

HOW TO GET A GP APPOINTMENT FAST? PAY £10,000 A YEAR

It's the future of healthcare – but only for the rich

It's a clinic that offers screenings, genetic testing, unlimited doctor's appointments, breathwork sessions (with a harpist) and gets your meds to you on holiday.

Harry Wallop signs up to the latest fast-track GP service – with surprising results



Harry Wallop with
Dr Liza Osagie-Cloward,
centre, and Dr Tamsin Lewis,
photographed by Tom Jackson
at Solice's Mayfair offices

It is Sunday morning. I am lying on the floor of my sitting room with my eyes closed and Rob, a handsome Northern Irishman whom I met only ten minutes ago, is leaning over me intoning in a hypnotic way, “Allow each inhale to be the ability to receive the abundance you deserve,” as he gets me to breathe in through my mouth for four seconds and then out of my mouth for one.

“You’re doing really well,” he says reassuringly as I slowly, and against my instincts, get high on the expulsion of carbon dioxide. My skin starts to tingle, my muscles relax and I stop thinking about the roast lamb in the oven that needs turning down and start listening to his instructions.

My tolerance for alternative therapies is close to zero. I have tried forest bathing, hypnosis, sound healing and various other woowoo nonsense and without exception found them to be emperor’s new clothes. I know Rob is manipulating me, but there’s something about his voice, and the effect of the deep inhaling, that makes me give in to his repeated incantation, “I’ve always done the best I can with the information that I have available.”

After 20 minutes of this, I start to cry. At first just a few tears, but by the 45-minute mark I am full-on sobbing with happiness and gratitude as I follow his instructions to send my body “love and deep compassion”.

The session ends after an hour. I stagger to my feet, slightly embarrassed, and embrace him. I can’t really speak, but my thought is: whatever voodoo you have just performed, I need it prescribed weekly.

On the NHS, of course, the idea of having Rob Rea, a former male model, come to your home to conduct his one-on-one breathwork sessions to destress you and “unlock trauma” would be fanciful. So too the concept of a GP popping to your bedside when you are feeling under the weather to take your temperature and heart rate. Or perhaps a physio visiting your office to fit in a session between meetings to help with a trapped nerve.

But in the new world of private medicine all these are possible – for a price. “There’s a person who is used to having concierge care for every other aspect of their life,” Dr Liza Osagie-Clouard says. “It is crazy that you have a nanny and you have a housekeeper but you have to wait a week to see your GP, and then you have to be on the phone to

Bupa getting your pre-authorisation code. It doesn’t make any sense.”

So she has decided to do something about it by setting up Solice – part private GP surgery, part wellness clinic, part longevity adviser. Or, as the blurb on her website says, “A single membership transforming what it means to see your doctor.”

Because at Solice you are not a patient; you are a “member”, paying an annual fee.

For £9,900 you get unlimited 24/7 GP appointments either at home or in the clinic – in Mayfair, of course – a thorough annual health screening involving MRI scans and genetic testing, six therapy sessions a year such as Rob Rea’s breathwork or Pilates, and a dedicated concierge. “The concierge is key,” Osagie-Clouard says. “So when you go to the south of France or Tuscany during the summer and you’ve forgotten the medication that I’ve prescribed you, it is our job to get that medication delivered to your farmhouse.”

Modern private medicine is no longer just about discreet clinics and ensuring patients get to see consultants quickly – although it is that. It is now also about prevention. Osagie-Clouard says a lot of her members are those “who want to live better. They don’t want to see a GP every time they’ve got a cough or cold. They want to see their doctor, their team, to optimise and prevent.”

Her sidekick at Solice, Dr Tamsin Lewis, adds, “It is about health profiling. People now know that their health is modifiable and they want experts to tell them how to modify it based on their personalised data. And that’s what we do.”

Solice’s focus on service and personalisation may be aimed at the pampered international jet set, used to having a personal trainer, personal assistant and personal protection. And its prices are prohibitive even by private healthcare standards: a Harley Street GP typically charges £250 for a consultation and £350 for a home visit.

Solice guarantees each of its GPs will only have 120 patients on their books, compared with 2,300 on the NHS. It is

not unique. An increasing number of doctors have realised that there is a generation of men and women who are prepared to spend serious money on their health, especially a service that might spot cancer or heart disease before any noticeable symptoms.

One of Solice’s clients, an English countess in her late forties, tells me, “I don’t mind spending money on health. I could spend it on a handbag. But a handbag or getting a year of top specialist care? I choose the latter.”

“Our average age is 49,” says Kate Woolhouse, the chief executive of Hooke, a medical screening company and longevity clinic just around the corner from Solice in Mayfair. “And it is trending younger, if anything, because young people have really bought into this idea of health and wellness as something you continuously nurture, rather than going to the doctor when you have a problem.”

Her clinic is unashamedly luxe. It resembles a hedge-fund office, with fresh-cut flowers, sculptures on sideboards and a gym in the basement. Membership can cost up to £54,000, an eye-watering sum even if it does include bespoke dietary supplements and a car service to pick you up for your consultation.

