

Pledges on out-of-hours GP service

PATIENTS have been promised a seamless changeover when the new contract to provide GP out-of-hours services in the city launches on October 1.

Nestor Primecare Services will start to operate the service, which provides urgent care between 6.30pm and 8am, Monday to Friday and all day at weekends and Bank Holidays.

The organisation already provides the call handling and telephone triage element of the current out-of-hours service.

The telephone number 0845 145 1800 remains the same and recorded information at GP practices will redirect patients phoning their surgery when it is closed.

Lynne Allen, director of primary care for the PCT, said: "Primecare will provide all aspects of the GP out-of-hours service – call handling, telephone triage and face to face treatment.

"Patients will continue to access the service in the same way and on the same telephone number and will be given health advice over the phone or an appointment at the out-of-hours centre in Wolverhampton or a home visit if deemed necessary."

Primecare managing director David Rose said: "We are delighted to have been successful in winning the contract to provide the full GP out-of-hours service to patients in Wolverhampton on behalf of the PCT.

"It builds on our track record of providing similar out-of-hours services in Dudley, Sandwell and central Birmingham.

"Through our delivery of this vital healthcare service, we will ensure that people of Wolverhampton have access to responsive, high quality, urgent GP care throughout the night at weekends and public holidays."

Mrs Allen added: "As with all NHS contracts the provider is subject to monthly monitoring of its performance by the PCT.

"This includes ensuring the provider is meeting all the current national standards for GP out-of-hours care."

● **For more information on the GP out-of-hours service – see centre pages.**



New health visitor support workers are providing extra care for families across the city.

New team ready to make a difference to families

A TEAM of 12 new health visitor support workers are now working with hundreds of families providing them with extra health care help and advice at home and in clinics.

The team, recruited earlier this year as part of a £250,000 investment, has spent the summer working under the close supervision of health visitors as their training continued, and are now starting to work more independently.

Each week they work with dozens of families giving advice on a range of issues including new births and breastfeeding, smoking cessation, immunisation, follow up visits and support at health clinics.

The support workers are based in 11 of the city's health centres and support the 60 health visitors and eight nursery nurses working for the PCT.

Margaret McNeill, health visiting service manager, said: "The new visitor support workers have spent the summer continuing their ongoing apprenticeship.

"They are now ready to work more independently, although under the close supervision of the health visitors.

"Between them they are working with hundreds of parents every week and are really helping to enhance an excellent service."



Contact details for the GP out-of-hours service.

If you need urgent care when your GP surgery is closed, call

0845 145 1800

INSIDE your Health Focus



Murals add a splash of colour at site of new health centre



Parents urged to sign up to MMR jabs



New PCT chairman pledges to rise to big challenge

News from Wolverhampton City PCT

Service pays a tribute to staff

THE annual St Luke's Tide Service to acknowledge the sterling work of staff from health and social care services takes place this year on October 18 at St Peter's Collegiate Church in Wolverhampton. The multi-faith celebration, highlighting the theme of working together for health and wellbeing will be led by Rev David Wright and Barry Picken, chairman of the Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust, and attended by the Mayor of Wolverhampton, Cllr Malcolm Gwinnett.

During the service, which runs from 2-3.30pm, there will be talks by service users and performances by pupils from St Luke's and St Paul's primary schools.

The name of the service reflects St Luke's identity as the patron saint of healthcare workers. The evangelist was a Greek physician and a disciple of St Paul, with whom he travelled on some of his missionary journeys.

5,000 women take up contraception offer

MORE than 5,000 women in Wolverhampton have taken the decision to use coils and implants following a successful campaign to promote long acting reversible contraception (LARC) to protect themselves against unwanted pregnancies.

Staff in GP surgeries, maternity services and contraception clinics in the city have fitted a total of 5029 LARCs since April 2009, beating the PCT's

annual target of 750.

The campaign promotes the benefits of intra-uterine devices (IUDs and IUSs) – commonly known as coils – hormone implants and injections for women of all ages.

A new website developed by the PCT – www.askforlarc.nhs.uk – gives women information on

the types of LARC and features a selection of cartoon clips – voiced by PCT staff – explaining their benefits in a light-hearted and user-friendly way.

Dr Louise Massey, consultant in public health at the PCT, said: "LARCs are more effective than oral contraceptives or condoms and are becoming more popular.

"They free women from having to remember to take a daily contraceptive pill and can reduce or stop monthly periods which can be a real benefit for those with active and busy lives."

