

Vercoe Brown Newsletter – May 2026

Please find below some general information about our newly merged practices, Bester McKay Family Doctors and Vercoe Brown & Associates Ltd, now operating together as Vercoe Brown.

The merger has gone smoothly, with only a few minor and expected challenges along the way. Vercoe Brown continues to operate from two sites:

106 Don Street and 82 Elles Road, Invercargill.

If you are making an appointment with a GP, Nurse Practitioner, Practice Nurse, Health Improvement Practitioner (HIP), or Health Coach, please ask the receptionist which site your appointment will be at.

There is an important document included at the end of this newsletter titled

Health Information Privacy Statement

Please take a moment to read this Privacy Statement, and feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Special Announcement

Vercoe Brown is pleased to share that a new GP will be joining the practice in June. Dr Mazyar Koolaiyan will be based at our 106 Don Street site and will be working Monday to Friday each week. He will begin with a limited number of appointments while he settles in and becomes familiar with the New Zealand health system. Please join us in giving Dr Koolaiyan a warm Southland welcome when you meet him.

Booking appointments

When you call the practice to make an appointment, please let our reception team know whether your issue is urgent or routine. If you need to be seen on the same day for an urgent matter, the receptionist will add you to the triage list and one of our nurses will call you back that morning. We aim to keep enough urgent appointment times available each day for same-day needs.

Prescriptions (Scripts)

If you need an urgent same-day prescription, a fee of \$35 applies. To request this, **please call and speak with a receptionist before 11:00 am**. Our clinicians run morning and afternoon clinics, so they have limited time to process prescriptions once clinics have finished.

Ordering repeat prescriptions

Please order your repeat prescription **at least two weeks before your medication runs out**. Ordering early gives the practice time to process your request and, if needed, arrange an appointment for a medication review. This is especially important before long weekends.

Please avoid leaving repeat prescription requests until the last minute. Our GPs and Nurse Practitioner are not always able to use lunch breaks or after-hours time to process urgent requests that could have been ordered earlier.

Blood pressure checks

If you visit the practice to order a repeat prescription or attend a prescription review, you may be asked to have your blood pressure checked. If this has not been recorded recently, doing it at the time may save you from needing to return later or visit a pharmacy for the same check.

12-month prescriptions

Important: A longer prescription can only be started during an in-person consultation with your doctor. It cannot be arranged through a standard repeat prescription request.

From 1 February, some people with stable, long-term conditions may be able to receive prescriptions lasting up to 12 months. Your prescriber will work with you to decide whether this option is appropriate for your health needs.

Most prescriptions are issued for up to three months, or six months for oral contraceptives. Even with a 12-month prescription, most medicines are still dispensed every three months, and all repeats must be collected from the same pharmacy.

Why this change was made

The change is intended to make it easier and more affordable for people to access the medicines they need.

Who may be eligible

- Your doctor or prescriber will consider your health needs before deciding whether a longer prescription is suitable.

- 12-month prescriptions are most likely to suit people with stable, long-term conditions.
- The rules for controlled drugs, such as strong pain relief and ADHD medicines, are not changing.

Is it safe?

- Your prescriber—doctor, nurse practitioner, nurse prescriber, or pharmacist prescriber—will work with you to decide whether a 12-month prescription is safe and appropriate.
- Not everyone will receive a 12-month prescription; it depends on individual health needs.
- You will still remain connected with your healthcare team.

How payments work

- You only pay one prescription co-payment per prescription item when you collect the first supply from the pharmacy.
- There are no repeat prescription fees for the same prescription.
- People who are already exempt from prescription fees, including children under 14, Community Services Card holders and their dependants, and adults aged 65 and over, will remain exempt.

Key points to remember

- Your safety comes first. Your doctor will discuss your health before deciding how long your prescription should last.
- You will still collect medicines at the usual intervals. No more than three months' supply can be collected at one time.
- There is no extra cost beyond the usual single prescription co-payment.
- For stable conditions, 12-month prescriptions may reduce the number of repeat visits needed.

