



## Patient Participation Group report

Type of report: Health data  
Date of report: 1 May 2022  
Subject: High blood pressure in Alexandra Park patients

### What is blood pressure (BP)?

- The heart pumps blood through the blood vessels to all over the body. Blood pressure is how forcefully the heart must push to get the blood moving.
- Reference:  
[www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/lifestyle/what-is-blood-pressure/](http://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/lifestyle/what-is-blood-pressure/)

### What is High blood pressure (hypertension)?

- Blood pressure (BP) is measured in mmHg (millimetres of mercury).
- BP is considered high at 140/90 mmHg – that means the upper figure reaches 140 mmHg or higher, or the lower figure is 90 mmHg or higher.
- In people aged over 80 years, the limit is 150/90 mmHg.
- Blood pressure can go up and down because of exercise, emotion, illness.
- Doctors diagnose hypertension if the BP has been checked three times at least a week apart, and is high three times in a row.

### How many people have been diagnosed with high blood pressure?

#### Our practice

- Alexandra Surgery has a register of patients diagnosed with hypertension.
- As of 1 May 2022, 558 people are on the hypertension register. This means 12% of the adult patients (aged 18 or above).

## Haringey

However, a report from Public Health England updated in February 2020 estimates that in Haringey 20.3% of the adult population has high blood pressure.

This comparison is not surprising. Back in 1990, a piece of research was published in the British Medical Journal. The conclusions were:

- Half of people with high blood pressure were not diagnosed.
- Half of people with diagnosed high blood pressure did not take treatment.
- Half of people on blood pressure treatment were on too little treatment.

### **Why is high blood pressure important?**

- Uncontrolled high blood pressure means the heart is working too hard, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- People may not feel unwell, but it is causing damage all the time.
- This can lead to serious illnesses, including:  
heart trouble, blood vessel problems, kidney disease, stroke, dementia.
- It is what we may call a “**silent killer**”.
- Reference:  
[www.nhs.uk/conditions/high-blood-pressure-hypertension/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/high-blood-pressure-hypertension/)

### **What are we doing about this?**

There are two ways to tackle this issue.

One is, we encourage everyone to have their BP checked, say, every year.

- You can do this at home with a portable BP monitor, or at a pharmacy.
- Of course, you are very welcome to use the self-service machine at the surgery, or ask our team to help you.
- For instructions **how to check your BP at home**:  
Please see the advice from British Heart Foundation:  
[www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/support/manage-your-blood-pressure-at-home](http://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/support/manage-your-blood-pressure-at-home)

The second approach is to look for people who did have a BP recorded some time ago that was high.

- Many of them had not been diagnosed with high blood pressure.
- They were advised to come back for another check, but have not done so for some reason. Maybe the pandemic and lockdown stopped them. Maybe they have been busy.

### **What have we found?**

- 339 people had a high BP reading the last time it was checked, but have not been diagnosed with hypertension.
- We are sending text messages to this group to invite them to have their BP checked again, whether at home, by a pharmacist, or in the surgery.

**Watch this space!**