a teething toddler was a different matter!

My son, Jack, got married in September and has a baby due in May.

Hopefully 2021 will give us all more to look forward to, have a safe and happy Christmas

Best wishes

*Dr Penny Morris*

December 2020

Dear all

I am delighted to be able to contribute a few words to this newsletter and it gives me great pleasure to be able to pass on my Christmas greetings to you all, as we approach what is going to be probably the most unusual Christmas I can remember.



It is wonderful to see all the Christmas lights going up in the local streets, in shop windows and in people's houses and gardens, even in such a difficult time. That emphasises to me that no matter what, the determination of us all not to be beaten and to continue to overcome both the darkness of winter and the trials of the current times prevails.

I am keeping well and have been using the time of lockdown to catch up on those things I have never had enough time to do such as reading and doing the garden, and most of all to have time to spend with my family -at a distance-!!

I am so much looking forward to the new year, the new spring and the hope of a new chapter in all of our lives with the arrival now of the vaccine and the hard work being done to distribute it by my former health professional colleagues

I miss everyone at Darwen Health Care, both the staff and all my former patients. The memories of my time with you all as a GP are never far from my thoughts, and I wish you all well, in whatever circumstances you may find yourself in.

Stay safe and have a peaceful and fulfilling Christmas in the hope of better things to come in the approaching new Year

*Dr Ray Sudell*

# We are proud of the service our staff have delivered keeping patients and themselves safe

**7412**

Number of Face to Face/  
Telephone Reviews undertaken  
by the Nursing Team

**84,344**

Number of  
telephone  
calls taken  
by  
Reception/  
Prescriptions

**5917**

Number of  
Video  
Consultations  
by GPs and  
Clinicians

Delivering  
Safe Services to  
our patients  
during COVID  
May to  
November

**3655**

Number of  
Vaccinations  
for Flu,  
Pneumococcal  
Shingles &  
Child Flu

**15,043**

Number of  
Telephone  
Consultations  
by GPs &  
Clinicians

**1599**

Number of Face to Face Consultations by  
GPs & Clinicians



**Darwen Healthcare**

## Flu Vaccination Programme

This year saw the three GP Practices in the Darwen Primary Care Neighbourhood deliver a unique programme of socially distanced vaccinations. The practices were assisted by other members of the Neighbourhood teams including District Nursing Services, local Councillors and Patient Representatives.



As well as running clinics at the Health Centre at weekends and evenings we made use of community centres at Hoddlesden and St Edwards Church and we would like to thank them for allowing us to use their facilities.

We also ran drive through vaccinations at the Health Centre and the Market Car Park. The Community Nursing Team visited Care Homes and administered the vaccine to the residents.



Feedback from patients proved this to be a resounding success

## COVID 19 VACCINATIONS

Plans are well underway for the delivery of the Covid Vaccinations in Blackburn with Darwen

We will contact you in due course with an invitation to book. We ask at this time that you wait until contacted. We need to keep the telephone lines as free as possible for patients ringing in who may be acutely unwell.

We know many of you will have many questions about the new Covid vaccine. To help you with any queries that you may have please click the link below that will take you to the Blackburn with Darwen CCG Covid Frequently Asked Questions site

[Covid Vaccine FAQs - NHS Blackburn with Darwen CCG](#)