If you have questions, please speak with your doctor or prescriber about your individual needs. Further information is available from Te Whatu Ora at info.health.nz/Prescription.

ADHD assessments

Vercoe Brown does not currently have any clinicians certified to carry out adult ADHD assessments. If you would like an assessment, you will need to contact a private provider such as:

Anteris SR Online – attention Dr Amy Mullen or referrals@anteris.nz. The cost is approximately \$900.

Bank account

The Vercoe Brown bank account details are shown on your invoice and statement. In time, the Bester McKay bank account will be closed, and we will give you plenty of notice before this happens. In the meantime, it would be helpful to update your Bester McKay payee details in your online banking to:

Vercoe Brown 06-0925-00184729-000

ANZ Direct Online Domestic Transactions Report

Report as at: 19/03/2026 14:00:25

06-0925-00184729-000 - VERCOE BROWN

Phone lines

You are still welcome to call Bester McKay on 03 218 6325 or Vercoe Brown on 03 214 6222. You will hear the same answerphone messages regardless of which number you call. If we move to a single phone number in the future, we will give you advance notice.

Phone lines are answered Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 12:00 noon and from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

Opening hours

Both sites, Don Street and Elles Road, are open from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Our phone lines are closed between 12:00 noon and 1:00 pm each day to allow staff to take a break and complete urgent administrative tasks.

On the first Wednesday of each month, the phone lines and both sites, Don Street and Elles Road, will be closed from 12:00 noon to 2:00 pm while we hold our all-staff meeting.

On all other Wednesdays, both sites will be closed, and phone lines turned off, from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm for meetings. You can still use the script line to leave a message for your **regular and routine** prescription requests, but not for urgent requests.

Both sites are closed on Saturdays, Sundays, and all statutory holidays, including the Tuesday of Easter weekend for the Southland Anniversary observance.

Appointments: At present, there is approximately a two-week wait for an appointment at either site. If you prefer to see a particular clinician, it may be helpful to book your next appointment before leaving the practice. If you no longer need that appointment, please call us with at least one day's notice so we can cancel it and rebook you for another suitable time.




Toitu Takata

Our long-term conditions programme, Toitu Takata, is available to support eligible patients in managing their long-term conditions. The programme runs for 12 months, after which a nurse can review whether re-enrolment for a further 12 months is appropriate.

If you are enrolled in this programme, you will be given a card. Please keep it somewhere safe and bring it with you when you visit a doctor, Nurse Practitioner, or nurse. If your appointment is for a long-term condition, the card will be used to claim your funded appointment. This may be different from what original Bester McKay patients have previously experienced, so it represents a change in process.

Reception staff will mark the card to show how many of your five free appointments have been used.

Fees

 DOCTOR CONSULTATIONS (15 minutes)		
Service	Standard Fee	CSC Holder Fee
Children under 14 years	FREE	FREE
Children under 14 - Phone Script	FREE	FREE
Youth 14-17 years	\$55.00	\$13.50
Youth 14-17 years - Phone Script	\$15.00	\$13.50
Adults 18+ years	\$67.00	\$20.00
Adults 18+ - Phone Script	\$25.00	\$20.00
Non-enrolled/Casual Patient (Adult 18+)	\$134.00	\$134.00
Non-enrolled/Casual Patient (14-17 yrs)	\$110.00	\$110.00
 PRESCRIPTIONS (SCRIPTS)		
Service	Standard Fee	CSC Holder Fee
Urgent Same Day Script aged 0-17 years	\$25.00	13.5
Urgent Same Day Script Adults 18+ years	\$35.00	\$20.00
 NURSE SERVICES		
Service	Fee	
Nurse Consultation	\$35.00	\$20.00

For a full list of our fees, please refer to the noticeboard display at each site.