While most of these clinics can be found in the navy blue corner of the Monopoly board, the idea is spreading beyond the superwealthy.

Coyne Medical in Fulham, west London, is ostensibly an old-fashioned private doctor’s surgery on the high street run by a husband and wife GP team, but it offers membership for £1,560 a year, which gives you unlimited GP appointments plus an annual health screening. Those who really want to ensure all bases are covered can pay £7,950 for the Ultimate Health Screening package, including whole body MRI scan, cardiovascular and cancer gene screening.

Co-founder Dr Lucy Hooper explains how she underwent the screening as a guinea pig, only to discover she had a gene called PALB2. “It contains a mutation, or variant as we try to call it now, which means... my breast cancer risk was really high, about 70 per cent.”

She was only 39 at the time, fit and healthy and with two young children. “I was really surprised. Because like most of us going for these things, you just think that you’re going to be negative. I certainly didn’t meet the criteria for NHS testing. I was too low risk.”

She rapidly made the decision to have a risk-reducing mastectomy. “For me, to be honest, it was an easy decision to make. The risk reduction



MY TOLERANCE FOR ALL THIS IS ZERO. BUT AFTER 20 MINUTES, I START TO CRY. SOON I’M SOBBING

is 95 per cent. I felt, what a gift to know that and to be able to do that. Through work, I’ve seen so many women go through breast cancer, chemotherapy and all the treatment. So if I can just skip that, I feel very lucky.”

There are many people who fear that these private screening services cater to the worried well, but Hooper is an example of how in some cases early, preventative screening can save lives.

Dr Tamsin Lewis at Solice believes “worried well” is an unhelpful label. “There’s always something that’s triggering the anxiety – that is the worry that we work on. They are hypochondriacs for a reason.”

She and Liza Osagie-Clouard make for an interesting pair. To fully understand what they are offering, I try out Solice’s membership for a month. The first step is a 90-minute consultation at the Mayfair

With breathwork specialist
Rob Rea and accompanist
Amie True Attwood

clinic, which could be the office of an expensive divorce lawyer. There is not a medical gown or treatment bed in sight, just tasteful sofas. “We want it to be a home from home,” says Osagie-Clouard, 40, who is married to a hedge funder and has a seven-year-old son.

There are lots of oversized Assouline coffee-table books: *Gstaad Glam*, *St Tropez Soleil*; Smythson stationery on Osagie-Clouard’s desk; and a Benin bronze on a plinth – although born in London, Osagie-Clouard has Benin heritage, with her parents emigrating from Nigeria just before she was born.

She is a former model (Vidal Sassoon, Levi’s jeans), tall, beautiful and occasionally unnervingly direct – at one point during the consultation she starts eyeing me up like I’m a bullock, leaning in closer while I am speaking without explaining that she’s inspecting a mole on my nose.

At their instruction, I start to rattle off my medical history, lifestyle, bad back and current state of mind. After a few minutes Osagie-Clouard interrupts me. “Sorry to be Nigerian and blunt, but you seem very pissed off.”

I thought I needed some physio; she thinks I need a thorough physical and psychological overhaul.

She is an orthopaedic surgeon and spent a few years as a research fellow at the renowned Hospital for Special Surgery in New York, where all medicine has a price tag. “I came across a lot of people accessing medicine who were being taken for a bit of a ride or just not getting the answers to their questions.”

Lewis, 44, is a psychiatric doctor or, as she describes herself on LinkedIn, “Medical Doctor dedicated to Human Flourishing”. She arrives wearing red filter “mood-boosting” glasses and sipping from a £120 Osmio bottle, which adds hydrogen to water using what the manufacturer claims is “Nanobubbling technology”.

Lewis laughs loudly when I start to raise my eyebrows. A former Ironman champion, she was laid low by long Covid and has embraced various alternative therapies that she believes would benefit even the most sceptical. “During Covid I rented a hypobaric chamber for my house. I bought an infrared sauna – it made a massive difference,” she says, enjoying the fact that even Osagie-Clouard is rolling her eyes. “I do an IV [drip] once a month; I’ll do an infrared sauna three days a week. ➔

I take nootropic powders and ketone esters, which are anti-inflammatory. I have a PEMF [pulsed electromagnetic field] mat that I lie on and do breathwork before bed every night."

Lewis is single with a nine-year-old daughter and is Solice's longevity specialist, something the ultrawealthy increasingly care about. "It's not about longevity per se, but pushing out those healthy years, because people retire and then they succumb to arthritis or a heart attack. They actually can't spend all the money they've accrued in their life."

She is also the one who prescribes Rob Rea and his breathwork session for me. "It makes you feel lighter," she explains. "It lowers your blood pressure; your nervous system is more at ease. It is part of the trauma release work."

She suggests this shortly after I mention I went to boarding school, where I was reasonably happy. Does she think I have trauma? "We've all got trauma. It isn't what happens to you; it's what happens within you. We've all had minor traumatic incidents."

