

Intelligence Report

May 1 - June 9 2020 - B12 injections

Key themes and issues....

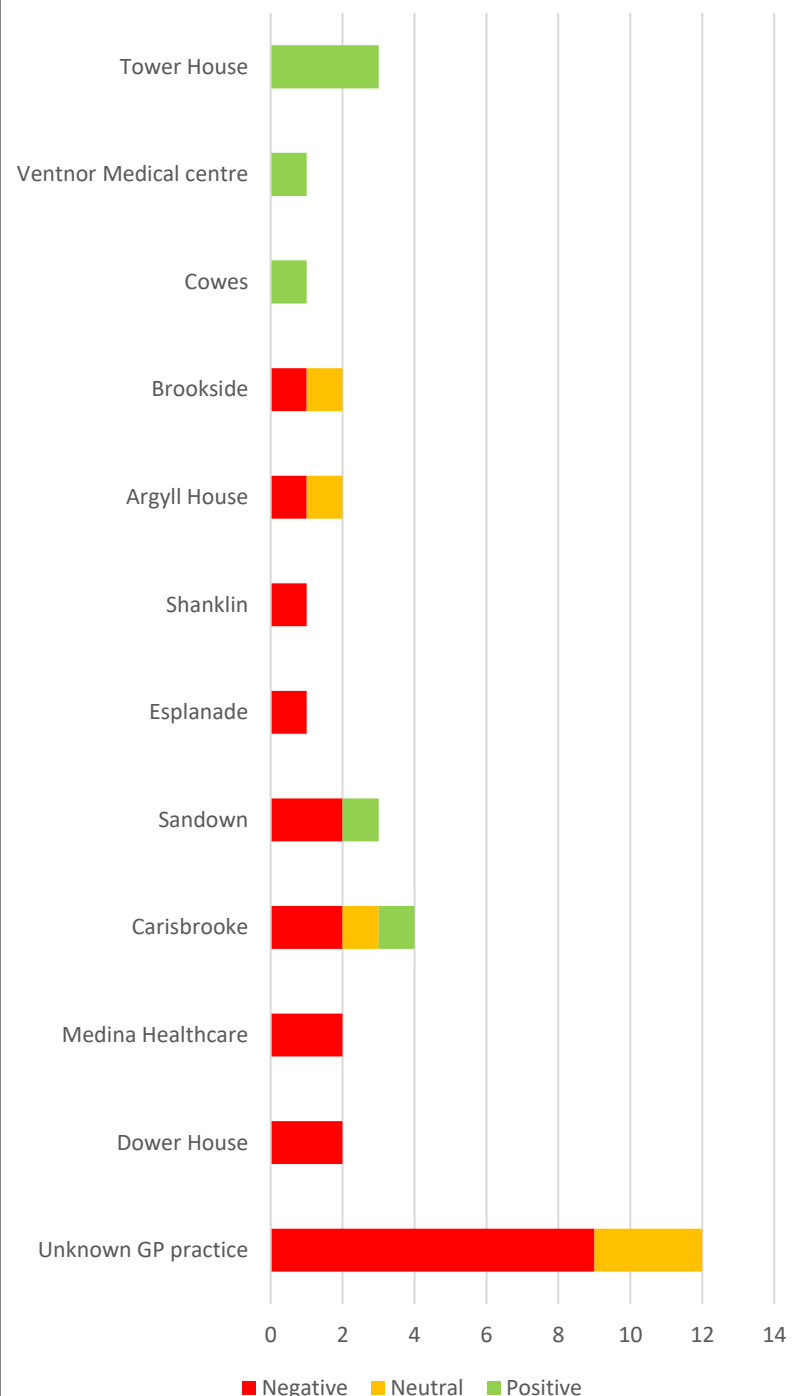
- There is an inconsistent approach from GP practices in relation to the administration of B12 injections.
- Some people have been advised to purchase tablets in place of their B12 injections with no information about dosage or frequency.
- Concerning symptoms such as lethargy, confusion, hair loss etc are being reported.
- Lack of consistent communication from primary care staff is causing anxiety and confusion.
- Some people feel that their symptoms are not being taken seriously enough.

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17% of the feedback we received
May 1st – June 9th is directly related
To B12 injections (34 interactions)

62% of this feedback was negative
20% was positive
18% was neutral

GP Practices - feedback relating to B12 injections



Advice and information

Since the coronavirus outbreak, we have had a greater focus on our information and signposting service, to help people get the information they need from a trusted source.