Staff

Staff updates

- Dr Andrew Costello finished at Vercoe Brown in April and is no longer working with the practice.
- Dr Jane Chalmers finished in January 2026.
- Dr Aidan Smith finished in October 2025.
- Melinda Prekopa finished in August 2025.
- Dr Paula Turley is working from 82 Elles Road until October 2026. If you have an appointment with Paula, please go to Elles Road rather than Don Street.

Regular clinical staff

- Dr Natalie Balme – Don Street
- Dr Heste Henning – Don Street
- Dr Patricia Hastilow – Elles Road (Mondays only)
- Dr Nitin Jooty – Elles Road
- Dr Paula Turley – Elles Road (until October 2026)
- Nurse Practitioner Julie Smith – Elles Road

Remote clinical staff

These clinicians work remotely from another town and provide phone or video consultations.

- Dr Peter Latchman
- Dr Jono Ussher
- Pharmacist Prescriber Jill James

Locum clinical staff

Locum clinicians work in the practice on selected dates only and may be based at either site, depending on available space.

- Dr Lynne Harvey
- Dr Johnny Vere-Hodge

Practice nurses

Practice nurses may work across both sites.

- Sheree – Don Street or Elles Road

- Lisa – Elles Road
- Naseeha – Don Street or Elles Road
- Jan – Elles Road
- Beatrix – Don Street
- Xandra – Don Street

Health care assistants

- Andrea – Elles Road
- Gillian – Don Street

Reception and administration


Some reception and administration staff work part-time and may work across both sites.

- Luci – Don Street
- Amanda – Don Street
- Amy – Elles Road
- Rosie – Elles Road
- Yvonne – Elles Road
- Lucy – Elles Road
- Nama – Elles Road
- Te Aroha – Elles Road

Practice managers

- Adina Giurgiu – Don Street
- Jan Jenkins – Elles Road

TIP & TRICKS

 Follow Vercoe Brown on Facebook AND refer to the Vercoe Brown website for more information on fees, staff, opening hours and afterhours services.



Vercoe Brown and Associates

<https://www.vercoebrown.co.nz>



Medical Practice | Vercoe Brown & Associates

Health Information Privacy Statement

I understand the following:

Access to my Health Information

I have the right to access, and request corrections to, my health information under Rules 6 and 7 of the Health Information Privacy Code 2020.

Visiting Another GP

If I visit another GP who is not my regular doctor, I will be asked for permission to share information from the visit with my regular doctor or practice.

If I am under fourteen years old or have a High User Health Card, or a Community Services Card, and I visit another GP who is not my regular doctor, he/she can make a claim for a subsidy, and the practice I am enrolled in will be informed of the date of that visit. The name of the practice I visited and the reason(s) for the visit will not be disclosed unless I consent.

Patient Enrolment Information

The information I have provided on the Practice Enrolment Form will be:

- Held by the practice.
- Used by the Ministry of Health to give me a National Health Index (NHI) number or update any changes.
- Sent to the Primary Health Organisation (PHO) and Ministry of Health to obtain subsidised funding on my behalf.
- Used to determine eligibility to receive publicly funded services. Information may be compared with other government agencies but only when permitted under the Privacy Act.

Health Information

Members of my health team may:

- Add to my health record during any services provided to me and use that information to provide appropriate care.
- Share relevant health information with other health professionals directly involved in my care.

Shared Electronic Health Record

HealthOne is a secure shared electronic record used across the South Island. HealthOne may be used to view my records held by other healthcare providers involved in my care, and to share relevant information with them. This information can include test results, allergies, medications, clinician summaries and hospital information.

HealthOne is fully compliant with the Privacy Act 2020 and the Health Information Privacy Code 2020. I can ask the practice for more information, or I can restrict the sharing of my records by contacting HealthOne directly on 0508 837 872 or healthone.privacy@pegasus.org.nz.

Health Information Collection

My general practice can collect information from other agencies for the purpose of maintaining an up-to-date health record and providing safe and quality primary health care.