**Surgery Opening Times**

30 Dec Wednesday 08:00-18:30  
 31 Dec Thursday 08:00-18:30

24 Dec Christmas Eve 08:00-18:30

25 Dec Christmas Day Closed

26 Dec Boxing Day Closed

27 Dec Sunday Closed

28 Dec Monday Closed

29 Dec Tuesday 08:00-18:30

**2021**

01 Jan New Years Day Closed

02 Jan Saturday Closed

03 Jan Sunday Closed

04 Jan Monday 08:00-18:30

**Chemist Opening Times****Market St Tel: 01254 873977**

24th December 7.30am – 7.30pm

25th December 10am – 2pm

26th December 7.30am – 6pm

27th December 10am – 6pm

28th December 10am – 6pm

29th December 7.30 am – 7.30pm

30th December 7.30am – 7.30pm

31st December 7.30am – 7.30pm

1st January 10am – 6pm

**Cohens Tel: 01254 772106**

24th December 8.30am – 6.30pm

25th December CLOSED

26th December CLOSED

27th December CLOSED

28th December CLOSED

29th December 8.30am – 6.30pm

30th December 8.30am – 6.30pm

31st December 8.30am – 6.30pm

1st January CLOSED

**Geloos Tel: 01254 705849**

24th December 9am – 6.30pm

25th December CLOSED

26th December 9am – 1pm

27th December CLOSED

28th December CLOSED

29th December 9am – 6.30pm

30th December 9am – 6.30pm

31st December 9am – 6.30pm

1st January CLOSED

**Everest Tel: 01254 777230**

24th December 9am – 6pm

25th December CLOSED

26th December 9am -11am TBC

27th December CLOSED

28th December CLOSED

29th December 9am – 6pm

30th December 9am – 6pm

31st December 9am – 6pm

1st January CLOSED

**Church St Tel: 01254 702435**

24th December 9am – 5:30pm

25th December CLOSED

26th December 9am – 5pm

27th December CLOSED

28th December CLOSED

29th December 9am - 5:30pm

30th December 9am - 5:30pm

31st December 9am - 5:30pm

1st January CLOSED

**Boots Tel: 01254 703120**

24th December 8am – 6pm

25th December CLOSED

26th December 8am – 5pm

27th December CLOSED

28th December CLOSED

29th December 8am – 6pm

30th December 8am – 6pm

31st December 8am – 6pm

1st January CLOSED

## Arrangements when the Surgery is closed over Christmas and New Year

You can check practice websites for updates and follow the general guidance when surgeries are closed

If you have an urgent problem that cannot wait until surgery is open please ring the [NHS helpline on 111](#)

If you are experiencing pains in your chest , shortness of breath or the person you are with has lost consciousness and cannot be roused ring 999 and ask for an ambulance

[Click here to be taken to the NHS 111 online help website](#)

## Please Remember HANDS - FACE - SPACE



November sees the launch of Self-care Week when the NHS reminds everyone of the best way to treat coughs, colds and minor illnesses.

Antibiotics do not work on viral infections, most of which can be treated with over the counter medication.

Your local pharmacist can also prescribe a range of medications if you are referred by the practice, if it is felt that is the best service to treat your needs. You can find out more on our website (link below)

**Home care is best**

Most common illnesses don't need antibiotics

This is how long they may last

Ear infection	4 days
Sore throat	1 week
Common cold	4-7 weeks
Sinusitis	2-3 weeks
Cough or bronchitis	3 weeks

Your local pharmacist can recommend medication to help ease symptoms

**Can the Pharmacist help with your symptoms?**

The pharmacist is an excellent source of advice for many common ailments, such as:

- Low Back Pain
- Eczema
- Heartburn and Indigestion
- Fever in Children
- Constipation
- Headache
- Coughs in Adults
- Acne (spots)
- Sprains and Strains
- Sore Throat
- Ear Ache
- Common Cold
- Sinusitis

Self Care Forum

**Be prepared... To make over your medicine cabinet**

Coughs, colds, headaches and other common illnesses can leave you feeling unwell and struggling to carry on as normal. Be prepared by keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home.

All it takes is just 2 minutes to make sure your medicine cabinet is ready to help you manage common illnesses. GPs recommend your medicine cabinet should contain the following:

- ✓ A self-care guide
- ✓ Painkillers, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen
- ✓ Antihistamines for allergies
- ✓ Antibiotic cream for bites and stings
- ✓ A lozenge to help constipation
- ✓ Sunscreen
- ✓ A first aid kit with plasters and bandages to manage cuts and grazes

Self Care for all the family

Always be careful to follow the product instructions and regularly check medicines are within date. If you're not sure what medicines to stock or how best to treat the symptoms of common health problems, ask your pharmacist for advice.