She added: "Many think that LARCs are only suitable for older women, those who have had a baby or those in a long-term relationship when in

fact they are suitable for all."

As well as the website, leaflets and information guides are available from GP surgeries and health centres and clinics in Wolverhampton.



Thousands sign up to beat cancer

MORE than half the people eligible for the NHS bowel cancer screening programme in Wolverhampton are now taking part in the vital scheme.

The programme, now nearing the end of its fourth year, targets men and women aged between 60 and 74 and aims to detect bowel cancer early – often before a person has any symptoms.

Research has shown that screening can reduce the number of people dying from bowel cancer by up to 16 per cent.

Tim Jones, commissioning project manager for the PCT said: "The bowel cancer screening programme is now in its fourth year of screening with an

average of 52 per cent of those eligible taking part.

"Recent studies have shown that in the first two years of the programme in Wolverhampton the cancers that were found were smaller and at an earlier stage than those detected in the two years before the programme started.

"In Wolverhampton this means the programme has detected four times as many of these easily curable cancers than were found in the two years before the programme started.

"The programme also tries to prevent cancer occurring by detecting and removing polyps in the bowel, which could become cancerous if left untreated.

"These are detected through a test

called a colonoscopy, which allows a specialist to closely examine the lining of the bowel."

Tim added: "Since July 2006 we have performed nearly 2,000 colonoscopies. Overall cancer has been detected in 10 per cent of people attending for a screening colonoscopy, and polyps have been detected in 40 per cent of people."



Bowel cancer screening kits which are being used by more than half the people in Wolverhampton eligible to take part.

● For further information about the NHS bowel cancer screening programme call **FREEPHONE 0800 707 6060** or visit www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/bowel



Testing kits help combat Chlamydia threat

MORE than 25,000 of the city's 18-24 year-olds will continue to be targeted in a bid to combat the most common sexually-transmitted infection among young people in England.

Self-testing kits for Chlamydia have already been sent to everyone in the age category as part of the drive led by the PCT.

More than nine per cent of young men and women in Wolverhampton have genital Chlamydia. It is often symptom free and if left untreated

can lead to infertility, long-term pelvic pain and other serious health problems. However, if detected early, the infection is easily treated with a course of antibiotics.

Tim Jones, commissioning project manager for the PCT said: "Getting tested for Chlamydia is vitally important and we want to provide young men and women throughout the city with the opportunity to undertake the test in the privacy of their own home.

"If they prefer, young people can go

for testing at the Snow Hill centre for contraception and sexual health in the city centre."

More information about Chlamydia and how to test for the infection is available from www.nhs.uk/worhtalkingabout or www.wolvespct.nhs.uk/healthycity/sexualhealth.asp

People can also contact the Black Country Chlamydia Screening Programme on 0800 694 0104 visit www.rusureblackcountrynhs.uk or email rusure@walsall.nhs.uk

News from Wolverhampton City PCT

Talking machine boosts home care

A MACHINE that asks patients with long-term health conditions how they are feeling and alerts health professionals if there are any problems is proving so successful that there are plans to expand the service.

The tele-healthcare scheme enabled 70 patients last year to be checked while staying at home. Another 72 have benefitted from the scheme in the first quarter of this year alone.

Peace of mind for those being monitored comes from a small, easy-to-use machine which prompts and guides patients through a series of tests as part of their agreed, personalised management plans, checking anything from weight and blood pressure to heart and pulse rates and even oxygen levels.

Results are then fed back down the phone line for clinicians to decide what action, if any, to take. Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust operates 40 machines in partnership with Wolverhampton City Council's tele-care service, which stores, installs and maintains the devices.

Sheila Baynham, aged 74, from Tettenhall Wood suffers breathlessness and abnormal heart rhythms after the winter vomiting bug

landed her in hospital for two and a half weeks earlier this year. After further trips to hospital, she was supplied with a monitor for use at home.

"It talks to me. It says good morning and asks me to get on the scales.

"Then it asks me to put the blood pressure cuff on as well as carrying out a test on my oxygen levels.

"Then I answer four or five questions and if I have a problem I get a phone call from the community matron.

"I think it's marvellous. I don't fancy having to go in and out of hospital and it saves someone having to call on me everyday. It's easy to use so I'm very pleased," she added.

Angie Beards, tele-healthcare project manager at the PCT, said: "This system gives re-assurance and improves quality of life for patients who don't have to go through the anxiety of constant trips to clinics or hospital for check ups. It also helps community matrons manage their caseloads more effectively."

