

NOTICE TO PATIENTS ABOUT APPOINTMENTS

Our GPs are aware that some patients are finding it increasingly difficult to get the appointments and services they need from us, and feel you should be made aware of the reasons.

Over the past few years, successive governments have reduced the investment in General Practice from around 10% of the NHS budget to nearer 7%.

In spite of this reduction in funding we still provide 90% of consultations carried out in the NHS. There is access to GP services 24 hours, 7 days a week, and the demand to see GPs is rising dramatically. There are currently 340 million GP consultations a year, an increase of 40 million in the last 5 years.

This has not been matched by an increase in GP and staff numbers or an expansion in the infrastructure. Added to this we are expected to take on more and more work previously carried out in hospitals, and are obliged to attend meetings with the Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS England management and spend hours preparing for and meeting the Care Quality Commission. All of these commitments mean less time to see our patients.

In addition, we are faced with huge difficulties in recruiting new doctors and nurses to work in General Practice. Currently there is a shortfall of about 10,000 GPs across the country. It is impossible to see how this shortfall can be addressed when it takes a minimum of 10 years to train a GP. In short General Practice is in crisis.

We simply want you to know that we are aware of the problems you have accessing some services and that we are working as hard as we can to provide those services. Indeed, Dr Coffey drew the Prime Minister's attention to these issues when he met him last October.

We hope you will bear with us as we strive to continue to provide quality General Practice in this area

Thank you for taking the time to read this.