Self Care Forum

## What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is not always physical violence. It can also include:

- coercive control and 'gaslighting'
- economic abuse
- online abuse
- threats and intimidation
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse

This has been recognised by the Government and there is a webpage dedicated to help and advice at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help#coronavirus-covid19-and-domestic-abuse>

There is also help and information about what to do and the things to look for if you feel someone you know is a victim.

We also have a very good support Service locally in the Wish Centre



**Domestic  
Abuse  
Services**

01254 260465

[www.bddwa.org](http://www.bddwa.org)

[info@bddwa.org.uk](mailto:info@bddwa.org.uk)

### How we can help

- We can provide help and advice if you are suffering domestic abuse
- A range of therapeutic programmes
- Services for men and women who are perpetrating abuse
- Group programmes for children and young people who have witnessed domestic abuse
- Legal advice clinics
- Counselling services

**Follow Us On:**

 Facebook and  Twitter  
@WishCentreBDDWA

## Praise for the NHS, but there are others?

Thursday Tea Time became a time to “Clap for the NHS” to show our appreciation of their dedication to help us through this pandemic, whilst risking their own health. I am sure everyone agrees there is no better free to access health service in the world.

But let us not forget all the other people who were classed as essential workers and carried on through these times like care workers, council staff, those who kept vital services going and many more. We could not have wished for a better response than the Help Hub provided by the Council who distributed food and essentials to those isolating or in need

We have some fantastic charities in the Borough like The Carers Service, Age UK, Care Network plus many others who have supported our vulnerable or those providing support to loved ones. There have been many reports of schemes just brought together by people who just wanted to help.

It would be remiss to miss out the shops and businesses in Darwen, especially the small independent traders like the Market who have ensured we could carry on getting our everyday needs. We hope that everyone will continue to support these businesses whenever things return to some sort of normality

**To all these people we would like to say**

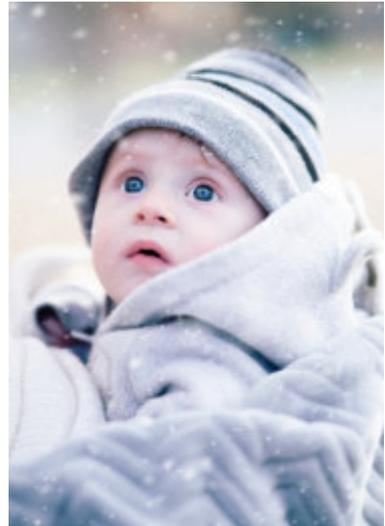
**A BIG THANK  
YOU**

**PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL  
BUSINESSES AND CHARITIES**

## Keeping your child wrapped up for the winter

Keeping our children wrapped up to keep out the winter chills is only natural and a sensible thing to do - right?

However being wrapped up, especially with padded jackets and other bulky clothing to keep our little ones cosy and warm whilst travelling can have serious consequences if they are travelling in a fitted car seat.



Research has shown that the padding in some winter clothes and other bulky coverings can prevent the safety restraints holding the child being effective in the unfortunate circumstances of a collision.

It is far safer to remove bulky and padded clothing and fit the child in the seat with properly adjusted restraints to hold them securely, then placing covers outside of the harness to keep the child warm.

More information can be found on the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) website. Please check it out to keep your child safe.

<https://www.rosipa.com/lets-talk-about/2016/November/Child-car-seats>

Keep you and yours safe and have a great winter season

## Maternity and post-natal services:

Here's a useful link to the maternity services currently being offered and how they are being managed during this current situation.

<https://elht.nhs.uk/about-us/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/maternity>



If you need any breastfeeding support then your health visiting team or midwife can put you in contact with the infant feeding team, who are based at Blackburn Birth Centre, alternatively there are Facebook groups such as Breast Intentions (BwD infant feeding support) and they are running virtual groups on Microsoft Teams every Monday from 10-11am - please join the group for details or ask your Health Visitor.

There's also FAB Lancs breastfeeding groups who run a Zoom chat 11am-12pm Mon/Weds/Fri (Code available from @FABLancsBFSupport or 01254 772929)

And Snowdrop Doula CIC also offer a full range of services including breastfeeding support.

