

New Appointment System **Right Care, Right time, Right Place**

It has now been a month since we launched the new system. We are grateful for your continued patience and co-operation. We need your help to shape the best system to meet your needs.

The new system was developed in response to your feedback on accessing services when needed. We consulted extensively with patients, staff and our wider stakeholders including the MP, hospital and the clinical commissioning group.

Prior to now, appointments were obtained by queuing in the morning for same day appointments. Once those were used up, it was then until the next day. Waiting times for planned appointments were long and the people who were in urgent need were not necessarily the ones who had the same day appointments.

What has changed?

- Self-care is the first care: most minor illnesses are self-limiting and do not need a doctor or nurse; your body will heal itself.
- Pharmacy: use the pharmacy for health advice in the first instance.
- Queuing up for same day appointments for non-urgent problems is **no longer** encouraged
- Same day appointments are now **only** for illnesses that are serious and need to be dealt with immediately.
- All other problems will be assessed by our trained receptionists and you will be given a 5, 10 or 25 day appointment.
- We intend to keep our waiting times for routine problems to about 2 weeks.

What can you do?

- Register for an online account to help you manage your own health better. You can book appointments online.
- Do not queue for non-urgent appointments
- Attend your appointments. We had **over 300 missed appointments** in the last month.

- Be polite to staff, they are here to help. We have a zero tolerance policy to abuse or aggression of any kind.
- Practice self-care. Use resources like www.nhschoices.co.uk or www.patient.info.uk to manage simple ailments like coughs, colds, fever, conjunctivitis, diarrhea etc
- Speak to the pharmacist if you are still unsure.
- Give us feedback. It is encouraging for us when it is positive and it is an opportunity to develop if it is not.
- Lastly, please educate your friends and family about the new system. The support and advice of several patients have been invaluable. We can never have enough champions.

If you have any feedback, questions or critique, please contact Kelly Houghton on 01582 601116 or Kelly.houghton@nhs.net

Dr Monica Alabi