

## Getting to know you - Dr. Colin Mason

Dr. Mason is a GP Partner he joined the practice on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018

### 1. What inspired you to become a GP?

My dad. Seeing the role he had in the community and building a long term relationship with patients inspired me to want the same.

### 2. What is the best thing about your job?

I enjoy having a role in people's lives, learning about them over time and understanding their health needs.

### 3. What advice would you give to someone who wanted to become a GP?

It is a fantastic profession and full of variety. The career has highs but also challenges and more difficult times.

### 4. What would you have done if you hadn't become a GP?

Several things. I originally thought I might become a civil engineer and had places at university to do this. Instead, I qualified as a physiotherapist after four years in Glasgow. It was only after this that I decided to train to become a doctor and onwards to become a GP.

### 5. What were you like at school?

A mixture of shy and outgoing depending on the scenario. It was only after leaving school that I gained more confidence and was able to decide on what course I would like my life to take.

### 6. Where is your favourite place to go on holiday?

I have been lucky enough to travel to lots of places from America to Japan. My favourite destination to date though has been Bara. This is the most wonderful and beautiful place on the southern tip of the Outer Hebrides of Scotland. I travelled there by ferry, but one day I would like to fly there and land on the beach runway.

### 7. If you could learn to do anything, what would it be?

I would love to be talented as a musician. I learned piano as a youngster but it did not come naturally and I was never very good. I wish I could learn the guitar or piano and that it came as naturally as learning my other creative or sporting hobbies.

### 8. What music do you listen to in the car?

Spotify has opened up the world of music and I will listen to most things. Generally I will set off a random playlist of relaxing music.

### 9. When you have 30 minutes of free time what do you do to pass the time?

I often spend this time thinking about and planning my next challenge or activity. Whether this is personally or professionally.

### 10. What was the happiest moment of your life?

Without question or doubt, the day my daughter was born.



## Thank you and goodbye...

At the end of June Dr Morgan retires after over 30 years as a GP in Blyth.

Dr. Emma Norfolk looks back on his career at Marine Medical group.

"In 1989 Dr Morgan joined the Ridley Medical Group taking over from Dr Dodds. In 1997 he formed the Marine Medical Group with Dr Allen, Dr Turner and Dr Hussain and has played a significant role ever since.



Dr Morgan exemplifies the cradle to grave GP. He has looked after many patients all their lives and now their children. He has worked tirelessly to improve the physical and mental health of all his patients.

For many years, Dr Morgan played a large role in training future GPs. It is a measure of the esteem he is held in that many have come back to work at Marine Medical Group.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Morgan of all his hard work in making Marine Medical Group the great practice it is.

He will be greatly missed, but I'm sure all our staff and patients wish him a happy and long retirement spending more time with his new Grandson and cycling around the country."



Our staff at the finish of Park Run Blyth

## Talking Park Run with Dr. Anna French

On Saturday 1st June a brave and enthusiastic troop of doctors, nurses, administrative staff and patients arrived at the mermaid car park to take part in the first ever GP park run pledge day. Some of the team joined the team of volunteers and marshalled the course, offering encouragement and support to the park runners. The rest of us made our way around the beautiful 5k course, taking in scenery of Blyth beach huts, the sea and the band stand. All of our team completed the course with smiling faces and a universal sense of achievement.

Meeting in the cafe afterwards (a highlight for many!) the vibe of positivity and community was evident. Would we recommend the Blyth Links Park Run to patients at Marine Medical Group? A resounding yes! Whether for physical, psychological or social benefits we would share the weekly park run opportunity with almost everyone as a way of increasing general well-being for our patient population and local community.

Blyth Links Park run is a weekly event on Saturday mornings at 9am. It is free and open to absolutely all abilities, from greyhound racers to leisurely walkers. All volunteers and supporters are also welcome and cherished. Register at [www.parkrun.org.uk](http://www.parkrun.org.uk) and print off your unique bar code to bring with you each week. For more information or with specific questions I'm confident that all of the staff at Marine Medical Group would be very happy to help.

**Did you know?.....** Flu clinics start in September please support the practice and get your vaccination done here.

## Prescribing of over the counter medicines is changing

Your GP, nurse or pharmacist will not generally give you a prescription for over the counter medicines for a range of minor health concerns.

Instead, over the counter medicines are available to buy in a pharmacy or supermarket in your local community. The team of health professionals at your local pharmacy can offer help and clinical advice to manage minor health concerns and if your symptoms suggest it's more serious, they'll ensure you get the care you need. Please help the NHS to use resources sensibly.

Pick up full information in the surgery or download it from [h](https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/1a-over-the-counter-leaflet-v1.pdf)

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# Is Hay Fever triggering your Asthma

As summer finally gets going, there'll be high levels of grass pollen in the air on warm, sunny days. Don't be surprised if your hay fever symptoms worsen - around 90% of people with hay fever are allergic to grass pollen.

When grass pollen levels are high, more people are admitted to hospital with asthma attacks – that's why taking your asthma and hay fever medicines as prescribed is so important.

Our unsettled weather means thunderstorms are never too far away. Storms can spark asthma symptoms because they smash pollen into tiny bits that then go deeper into your lungs.

## When to see your GP about your symptoms

The common symptoms of hay fever are itchiness, runny eyes and a blocked nose. If you also notice any of the following: Feeling wheezy/breathless. Coughing more than usual. Needing to use your reliever inhaler three times a week or more – then ask your GP for an urgent, appointment. By starting treatment quickly, you can get on top of your symptoms and reduce your risk of a potentially life-threatening asthma attack.

If you don't think you have hay fever, but your asthma is still getting worse, still see your GP urgently. You don't have to put up with your asthma symptoms.

