

From All at Barnt Green Surgery

Despite all working harder and longer hours than we have at any point in our careers, and with more staff employed in each role than ever before, we recognise that our service is not currently exceeding the high patient satisfaction level we have always strived to achieve.

We have been really struggling with staff absence – planned and unplanned, Covid related and non-Covid.

We know that the waits you are experiencing when you call to try to get an appointment each morning are incredibly frustrating not helped by our need to be doing large amounts of vaccination programme recalls, whilst trying to call regarding first & second COVID vaccination requests. We also know that those of you who get through to be told “sorry there are no appointments left” must also find this also frustrating.

The team here are all patients somewhere too, and are facing the same issues accessing health care for themselves and their families/loved ones as we know our patients are, so fully understand everyone’s frustrations.

We have always prided ourselves on giving an excellent service within the bounds of the budget to our patients, and we recognise at times it might seem like we are not doing this.

You will be pleased to hear we have put some things in place to aid access to the practice, for example:

- We have a practice nurse who can prescribe, who has, some days a week, on the day appointments for minor illness such as a UTI, tonsillitis, a cough, emergency contraception
- We now have two clinical pharmacists working within the team to assist our GP’s to review patients on complex medicine regimes, respond to prescribing queries & requests, hold clinic’s for conditions such as hypertension
- You can get direct access to an MSK service without having to talk to a Doctor. The role of the First Contact Physiotherapist is to assess patients with a soft tissue, muscle or joint pain. These physiotherapists have expertise in the assessment of musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions.
- Introduced a social prescribing service which aims to support individuals to take greater control of their health and feel more empowered to look after themselves
- We are looking to restart our Patient Participation Group (PPG) and further posts will follow regarding this. A PPG is a group of patients, carers and GP Practice staff who meet to discuss practice issues and patient experience to improve the service

General Practice is changing and with this a need for us all to use the range of healthcare professionals starting to work alongside GP’s to ensure that as a patient we get the right care. Appointments are telephone triaged and where appropriate you will be offered a face to face appointment. This is to ensure that we reduce the risk of COVID to both you as patients, particularly those who are most vulnerable but also to the practice so that we can avoid an outbreak and maintain our service.

Although we know you are frustrated with the current system and it’s not what we would want to offer, we feel we do still offer a safe service: if you ask for an appointment and we are fully booked, and you feel you are seriously ill, our reception team will take your details, some information about your issue, and it will be assessed by our Duty Doctor team. Please only use this option if you are seriously unwell.

As always, thank you so much for bearing with us and all your lovely comments.