We have created dedicated coronavirus advice and information pages which include all the latest national and local information. They also include information about local support and community groups.

Where is our insight coming from?

Due to the present circumstances we have had to adopt a flexible approach to engagement and people are able to share their experiences with us via social media, through partner and voluntary sector organisations, by post by telephone, via our website, text or email

We are asking local community and voluntary organisations, including local Covid-19 response groups, to be our eyes and ears so we can understand the experiences of those they support.

We have launched a survey with other local Healthwatch, to enable Hampshire and Isle of Wight residents to give feedback relating to their experiences of accessing health and care information, services and community support during this time.

What are we hearing?

“My daughter has pernicious anaemia and needs a B12 injection every 2 months. She is well overdue for an injection and is beginning to feel more and more unwell. She has been told that no B12 injections are being given at present and there is no date given for them being resumed. She was also told to take B12 tablets, but as she is unable to absorb B12 in tablet form, this was not a helpful response. With a possible return to work in June, she is understandably worried about how she will cope as her untreated symptoms grow progressively worse.”

“Argyle house surgery did do mine (B12) after a bit of discussion but the health care assistant was not happy about it.”

“I had my B12 injection as usual at Cowes medical centre.”



“I am actually quite worried that many of these Dr's don't seem to know the difference between B12 deficiency and pernicious anaemia. The Dr and 3 nurses I spoke to refused my injection and told me to take tablets. I explained that with PN you don't absorb B12 in the gut. They seemed surprised and told me to take as many as I needed! This really isn't being taken seriously.”

Individual's partner has been having B12 injections at Shanklin medical centre. They texted her and told her not to come into the surgery for an injection, and advised her to buy some on Amazon for around £6. They did not advise what make or dose to purchase. She then began feeling lethargic and unwell. Her GP surgery advised her to go to Sandown medical centre for a blood test. She can't understand why she can go in for a blood test but not an injection.



What else are we hearing?

“I was due injection about 3 weeks ago now was told to get tablets. I've been taking the tablets from Holland and Barrett! Don't think they work for me, headaches back and a migraine, sore tongue and tiredness just to name a few.”

“My Dr's at Medina Healthcare in Newport, cancelled my B12 injection and I've been taking oral instead, but definitely feeling the difference. That constant feeling that I've been up and down in a lift is horrid.”

“I begged and pleaded with a nurse at Brookside in Freshwater (for B12 injection) and she got a bit prickly. She said it wasn't their choice to postpone them but an instruction from the government. She said her hands were tied and there was nothing she can do. Told me to take an over the counter supplement.”

“I have IBD (Crohn's) so although not deadly can certainly make life miserable! I'm nearly 6 weeks overdue now and have been feeling incredibly fatigued and lethargic. I finally bought some sublingual B12 drops online in desperation. I think they are making a small difference.”

“My son needs vitamin B12 injection 3 times a week and our surgery asked if I would be prepared to give them to him as he is shielding . I agreed to this.”

“I'm pregnant and got refused my B12 back in April. When I had my 28 week bloods done 4 weeks ago, got my midwife to add B12 to it. Showed it was very very low. Didn't get a call from the Drs it was only because I was talking to my midwife she said I should have had a call. So called my Dr said I knew it was very very low and I was now symptomatic. I finally got my injection yesterday.”

“My surgery sent out letters a few weeks ago saying take tablets instead of the injections (B12) . I am every 8 weeks and about the end OF that very soon. Been taking the tablets but not sure how effective they are.”

“They (GP surgery) stopped mine and told me to get over the counter B12 but it's not the right strength. I usually have every 8 weeks, last one January, should have had one 18th March but they cancelled and again 13th May , I'm really feeling the effects now losing my hair and lots of other symptoms. Was told I would have to wait till my diabetic check end of July and they will look at my levels then , even though the doctor at St Mary's said every 8 weeks permanently.”

“My sister who is elderly, went to the Dower house this morning and was told to get tablets from the chemist for B12 not even offered an appointment for her injection so are people being treated differently on their age ?”

“My husband has progressive MS and was able to get his B12 injection a few weeks ago at Ventnor medical centre.”

“I have B12 injections every 12 weeks. I went last week to my doctors (Sandown medical centre) and they showed me how to do it myself .and also gave me 2 months of B12 to take home.

“My eldest has been having B12 jabs for years. Again just at start of lockdown she was told her levels were borderline and she didn't need jabs anymore. She has other issues too but is starting to get the symptoms again but they won't retest till this is over.”