<http://www.snowdropdoula.org.uk/>

If you need any advice on Slings or baby carriers West Pennine Slings CIC are still offering a safe contactless hire service with fittings over Zoom, please see the Facebook page for details.

<https://www.facebook.com/wpslings/>



*Maternity services across Lancashire and South Cumbria are today launching a new Mum & Baby app a definitive, personal, on-the-go guide for pregnancy, birth and beyond.*

[Click here to find out more](#)

## Digitisation of Medical Records

Lancashire and South Cumbria has been chosen by NHS England to be a national pilot for the digitisation of Medical Records. Scanning these paper based records and making them digital will enable better utilisation of space, creating more clinical space, staff areas, multi team space and video hubs, removing the need for some practices to build extensions. In addition it will also make your record more easily and speedily accessible to clinical staff within your practice.

Your complete GP medical record will be digital and stored in a secure cloud based clinical system (only accessible by your GP practice) with the paper based records being securely destroyed following BS EN 15713:2009 Secure destruction of confidential material. Your GP will still be able to access your records easily within this system. The scanning and destruction of the paper records will follow strict data protection guidelines adhered to by the NHS.

As with paper based records, digital records are stored for the duration specified in the Records Management Codes of Practice for Health and Social Care. For GP patient records, this states that they may be destroyed 10 years after the patient's death if they are no longer needed.

If you wish to discuss the scheme, please inform the Practice direct either by letter or via e-mail [darwen.healthcare@nhs.net](mailto:darwen.healthcare@nhs.net)

## Do you request the same Medicines each month?

If you have been on the same medication for 6 months or more and request the same each month please speak to our medicines team on 01254 226691 option 1 and ask about the option to have 6 months prescriptions held by your nominated pharmacy. This will save you having to contact the practice each month to order. You will still only be able to collect them in monthly batches (or delivered if you have arranged this with your pharmacy).

Please note that certain medications may still have to be ordered monthly, such as strong pain relief medication and the medicines team will advise when you contact them.



## Alcohol & Mental Health

During November we had Alcohol Awareness Week and the theme this year was alcohol and mental health.

We are living under unprecedented pressures and we have not seen in our time such a significant change to our daily routines.

Everyone who drinks has had changes around how, where and sometimes when they drink alcohol.

Drinking behaviours have had to change with lockdowns and other measures but we must remember some important things about alcohol:

- Alcohol is more affordable if you buy it in retail outlets, if you are used to spending money in a pub or bar you will find the same amount will buy you much more in a supermarket for example.
- Alcohol is a depressant drug, so if you drink because you are feeling a bit down it can make things worse. If you drink because you have a problem, you then have two problems. The original problem is still there and you have chosen a coping strategy that might make things worse.
- It is easy to drink more than you intended at home as you don't have the usual 'regulators' around you. You are safe in your own home, you don't have to worry about driving, you may not be drinking 'normal' measures and so have difficulty in assessing how much you have had.
- If you live or work alone and you drink there are not the usual social requirements dictating when or how much you drink.
- Alcohol is a clever drug, if you drink alcohol for any amount of time your body begins to get used to it so you don't feel the effect. This means over time you will have to drink more alcohol to get the effect you once did. We call this tolerance and it is how people can become addicted to alcohol.
- Remember, any alcohol you drink may have an effect on your medication. This effect can go either way, it may neutralise or reduce the impact of the medication or it may amplify the effect. Please speak to the Practice if you have any questions.
- If you are concerned about your relationship with alcohol please contact the Practice and ask to talk to someone about it. Free advice and information is available locally at Inspire BwD 01254 495014 or online
- <http://www.inspireblackburndarwen.org.uk/>