A couple of weeks after our session I admit to her I found it strangely powerful. She is unsurprised. "What it does is turn off the thinking brain and turn you more into a feeling state," she says. "In the day-to-day, we exist in a highly functioning thinking state and we ignore and push and suppress our emotions, which over time [can] manifest as disease."

The breathwork is just one of the therapies they prescribe. You can even get a harpist, Amie True Attwood, to accompany Rob Rea's incantations, rather than the Bluetooth speaker he used for my session. They insist that as part of the concierge service they can put members in touch with any medical specialist, such as the best breast surgeons in London. Is it always breasts? "No, you can have penile extension, jawline chiselling, facelifts," Osagie-Clouard says matter of factly.

I am not in the market for cosmetic surgery, but an excellent Pilates instructor is sent to my home to work on my bad back and improve my core strength. I also have a session on my bedroom floor with a physiotherapist who gives me acupuncture, which I find uncomfortable.

But the main benefit of Solice – so too Hooke, Coyne Medical and the other private clinics – is a rigorous medical checkup. It starts at home, where a nurse arrives to take 19 vials of blood and collect a urine specimen. I also spend three days collecting my poo, which I have to mix with chemicals and decant into seven separate plastic pots and store in the fridge, a procedure that is disgusting to complete and which horrifies my children.

I then spend a full day, from 8am to 6pm, undergoing various tests at OneWelbeck, an imaging and diagnostics company near Harley Street in London which is used by many private doctors. I strip naked, save for a paper posing pouch, for the mole mapping machine; I am strapped to an electrocardiogram as I cycle furiously on a stationary bike; there's an ultrasound scan of my organs; I am given a full-body MRI scan. All this, of course, is available on the NHS – but only to those with a recognisable problem and those able to get an appointment.

Last year, my bad back flared up and it wouldn't shift no matter how much I stretched, rested or did planks, and it was stopping me from sleeping properly. Now 49, I realise I'm at an age where niggles turn into something more serious. I called my NHS GP – nearly all appointments are now telephone ones and only available if you call at exactly 9am; miss that time by minutes and you have to try again the next day. They sent me off for an x-ray, which then merited an MRI scan, but the time between my first call and finally

says breezily. "Even those who don't know their cholesterol score."

I tell Lewis and Osagie-Clouard that I feel too young to be on medication associated with older people. Lewis says, "We need to be sensible. So many older people end up on 20 different medications. But if you start younger, you're going to offset some of this damage." She adds that by taking them now I would be on a smaller, less powerful dose than if I wait another ten years. "I have 35-year-olds with this profile who take statins."

I feel lucky that, thanks to a journalistic exercise, I have discovered something potentially quite serious that would have otherwise remained hidden, ticking away. But surely this level of personal care and forensic testing shouldn't be available just to those on Mayfair or even Fulham budgets?

"Does it play on my mind that we can't do this for everybody? Yes, of course it does," Osagie-Clouard says. "But it's sadly the reality. So we've tried to mitigate that by bringing the price down as much as possible."

'MY LATE FATHER WAS AN NHS CASUALTY – SOMEONE WHO HAD A PHONE CONSULTATION THAT MISSED HIS CANCER'

seeing a consultant to talk through the results of the scan was six months.

The Solice team see me two weeks after my testing bonanza. In fact, before then I get not just a missed call but also a WhatsApp from Osagie-Clouard: "I have received some of your blood results. So please do give me a call." This alarms me; I am clearly dying. When I get through to her and tell her I was agitated, she replies, "No one is used to their doctor calling them any more."

This is true. It turns out I am not dying but I do have high cholesterol, specifically a high lipoprotein A score of 136 nanomoles per litre. A healthy score shouldn't exceed 75nmol/l. Worse, the MRI scan has found slight coronary calcification, putting me in the 69th percentile for my age and gender.

Lewis explains the calcification. "That is the process of development of plaque in the arteries, which over time can either break off and cause a stroke or block the artery."

In short, I am at a surprisingly high risk of a heart attack for a man of my age considering I am neither overweight nor a smoker. The consultant, a professor whom I am sent to see the next day, tells me I should be on statins. Really? "Every coronary doctor I know is on statins," he

She has a nagging guilt that she's quit the NHS, which she describes as "majestic... but running off goodwill", to help members get their medication flown out to Doha. Lewis is more hard-headed about the public health service and its limitations. A year and a half ago she lost her father, a former professional cyclist who competed in the Tour de France three times. "He was an NHS casualty – someone who had a phone consultation that missed his cancer. It drives me because I remember getting the blood tests and the GP had missed it."

For now it is only the wealthy, the worried well and those worried for a good reason who can benefit from the level of care that Solice and its rivals can offer.

On leaving my follow-up consultation, I realise the benefit of this sort of private healthcare is not so much the testing, the genetic markers, Pilates and breathwork; it is time. The ultimate modern luxury. Two consultations with Lewis and Osagie-Clouard amounted to more minutes than I have spent with my NHS GP in 30 years.

As Lewis says of her hypochondriac patients, "At the end of the day we are seeing them, listening to them, providing a compassionate witness to their story. And in that, the hypochondria disappears." ■