The service is being expanded later this year to include the PCT's heart failure team and bids have been submitted to fund another 50 machines as part of a long-term plan to roll the scheme out across Wolverhampton.



Patient Sheila Baynham with the tele-healthcare equipment which helps her monitor her condition, and alerts health professionals if there is a problem.

Artwork adds a touch of colour

CHILDREN have produced a series of stunning murals using glass and fabric to brighten up the hoardings around the building site of a new health centre in Heath Town.

Around 150 youngsters from St. Stephen's Church of England primary school and Heath Park Business and Enterprise College took part in art workshops themed around exercise, being active and healthy eating.

Community workshops were also held for parents and children at Heath Town community centre as part of the project.

Artwork has been photographed to produce nine bright, colourful mural panels carrying healthy messages. The murals cover about 30 metres of the wooden hoarding.

Natalie Jones, arts co-ordinator for Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust, said: "The idea is for the community to take ownership of the site. It's an opportunity for local people to connect with the



Wolverhampton artist Susan Purser Hope with some of the community artwork that will be transposed on to hoardings around the site of a new health centre at Heath Town.

building project, get involved and feel proud."

Artist Susan Purser Hope, who led the workshops with fellow artist Jo Newman, said: "What the children have created is really fantastic. They've been really excited about the project.

"Some people assume working with glass can be dangerous but it's

not, if handled correctly. Children produced individual health-related images using small pieces of glass, which was then fired in a kiln. They've been really creative in producing work with positive messages about healthy eating and living."

An arts steering group is being set up which will include

representatives from the Heath Town community to guide the development of ideas for public art for the new health centre, which will make the building welcoming, warm and inviting.

● The PCT's arts co-ordinators and Heathfield Park Neighbourhood Partnership worked together to manage the project.

Health checks reach over 40s

MORE than 8,850 people have already undergone NHS health checks as part of a scheme to screen 40 to 74-year-olds in Wolverhampton.

The majority have been seen by GPs while around 250 have been screened as part of an innovative one-year programme funded by Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust and aimed at people from five specific groups.

Men, people from Asian and black communities and people with learning disabilities or mental health needs are being targeted as part of the scheme.

A number of organisations have been trained by the PCT to deliver simple health risk assessments for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and kidney disease. People are being offered lifestyle advice and, if necessary, are referred to a doctor for further help.

The scheme runs until March 2011 and a health check can be booked by telephoning the following numbers:

- Nanaksar – Asian community (lower age limit of 35 in this group) 07984 623884
- African Caribbean Community Initiative – Black community 01902 571230
- Wolves Community Trust – Men 07712 062115
- Wolverhampton City PCT – Learning disability and mental health service users 01902 572572.

Praise for local nursing services

DR Peter Carter, chief executive of the Royal College of Nursing has praised community nursing services in Wolverhampton after meeting staff and managers from Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust, touring its flagship Phoenix health centre and taking a "virtual tour" of services from a patient's point of view.

He said after his visit: "I found services to be extremely progressive. I thought that staff morale was very high and the motivation of all the people I met was very impressive.

"The Phoenix health centre was particularly interesting, as was the series of presentations I received from a range of staff showing how they are using new technology to prevent admissions to hospital right through the spectrum of care to palliative care services."

Choose well in Wolverhampton

If your GP surgery is closed, urgent out-of-hours medical care is provided by Primecare. The service is for medical problems too urgent to wait until your GP practice is next open and runs from 6.30pm to 8am Monday to Friday, all day weekends and Bank Holidays.