Take these 3 simple steps to cut your asthma risk from hay fever

1. Carry your reliever inhaler (usually blue) every day

Reliever inhalers quickly relax the muscles in your airways and ease your symptoms on the spot – but only for a short period of time. For long term control, start using a preventer inhaler. Your GP can prescribe inhalers if you don't have them.

2. Take your preventer inhaler as prescribed

Preventer inhalers reduce sensitivity and swelling in your airways, helping stop wheezing and coughing before they even start. Take consistently for best results.

3. Take antihistamine pills and sprays and/or use a steroid nasal spray

There are lots of different medicine options and it's a question of finding out which ones suit you.

Information from [www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk)

## Living with Asthma – a patient's story

I've had asthma since I was a young boy. My dad called it an "affliction" and that stopped me joining a Scout troop which I really wanted to do but my parents thought it was too risky. It nearly stopped me going out with my pals too but thankfully didn't. My asthma was diagnosed quite early and I was prescribed an inhaler. This went with me all over whenever I went out. everywhere with me, even out to play with my pals. In those days there was no regular Asthma Clinic or check-up at the GP surgery so the inhaler was my lifeline.

I did most of the things you lads do and played footie, climbed trees, and walked all over the place. Thankfully I was excused cross country at senior school as I did have an asthma attack on my very first run. The PE teacher was mortified because he had known about my "affliction" but forgot so after that I worked in the gym while the others did the run. Things settled down and I continued to play football at school and the Youth Club and carry my medication. In my late teens I had a bad asthma attack whilst on a bus. I made it home but it was becoming very difficult to breathe. Fortunately a neighbour who was a nurse came to the house and helped me. My last and most serious asthma attack happened on my honeymoon in 1979. It may have been excitement but I maintain that it was an allergy to feather pillows!

When our first son was born I decided that I needed to stay fit to keep up with him as he grew so I started jogging. This has helped me greatly. I've now done 3 Great North Runs and one 10k and have walked from Geneva to Nice (in stages over a few years though) I continue to stay fit and eat healthily but still have my two inhalers (Clenil Modulite as a preventer and Ventolin to help if my chest feels tight or just before strenuous exercise)

So has asthma stopped me? I don't believe so, as long as I stay fit and keep up with medication. Most importantly what has changed is the level of monitoring carried out at the GP surgery. It has improved immensely in recent years and has greatly helped the management and control of my condition. I now have a regular check up to make sure my medication is the right one for me and that I'm using it properly and at the right time. I live with asthma but it does not rule my life.

## We want to know what you think

The Patient Participation group is running a survey throughout July to gather the views of patients, their families and carers. The results of the survey will, once again, be used to improve the patient experience. If we have your email address you will be emailed a link to complete the survey online. There will also be printed copies at reception if you would prefer. Please do your best to complete the survey and encourage others to do the same. Your views are important and can make real change happen.

## Alzheimer's Society Northumberland Services.

Helen Williams, Services Manager, Northumberland, tells us about some of the services available for those living with Alzheimer's Disease.



Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading support charity for people with dementia, their families and carers. The Northumberland Team are based at Suite 18, Wansbeck Workspace, Rotary Parkway, in Ashington. We offer practical support whether you are worried about your memory or have had a diagnosis. We give expert advice and can help you carry on doing the things you enjoy. We have an open referral system and encourage calls for anyone wanting advice and support.

**01670 813255 Northumberland Team Email: [northumberland@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:northumberland@alzheimers.org.uk) 0300 222 1122 National Dementia Helpline [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)**

Our services in Northumberland include:

### Alzheimer's Society, Singing for the Brain®

Singing groups at: Blyth Phoenix Theatre, 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of every month 1.30pm- 3.00pm, The Alwick Gardens, 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month 1.30pm-3.00pm, Hexham Abbey, 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month 2.30pm-4.00pm

For people living with dementia and their carers to enjoy music and singing. Please ring for details of times and dates or go along to the nearest session. Our group Coordinator is Suzanne Johnstone.

### Alzheimer's Society Northumberland Side by Side

Side by Side is a service which provides one to one support to enable people with dementia to get out and about, taking part in local activities, and access universal services such as public transport, museums, cinemas, pubs, and participate in every day leisure pursuits. The one to one support is provided by trained volunteers.

The key aims are to

1. Support people with dementia to live independent and fulfilling lives within their local areas
2. To ensure people with dementia are not excluded from services and activity and are able to remain active in their communities
3. Combat social isolation and loneliness
4. Empower people with dementia to develop their own personal talents, strengths and capabilities and what they can bring to their peers and wider community
5. To develop and encourage community based informal support networks for people with dementia
6. To link people with dementia and local volunteers to build networks of support and activity

Comments from service user living in Blyth

My Side by Side volunteer means the world to me, she's my friend and we love going out together. We talk and laugh all the time and have a great time together. She visits me every week and we go to garden centres, the shops, drives along the coast, all the places I like to go. We always stop at a café for a cup of tea and a piece of cake or a scone, the couple of hours together fly pass, I wish she would come every day. I love spending time with her.'

The Side by Side Coordinator for Blyth is **Jenny Keech**

### Alzheimer's Society Dementia Adviser Service

The Dementia Adviser service is available to people who have received a diagnosis of dementia, or are in the process of receiving a diagnosis.

Dementia advisers and dementia adviser volunteers provide support to understand key information around a diagnosis of dementia and what this may mean for the service user and family. Information can be requested which might be useful to carer, family members and friends. They can provide advice re Lasting Powers of Attorney, benefits, wills and trusts.

The Dementia Adviser covering Blyth is **Carol Barker**