

The Living Well Partnership - Notice to Patients January 2018

Our doctors and clinical staff here understand the difficulty that patients are currently experiencing when trying to book a routine appointment.

Demand upon our service exceeds our capacity to provide routine doctor and nursing appointments. This issue is not ours alone but, as widely reported in the national press, it is something affecting many practices across the country. Despite this we continue to provide an average of 2400 routine clinical appointments each month.

Across the UK the average patient list size per full time GP is 1,650. Our full time GPs have a patient list size at least twice this size. We have an on-going recruitment programme to attract new GP's to join us on a long term basis, but this takes time. Currently we simply do not have the capacity to provide any more clinical sessions or routine appointment slots.

As a consequence of this severe lack of routine appointments, we are experiencing a very high demand for our urgent care "same day" service. This too, creates additional strain.

We understand and empathise with our patient population and appreciate how frustrating this situation is for you.

So what are we doing about it?

The recent merger of our Weston Lane, Ladies Walk, Bitterne Park, St Lukes plus Botley, Harefield and Midanbury surgeries will mean that we are stronger together to deliver a more robust service for all of our patients. This partnership merger does currently have constraints and whilst this provides us with the opportunity to review our clinical resource and ensure each site is adequately staffed it does not currently offer our patients the ability to move across these sites and be seen at a practice where they are not currently registered. We accept that this may be frustrating for our patients and this is something that we shall be reviewing in the longer term. We will ensure that all of our patients are kept fully informed.

We are also reviewing the way we provide our urgent on the day care and are trialling a new service from our Harefield surgery. This is a new way of working for us and we will be continuously reviewing and refining this to ensure that we deliver an effective and appropriate service for our Harefield patients.

How can you help?

- Choose the new e-Consultation service* that you can access via the website 24/7 – this is currently available to all patients aged 18years and over and is simple to use, with a response within 48 hrs.
- Be patient with our dedicated reception and administration teams who are working hard behind the scenes to ensure that we are running to full capacity on a daily basis.
- Please respect our staff. When we advise that we have no available routine appointments to offer, we truly have nothing showing on our screens at that time.
- Think carefully about the type of appointment that you need. A telephone consultation may be more appropriate than waiting for a face to face routine GP appointment or e-Consultation.
- Explore the expertise of your local pharmacist or other self-help opportunities (NHS UK).
- Do not waste a precious routine appointment if you are unable to keep the date/time or if the appointment is no longer required. Please either leave a message on our cancellation line (option 1) or visit the surgery to re-arrange or cancel at reception.
- Join our Patient Participation Group and become part of the pro-active voice of the surgery to help by working together with us to shape our healthy future.

** e-Consultation service is not currently available at Bitterne Park but will be coming soon*

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for your patience and understanding.