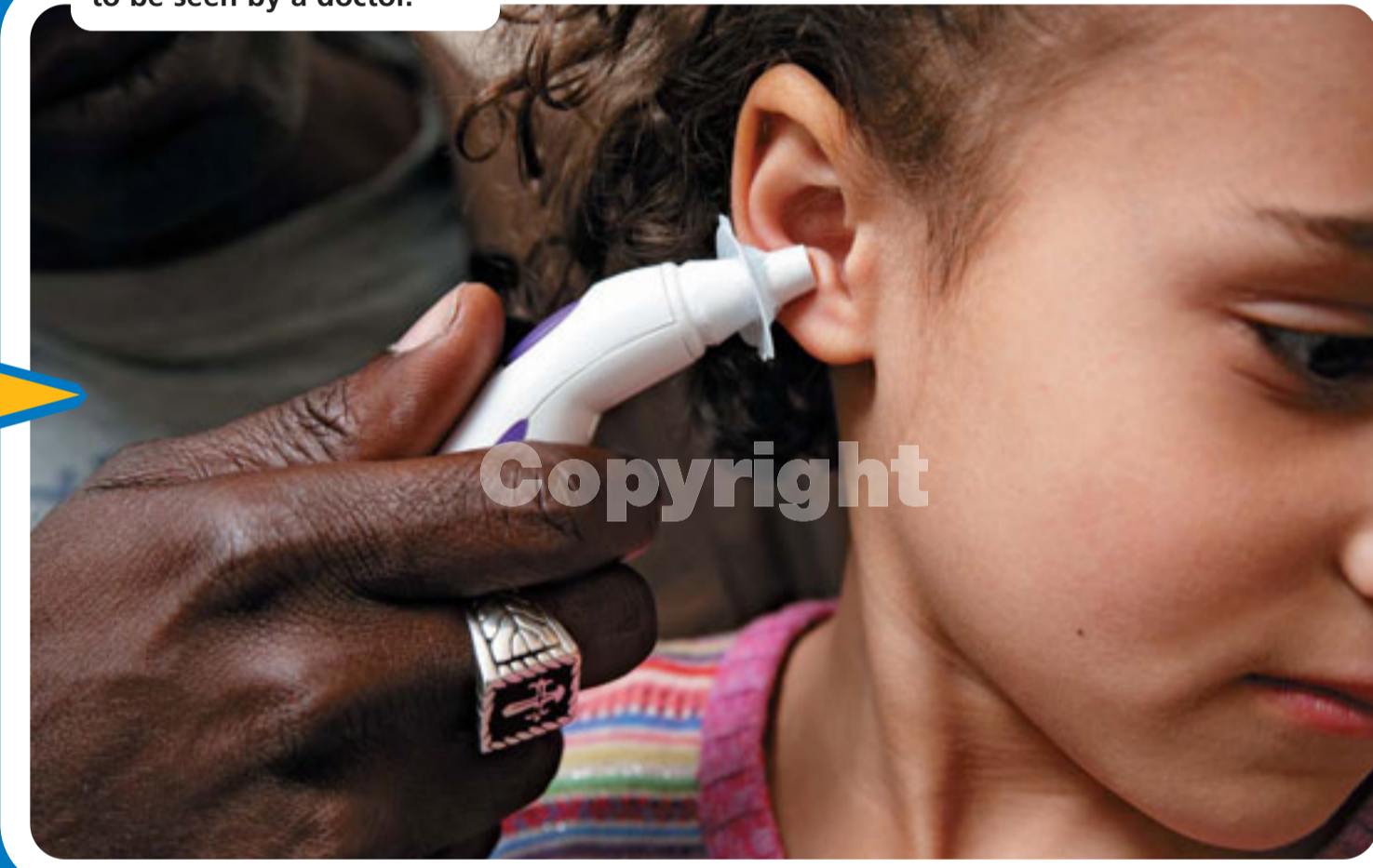
...be assessed or given advice over the phone by a nurse or doctor.



A worried mum at home with a poorly child. She decides to call the out-of-hours GP service on 0845 145 1800.



An operator takes the initial call and decides whether the patient needs to...



...be given an appointment at the out-of-hours centre to be seen by a doctor.

Walk-in Centres

People with minor illnesses and injuries that do not need hospital treatment can also use one of Wolverhampton's walk-in centres.

■ **Phoenix Health Centre**
Parkfield Road, Parkfields, Wolverhampton WV4 6ED.
Open 10am-7pm Monday to Friday and 9.30am-4.30pm weekends/Bank Holidays.
Buses 526 (stops outside) and 558.

■ **Showell Park Health & Walk-in Centre**
Fifth Avenue, Wolverhampton WV10 9ST.
Open 8am-8pm every day including Bank Holidays.
Buses 598, 532, 533 and 525.

Advice and treatment for complaints including minor cuts, bruises, burns, scalds, head injuries and insect bites; muscle and joint injuries, back pain, coughs, colds; headache and dizziness; stomach ache, indigestion, constipation, vomiting and diarrhoea; ear, nose and throat problems including minor infections and sore throats; eye problems such as conjunctivitis and styes; skin complaints including rashes, minor allergic reactions, scabies, head lice and nappy rash; genito-urinary complaints such as urinary infections and thrush and pregnancy testing, advice and referral, 'morning-after' emergency contraception pill and sexual health advice.

No appointment necessary. Babies under the age of 12 months must be seen by their own GP.

...be visited at home by a doctor if they are too ill to attend the out-of-hours service.



