

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

Help us to help you

As you may be aware, there is a huge shortage of general practitioners and primary care is facing unprecedented demand with very limited resources. There is no vast cohort of doctors ready to step up and we have to look at creative ways we can manage demand. It is vitally important you get to the person best placed to help your clinical need and this is not always your GP.

Things have to change and we are looking for support and understanding from our patients to facilitate this change.

Appointment System

Contrary to popular belief (as reported by the mainstream media) we are working harder than ever and dealing with about 50% more patient contacts per day than pre-pandemic whilst still trying to comply with Covid regulations. While routine face to face consultations are often preferred by both patient and doctor, Covid-19 numbers are not insignificant and we have to be realistic regarding safe provision of care with the focus on clinical need in order to avoid the busy waiting rooms we had pre-pandemic given the vulnerability of many of our patients.

We plan to implement changes to the appointment system incorporating aspects of the system pre-pandemic and now. All routine appointments will be telephone by default and can be booked on-line or through reception. If you are certain you need to be seen, please go through reception as staff can change the appointment type to face to face. Examples would be breast lumps, post-menopausal bleeding, sick babies, abdominal pain etc. Given the need for additional measures during the pandemic, fewer patients can be seen face to face than before in the time available. Some patients prefer e-consultations and can continue to submit through patient triage/footfall via the website. Please do not submit an e-consultation if you know you need to see/speak to the GP.

We are stopping same day availability as this seems to be generating more frustration than benefit currently. The choice will be routine or emergency. If you have booked a routine appointment but your condition deteriorates and you need to be seen more urgently, please contact the practice.

There are other options to seeing your GP. The local pharmacists are well placed to deal with minor ailments. The CUES service (Covid urgent eye care service) is especially commissioned to deal with acute eye conditions. If you have a significant musculoskeletal problem (not acute minor injuries) you can be booked in with the First Contact Physiotherapist. Soon we will have the service of a mental health practitioner. Medication reviews can be done by the Primary Care Network pharmacist. PC24 offers an overflow service of GP appointments. This might enable easier access than waiting for the next routine practice appointment.

Abuse of Staff

We have noticed in recent months an increase in hostile and abusive behaviour by some patients. We can understand your frustration but this is no excuse to take it out on practice staff and will not be tolerated. We cannot help if hospital appointments are cancelled at short notice. We cannot drop everything to carry out work that has been inappropriately transferred to primary care from secondary care. All staff work very hard and have done throughout the pandemic and do not deserve to be shouted at. Please be kind.

Covid Vaccination Service

This is no longer GP-led but is in the hands of the Mass Vaccination Site, NHS Digital and NHS 111 (119). Boosters are 6 months after second dose. Third primary doses are 2 months after the second.