



Willington Surgery Partnership  
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Willington  
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25<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Dear Patient

The following is an open letter regarding the **appointment system changes** starting May 26<sup>th</sup> 2023 to all patients from the GP partners and practice manager at Willington Surgery

We have listened to feedback from our patient participation group (ppg) and other patients who have contacted us around their general frustrations with the current appointment system. We have started a project aimed at improving access which will be completed over the next 4 weeks. We are looking to return to the system that we implemented back in 2019 but had to change due to covid.

With in this timeframe, it might be harder to gain a routine appointment as we move the availability of future appointments from 2.4 weeks to 2 weeks due to the national contract guidance, noting current demand far outstrips capacity. To try and help with this we have employed additional locum GPs over this time.

### **Urgent on the day appointments**

We will have a fewer number of on the day appointments. Patients who require an urgent on the day appointment will still need contact us at 8am. We are currently training the reception team to support the national NHSE contact such that we need to advise all patients on their first call of an appropriate service for them to attend. This could be an urgent walk-in center, a different team member at the surgery, a community pharmacy, sexual health clinic or self-care.

### **Routine Appointments (non-urgent or ongoing issues)**

When the appointments open at 8am we will also have appointments opening throughout the week; for example, you call on Monday the team will be able to offer if "medically appropriate" an appointment later in the week. This will help working patients to plan ahead and stop the bottle neck of calling at 10am on a Wednesday for a routine appointment.

### **Capacity**

We currently have just under **10'000 patients registered** with us, so we need to stress that even with the new process, we will not have any extra appointments than we currently have. Demand still far out strips capacity. Please do not think that our reception team do not want to give everyone that contacts us an appointment as this

would make their job much more pleasant, but due to us not being able to ask people to call back this new appointment system will help but it will also mean that from the first patient calling at 8am the team need to be listening and with GP support advising of the best appointment for the patient.

General practice is changing we are now benefitting from having a multi-disciplinary team which includes:

- a first contact physio (for anyone over 18) for any muscular or joint pain
- 2 clinical pharmacists for all medication queries and reviews
- a pharmacy technician who supports the clinical pharmacist
- 3 social prescribers for patient needs that are not medical including debt management, housing and bereavement
- health and wellbeing coaches for patients who want to look after their physical health including stability from falling.

Both the clinical and non-clinical team will be sign posting you to these team members also.

## **Hospital Appointments**

The ever-growing backlog of hospital appointments and waiting lists has resulted in primary care being left to manage patients with an average of 35% of all our GP appointments being with patients who have already been referred. This together with an aging population with complex needs, increased mental health problems and social care gaps are only some of the other factors that drive up demand and pressure on our appointment capacity. Please always ask yourself before contacting us, can I self-care or get advice elsewhere.

Once you have been referred, please contact the hospital to chase up appointments. You can contact the hospital PALS department directly if you do not have a contact number for the hospital (01332) 785156 or [uhdb.contactpalsderby@nhs.net](mailto:uhdb.contactpalsderby@nhs.net)

We are averaging 17% more appointments than we did in 2020.

## **Our commitment to you:**

- We remain committed to delivering **quality care** but cannot compromise on clinical safety and team wellbeing in favour of unlimited access.
- We are **changing the appointment system** and will engage with other services to offer alternative appointment which are safe and appropriate. This will include more pre-bookable appointments and bringing in a locum GP when we can.

- Patients may be **signposted to more appropriate team members** or services, rather than a GP. This may include a first contact physio, clinical pharmacist for medication, social prescriber, health and wellbeing coach for lifestyle support.
- Our **telephone system** has more lines added, this is based on feedback from our PPG and other patients who said they prefer to know where they are in the queue rather than getting an engaged tone. This does mean you could be 30<sup>th</sup> in the queue at our very busy times, with most calls taking an average of 4.5 minutes – this could mean a wait time of approx. 30 mins as we do always aim to have at least 4 people answering the phone between 8am and 9am Monday to Friday.