GP out-of-hours service call 0845 145 1800

News from Wolverhampton City PCT

Positive response to survey

THE first report into the experience of patients using healthcare services provided by the PCT has been published.

A number of PCT departments carried out surveys from October 2009 until March this year to gather feedback from patients to ensure services are responsive to their needs and identify where improvements are needed.

The patient experience report summarises the responses received by each service and details what actions are being taken as a result of comments received. The report also gives the PCT's results in national surveys and ratings.

Maxine Bygrave, co-ordinator of the PCT's patient advice and liaison service and co-author of the report, said: "The views of users of our services are important and from feedback received the overall experience of health services in the city has been positive with people rating the standard of care they received as either good or excellent.

"However, we are not complacent and in areas where improvements are needed – particularly around access and waiting times, involving patients in decisions about their care and the range of patient information available – actions will be taken to ensure services meet the needs of the people who use them."

Patient experience reports will be presented to the PCT board every six months. Copies of the current report are available on the PCT's website www.wolvespct.nhs.uk/publications or by calling 01902 445378.

Conference to mark 10 years

A CONFERENCE is being staged to celebrate 10 years of work by the PCT's community learning disability team for children and adolescents.

Professionals, children and teenagers, parents and carers are all invited to the event called "Be Inspired", which will give an insight into the team's work and how it has evolved over the past decade.

The conference takes place at the Novotel on November 19 and is free for young people with a learning disability and £25 for parents and carers.

For details or to reserve tickets call 01902 444706.



Left to right: new GP practices at Ettingshall, Showell Park, Bilston, and, below, Pennfields have boosted access to primary care.

Pioneering practices celebrate first birthday

FOUR new GP practices in Wolverhampton have celebrated their first birthdays.

The investment provided doctors and improved access to primary healthcare services at Pennfields Medical Centre, Showell Park Health and Walk-in Centre, Bilston Urban Village Medical Centre and Ettingshall Medical Centre.

The city has also benefitted from the opening of a second NHS walk-in centre for minor injuries and illnesses at one of the practices at Showell Park.

Ettingshall marked its first birthday with a parent and baby morning and a celebration event for patients who had been helped to give up smoking.

Jon Crocket, chief executive of Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust, said: "From being among the 10 worst areas in the country with the least number of GPs in relation to the local population, Wolverhampton now offers much quicker and easier access to health services for many people in the city."

The new practices and the GP-led health centre were developed under the Equitable Access to Primary Care Fund

which is investing £25 million to create 22 new GP practices and 17 GP-led health centres in the West Midlands region.



New dentists fill access gap

IMPROVED dental services for thousands of NHS patients in Wolverhampton are a step closer now contracts have been awarded for two new practices.

Patients are already being seen at the Wednesfield Dental Practice on Lichfield Road while a new practice at Bilston is due to open its doors soon in a converted former shop in Church Street.

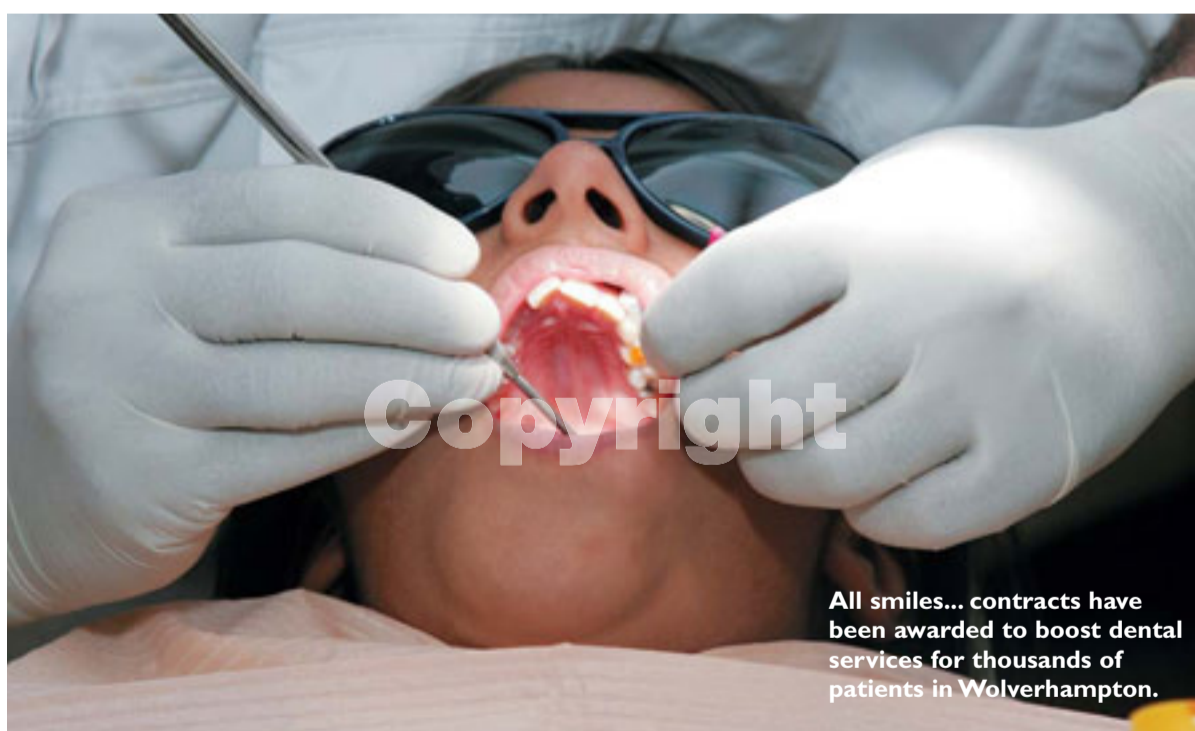
The new practices are part of Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust's £5 million drive over the next five years to improve access, particularly for patients who have not been to a dentist for two years.