## Tips for improving your **mental health** and wellbeing:

**ALCOHOL**  
**CHANGE<sup>UK</sup>**

**Get active.** Getting outdoors and regular exercise can boost your mood.

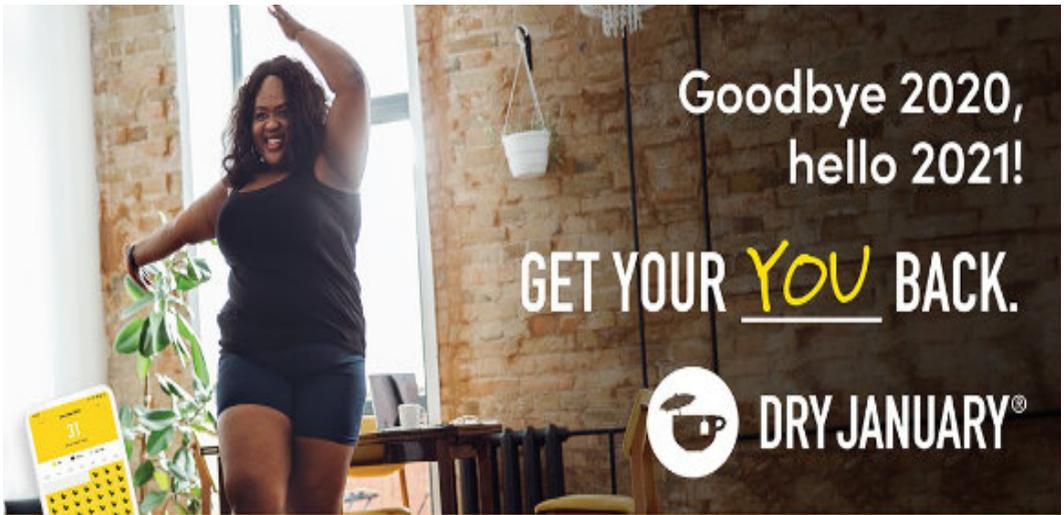
**Talk to someone.** Phoning a loved one and talking about how you feel can help lighten the load.

**Manage your drinking.** Downloading the free Try Dry app can help you set some goals.

For more tips:

[www.alcoholchange.org.uk](http://www.alcoholchange.org.uk)

#AlcoholAwarenessWeek



Goodbye 2020,  
hello 2021!

GET YOUR YOU BACK.

 **DRY JANUARY<sup>®</sup>**

Download the free Try Dry app. [dryjanuary.org.uk](http://dryjanuary.org.uk)

# *Flourishing Minds*

**Are you feeling low  
and lacking motivation?**

**Would you like to get a  
better night's sleep?**

**Do you find yourself  
worrying a lot?**

If so, then this could be the support that you need!  
We are working specifically in Blackburn and Darwen  
to help people to better self manage their wellbeing  
and to improve their quality of life!

We offer multiple forms of support:

- **Peer support**
- **Community groups**
- **Coaching groups**  
Anxiety, Depression, Stress & Worry, Sleep
- **1-2-1 Coaching**

Get in touch with us at...

Tel: **01257 231660**

Email: [admin@lancashiremind.org.uk](mailto:admin@lancashiremind.org.uk)



# Cervical Cancer Prevention Week

## 18-24 January 2021



Darwen Healthcare will be running its Cervical Cancer uptake promotion during these dates to encourage all those who are in the risk age group to have the smear test.

Do you know how cervical cancer can be prevented? During Cervical Cancer Prevention Week we want as many people as possible to know how they can reduce their risk of the disease and to educate others.

### How can you reduce your risk of cervical cancer?

We want to ensure all women and people with a cervix know how cervical cancer can be prevented. This means:

- Attending cervical screening when invited
- Knowing the symptoms of cervical cancer and seeking medical advice if experiencing any
- Taking up the HPV vaccination if aged 11-18

To find out more go to: <https://www.jostrust.org.uk/>

### Breast Screening (Mammogram)

One of the effects of COVID is that the mobile breast screening units have been unable to operate due to restrictions around social distancing and sterilisation of the unit to prevent spread of infection. The Health Authority are aware of the problem and taking all steps to increase the uptake

If you do get an invitation please try to attend, there is transport from Royal Blackburn to Burnley General Hospital available if you are unable to go by car. We will forward further information as soon as we know what is happening

If you get a Bowel Screening kit through the post please take the test and return it without delay



**Screening Saves Lives**

**CLICK FOR  
INFO**