## We need your help:

### 1) Appointments

- Please be **respectful to all staff**; no one deserves abuse in the workplace. All the team are trying their best to help you. Instead of taking your frustrations of the system out on the team here you could contact your local MP and ask why the increase in GPs hasn't happened and the funding into primary care isn't there.
- By **preparing for your appointment**, you will get the most out of your consultation. It sometimes helps to write down what you want to ask the clinician. Please try to prioritise major problems as it can sometimes not be safe to rush through multiple problems in a single consultation.
- A **single appointment** is 10 minutes with a GP, if your illness is complex, please consider asking for a **double appointment** as this will save you potentially having to come back. If you have more than one ailment the GP will try and review as many as they can within the 10-minute appointment but do not want to keep the next person waiting.
- Take **responsibility for your own medication**, please order any medication in plenty of time, ideally 5 working days in advance. If you require a medication review, please contact us to book this in within plenty of time for your next prescription.
- **Download the NHS App** – you can order your medication and it has other useful tools, and ways to contact the surgery.
- If you can't call the surgery, you can use our **e-consult facility** which is on the website <https://www.online-consult.co.uk/org/willington-surgery>
- If you **fail to attend TWO APPOINTMENTS** in 12 months, then you will receive a letter warning of deduction from our patient list for a further infringement.
- Be prepared to **answer some basic questions** from our reception team who are trained to signpost you to the quickest and most appropriate service or team member.

- Please **avoid requesting prescriptions for treatment that are available over the counter** even if you are prescription payment exempt.
- Keep your **patient details** up to date.
- We understand plans change, and if you need to **cancel your appointment** you can do this by text back on the appointment confirmation text the word CANCEL. This helps us offer that appointment to someone else. We on average lose 6 hours 42 minutes of clinical time per month through patients not attending.

## 2) Self- help

- **Take responsibility for your own health.** We are here to help and advise and can refer you to one of our health and wellbeing coaches if you would like to start exercising with the support of a team connected to the surgery and this service is free of charge including classes.
- **See your local pharmacy** for minor ailments and try a self-care / over the counter option first. Most minor ailments are self-limiting and do not require medical input or intervention e.g. hayfever, a cold, sinus congestion, sore throat, simple headache or rash.
- If you are experiencing **Mental Health issues** for the first time such as anxiety and low mood, please access the self-help and counselling self-referral pages on Derby & Derbyshire - Emotional Health & Wellbeing ([derbyandderbyshireemotionalhealthandwellbeing.uk](http://derbyandderbyshireemotionalhealthandwellbeing.uk)) and/or call the 24/7 Mental Health Support Line for Derbyshire on 0800 028 0077 – BEFORE contacting the surgery (unless you have active suicidal thoughts).
- For **new joint/muscle problems** please see the website/app <https://app.getubetter.com/request-access/1/31857b449c407203749ae32dd0e7d64a?t=1> for advice on self-management or **make an appointment with our First Contact physio.**
- **We are not an emergency service**, if you feel that your problem is urgent please call 111 or attend the Urgent Care Center <https://www.nhs.uk/services/gp-surgery/derby-urgent-treatment-centre/Y01994>
  - Entrance C, Derby Urgent Treatment Centre  
Osmaston Road  
Derby  
Derbyshire  
DE1 2GD

### 3) Hospital Appointments

- If a **hospital team gives you a prescription** to be dispensed intended for the hospital pharmacy we **will not issue duplicate scripts**. Please do not expect us to issue this prescription simply because it's a long wait at the hospital pharmacy.
- If you have been **referred by us to the hospital** and are facing a long wait we can only expediate a referral if you have had a specific change in your condition (and even then, the hospital will not always change timeframes). Please contact the hospital directly to chase up appointments. You can contact the hospital PALS department directly if you do not have a contact number for the hospital (01332) 785156 or [uhdb.contactpalsderby@nhs.net](mailto:uhdb.contactpalsderby@nhs.net)
- If on **discharge from hospital** you are given a discharge letter, please bring it to us within 48hrs as we often wait several weeks to get a copy from the hospital.

We thank you for your continued help and support