Extended opening times are being offered before and after work and on Saturdays.

Emergency care and home visits for the housebound are also being catered for as part of new style patient-focussed contracts.

Lynne Allen, director of primary care for the PCT, said: "We've listened to what the public have told us and considered their views together with national and local data and we're delighted to be able to increase access to NHS dentists where they are most needed."

Dentist Kam Aulak, for one of the new practices, said: "We are extremely proud to have been



All smiles... contracts have been awarded to boost dental services for thousands of patients in Wolverhampton.

chosen to provide NHS dental services in Wednesfield.

"I would like to thank the PCT for giving us the opportunity to increase access to high-quality NHS dentistry for the people of Wolverhampton."

Patients were able to sign up for the new services at the Wolverhampton City Show.

One said: "I came across one of the new dentists at the City Show

and got chatting. I haven't seen a dentist for a long time because I didn't think I needed to and I assumed that NHS dentists were scarce.

"I was wrong on both counts and have since made an appointment. I'm pleased I did."

Many people are eligible for free NHS dentistry while charges are made for others. Prices range from

£16.50 for Band 1 routine examinations and diagnosis up to Band 3 charges, which start at £198 for complex procedures like crowns and bridges.

• Wednesfield Dental Practice can be contacted on 01902 731734 or email wednesfielddentalpractice@live.co.uk

For a list of NHS dentists contact 01902 445378 or wolvespct.nhs.uk

News from Wolverhampton City PCT

Five-year plan unveiled to banish the bugs

THE PCT and Wolverhampton City Council have set out a five-year joint plan to better combat deadly infections in hospitals and care homes.

The organisations have been working together for many years to develop new and innovative ways of preventing and controlling diseases such as MRSA and Clostridium-difficile, known as C.diff.

Now they have signed up to an Infection prevention care economy strategy, which

outlines priorities and plans up to 2015 and recognises new challenges.

The partnership approach has been paying off in Wolverhampton and has enabled a dramatic fall in cases of MRSA and C.diff.

The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust has also been named a Showcase Hospital and has won national awards for its improvements and practices in infection prevention and control.

Meanwhile a partnership to screen and treat people in care homes for MRSA and improve training and standards has seen MRSA colonisation halve in two years.

PCT chief executive Jon Crockett said: "Our patients have a diversity of needs and are cared for in a variety of settings.

"We have to ensure we all work to the same high standard to deliver clean safe care."

Parents urged to sign up to MMR

PARENTS in Wolverhampton are being urged to ensure they and their children are fully vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella after several confirmed cases of measles among adults and children in the city and across the UK.

Nationally, concerns are increasing about clusters of cases and the impact of the low uptake of the MMR vaccine which has led to rising numbers of unprotected children.

Ros Jervis, consultant in public health for Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust, said: "Measles is highly infectious and spending just 15 minutes or more in direct contact with someone with the disease can transmit the virus. It is spread by face-to-face contact with an infected person or by the droplets in their coughs and sneezes.

"Whilst it is generally considered a childhood illness, adults who have not been immunised can catch it and become very poorly. It's never too late to have the MMR vaccine.