This may include:

- **Receipt of laboratory, radiology or other results**
- **Correspondence from after-hours services, hospitals and specialists** which can include discharge summaries, specialist letters, lab and imaging results.
- **Letters and notifications from referral providers** reporting back on health or screening programmes for which I have been referred (for example, Green Prescription, smoking cessation, dietitian).
- **Information from Health NZ and WellSouth** in regard to updated demographic, NHI or eligibility information.
- **Contact from or correspondence from non-health agencies** such as Police, legal representatives, Oranga Tamariki, insurance companies, Ministry of Social Development (Work and Income New Zealand) and the Accident Compensation Corporation
- **Receipt of correspondence from employers**, regarding, for example, fitness to work

Audit

In the case of financial audits, my health information may be reviewed by an Auditor for checking a financial claim made by the Practice, but only according to the terms and conditions of section 22G of the Health Act (or any subsequent applicable Act). The Auditor may contact me to check that services have been received. If the audit involves checking on health matters, an appropriately qualified healthcare Practitioner will view the health records.

Health Programmes

Health data relevant to a programme I am enrolled in (e.g., Breast Screening, Immunisation, Diabetes) may be sent to the PHO or the external health agency managing this programme.

Complaint

If I make a complaint about the care or services I receive, relevant information may need to be disclosed to the practice regulators, insurers, indemnity providers, or legal advisors for the purposes of managing or responding to the concerns I have raised.

Other Uses of Health Information

My health information which will not include my name but may include my National Health Index Identifier (NHI) may be used by health agencies such as Health New Zealand, Ministry of Health, or PHO for the following purposes, as long as it is not used or published in a way that can identify me:

- Health service planning and reporting;
- Monitoring service quality; and
- Payment.

Research

My health information may be used for health research, but only if approved by an Ethics Committee and will not be used or published in a way that can identify me.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

My practice may use an AI tool to assist in providing healthcare services. All data processed by AI tools will be handled securely and in compliance with data protection regulations. I will be informed about how AI tools are being used in my care and can ask questions or request more information at any time. I can also withdraw my consent at any point by notifying the practice.

Except as listed above, I understand that details about my health status or the services I have received will remain confidential within the Practice unless I give specific consent for this information to be communicated.

Whānau LINK Prodigy

The Plan Eligibility Why Whānau Link? FAQs [Check my address](#)

A PRODIGY INITIATIVE FOR SOUTHLAND

Unlimited fibre. \$28 a month.

Affordable home internet for Southland. No catches, no contracts.

123 Tay Street, Invercargill [Check eligibility](#)

Takes less than a minute. No pressure, no obligation.

\$28/mo

Unlimited fibre. Router included. Prepaid, no contract.


SOUTHLAND ONLY

Three ways whānau qualify.

Not sure if you fit? **Apply anyway.** We review every form personally and there's a good chance we can sort something for you.

Not quite a match?
We've got **other options** that might suit. Apply anyway and we'll have a kōrero and work out what fits your circumstances best.


01



Through a school or kura

A child enrolled at a Southland school or kura that meets the EQE (Equity Index) criteria, paired with a parent or caregiver with a Community Services Card or on a benefit. [See school's list](#) >


02



Kāinga Ora & community housing

Whānau in Kāinga Ora homes or social/community housing in Southland may qualify based on tenancy.

03



Hardship exception

Going through a tough patch and don't fit the categories above? Have a kōrero with us. There's a hardship pathway for whānau who genuinely need it.

ABOUT THE ADDRESS CHECKER

Our checker just confirms two technical things with the network: there's a fibre line (FON1) at your home, and no-one has had active internet there for 3+ months. **Just moved in?** The 3-month rule doesn't apply, just tell us on the form. The criteria above are checked separately.

[✓ Fibre line at your home](#) [✓ No active internet for 3+ months](#)

For families who dont have working internet access in the home – check out Whanau link. NZ to check eligibility