"All parents want the best for their children. Measles, mumps and rubella – which is known as German measles – can be very serious diseases and cause permanent disabilities or even death. The MMR



A young patient receives the MMR vaccination at a Wolverhampton GP practice.

vaccine is the safest and most effective way of protecting children from these diseases.

"Yet despite the hard work of health visitors, GP practices and public health staff, local uptake for MMR vaccination seems to be falling. Figures for April to June 2010 show that 85.8 per cent of two-year-olds were immunised and 80.6 per cent had their booster jab at age five –

whilst 88.8 per cent and 81.2 per cent, respectively, were immunised at the end of 2009.

"The city aims to achieve 95 per cent uptake for the first dose and 90 per cent for the second.

"In order to gain herd immunity, where the number of those immunised is high enough to protect those unable to be vaccinated for medical reasons, we really need to

reach 95 per cent."

Anyone with symptoms of measles should first phone their GP practice or NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 for advice.

They should not go to the GP surgery, child health clinic, walk-in centre or hospital A&E department as this could spread the infection to other people who may not have been immunised.

City hospitals rated high in NHS survey



WEST Park Rehabilitation Hospital and Penn Hospital in Wolverhampton have been highly rated as part of a national NHS programme to assess healthcare facilities.

The hospitals have received "excellent" or "good" ratings in all areas as part of the Patient Environment Action Team survey.

The programme was established in 2000 to assess all NHS hospitals and facilities with 10 or more inpatient beds on an annual basis.

Each hospital is then given a rating of excellent, good, acceptable, poor or unacceptable in three categories:

- Environment – cleanliness, decoration, linen, furniture and state of repair
- Food – quality of food and its nutritional value

- Privacy and dignity – the segregation of men and women in sleeping areas as well as toilets and bathrooms.

A team of assessors, made up of nurses, matrons and catering and domestic managers inspected a range of facilities and services including patients' meals, floors and access to determine each hospital's overall rating.

West Park Rehabilitation Hospital, which has 100 beds, was rated "excellent" for environment and food and "good" for privacy and dignity.

The 70-bed Penn hospital rated "excellent" for environment and privacy and dignity and "good" for food.

Overall, the programme assessed standards and quality of care at 1,242 sites across the country.

Still time to have say on future

THERE is still time for people to have their say on the future of mental health services in Wolverhampton.

A three-month public consultation exercise is underway with the aim of making the services more responsive to the needs of local people.

It is centred on a joint mental health commissioning strategy for adults aged 18 to 65, which has been produced by the PCT and Wolverhampton City Council – reflecting national policy and focuses on tackling the root causes of poor mental health and providing support where it is most needed.

Local people, organisations, voluntary groups and staff all have the chance to comment on the strategy as part of the consultation, which continues until mid-October.

Gurdip Chima, from the commissioning unit, said: "The aim of the strategy is to ensure that adults with mental health problems and their carers have their mental health needs identified and met without encountering discrimination or barriers to accessing services.

"This strategy provides us with an exciting opportunity to ensure that the requirements of people who need the service are met in a fair, safe and effective way."

A summary of the strategy has been sent to all mental health service users and presentations are being made to local groups and organisations as well as public meetings in the community.

The summary and dates of public meetings are available at www.wolvespct.nhs.uk and www.wolverhampton.gov.uk

New chairman pledges to 'rise to challenge'

JIM Oatridge OBE has been appointed chairman of **Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust**. He took up the £34,152 per year part-time post on September 1, 2010.

A chartered accountant, Jim had been a non executive member of the PCT's board since 2006 and also chair of the audit and governance committee.



Jim Oatridge OBE

He said: "I am delighted to be appointed to this challenging role. The PCT has a key role in delivering the Government's vision for the NHS, which is detailed in the NHS White Paper.

"Wolverhampton City PCT has an impressive track record of successful delivery with a committed and dedicated staff. I very much look forward to continuing to work with them."

Paying tribute to his predecessor, **Barry Picken**, Jim said: "Barry has been a superb chairman of the PCT. I am delighted he will continue to contribute to improving health care in the city of **Wolverhampton** in his new role as chairman at **The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust**.

"I look forward to a

continuation of our positive working relationship."

In the past Jim has worked as a director in the public, private and third sectors with experience of local government, electricity supply, the water industry, health, education and utility regulation.

He was awarded an OBE in 2003 and currently holds non executive director roles at the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation, Animal Health (a DEFRA agency), and is chair of the board of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management.

Chief executive, **Jon Crockett** said: "I look forward to working with Jim as we embark on a major programme of change for the NHS. His experience,

background and skills will continue to be a major benefit to our organisation.

"His appointment also reflects the quality of our board and the importance of continuity in times of change."

Non executive **Surrinder Kalirai** is the new chair of the audit and governance committee.



Barry Picken



Jon Crockett

University honours PCT chief

JON Crockett, chief executive of **Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust** has been awarded an honorary doctorate for his "considerable contribution to the provision of healthcare in the region."

He received an honorary Doctor of Science degree from the School of Health and Wellbeing, the University of **Wolverhampton**.

Jon said: "It is a tremendous honour to receive this award.

"I have had the great pleasure to have now worked in the National Health Service in our city for over 25 years and throughout that time have been astonished at the sheer commitment and hard work of staff in the NHS."

He added that he did not feel the award was in recognition of just his own contribution but of all the work done by staff at the PCT and the rest of the local NHS.

Jon was born and brought up in **Wolverhampton** and is a life-long **Wolves** supporter.

After his schooling in the city, he completed a degree in economics at **Staffordshire University**. He is also a qualified accountant and was president of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy for the Midlands for two years.

Text service proves popular

A NEW text messaging service has been set up for people with hearing problems.

The 30,000 adults and children who access the PCT's hearing services can sign up to have appointment, reminders and enquiries dealt with via text.

Young people who are treated at the Gem Centre have been targeted as well as adults who are treated at **West Park Hospital**.

They can either text their enquiry to a dedicated number or receive appointment details and reminders directly to their phone.

Paul Holiday, professional head of audiology at the PCT, said: "More and more people – particularly young people – communicate by text these days so this is an appropriate and convenient way forward for the service."

New strides for walks scheme

WOLVERHAMPTON'S popular **Walking for Health** scheme has been expanded to cater for people with mental health needs and learning difficulties.

A new community walking developer – **Mark Evans** – has been appointed to encourage people with particular needs to sign up for the healthy strolls around the city.

Organisations who assist people with learning difficulties and mental health needs are also being encouraged to refer service users to the scheme, which has been running for nearly a decade.

Mark said: "Walking is one of the safest and easiest forms of exercise. People don't need special equipment and can build it into their daily routine.

"My role is to help people with

mental health needs and learning disabilities to take part and to expand the number of walks to cater for them."

He added: "We already have a network of over 30 walks which are led by fully trained volunteers and take place every day of the week in different locations all over **Wolverhampton**. They are of varying length and difficulty – with some being accessible for wheelchair users and people with pushchairs."

Anyone who wants to take part in one of the walks can simply turn up on the day. People with a learning disability or mental health needs or their carers are encouraged to contact **Mark Evans**.

● For further information call the **Walking For Health** scheme on 01902 444601 or visit the PCT website at www.wolvespct.nhs.uk



Walking for Health has added a new walk to its programme which is aimed at encouraging people with learning disabilities to participate – along with the care staff who work with them. The new walk is around **West Park** on **Fridays** at 1.30pm and is led by volunteer **Phil Humphreys** (pictured in fluorescent jacket) supported by walk leaders from the **Flourish2BU** and **Outside Centre** projects.

Flu jab campaign to launch in Autumn

A CAMPAIGN to encourage people to have the seasonal flu vaccine will shortly get underway in **Wolverhampton**.

Those who are eligible are being reminded of the importance of protecting themselves from the illness and its side-effects.

The groups qualifying for free jabs are as follows:

- All people aged 65 and over.
- Adults and children over six months in the usual seasonal clinical risk groups. These include people with the following conditions: chronic heart disease, chronic respiratory disease including bronchitis,

emphysema or asthma, kidney disease, liver disease, stroke or a transient ischaemic attack and diabetes, as well as people who have lowered immunity due to disease or treatment.

- Front line health and social care workers.
- Poultry workers.
- Main carers of an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill.
- Pregnant women not in clinical risk groups for seasonal influenza, and who have not already received the H1N1 swine flu vaccine, are included in the 2010/11 seasonal vaccination

programme for the first time as they are at increased risk from the H1N1 swine flu virus.

Debbie Pickford, immunisation co-ordinator for **Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust**, said: "Even if you feel healthy, if you are in one of the groups who qualify for the free vaccine you should protect yourself from the viruses circulating this year.

"Flu is not just a heavy cold, for people who are susceptible to the effects of seasonal flu, there is an increased risk of developing more serious illnesses such as bronchitis and pneumonia."