

## **Fifteen Minute GP Appointments**

In the middle of September 2018 we extended the length of the GP appointment time from the traditional 10 minutes to 15 minutes. Our reasons for making this change are primarily to reduce pressure on the GPs due to over running surgeries and to also reduce the waiting time in the practice for our patients.

Despite the increase in individual appointment duration the Practice has been able to increase the number of available appointments compared with this period last year. This is due to the completion of overlapping periods of Maternity Leave.

There has been a lot of work undertaken behind the scenes to support this change and from that two things have emerged that we would like to make our patients aware of;

### **1. Arrival Time for appointments**

We fully appreciate that car parking is difficult however we can see that a large number of patients are arriving 20-30 minutes before their appointment time. This in itself is having an impact on the car parking situation as cars are parked for up to 30 minutes longer than they need be. It also results in an over full waiting room and means that patients are often waiting in excess of 1 hour if the GP is running late.

The change to 15 minute has had a positive impact on waiting time in the practice already but we ask that patients help us by arriving closer to their appointment time. Five to ten minutes is sufficient time and will result in a nicer waiting room experience for everyone and much shorter waiting times in the practice.

### **2. Telephone Consultations**

We have always offered Telephone Consultations with the clinical staff but this is not widely known and sometimes patients are unsure about it. We have identified that currently there are about 25 appointments a week with the GPs that could be dealt with over the telephone rather than a face to face appointment. The GPs would like to do more follow up and review consultations over the telephone and would like to encourage patients to consider this as an alternative to always coming into the practice.

If we can increase the uptake of telephone consultations we can potentially increase our GP capacity as they can carry out two telephone calls in the same time as one face to face appointment. It will also mean that there are 25 patients a week less coming in and waiting in the practice to be seen. This will also have the added benefit of taking pressure off of the car park as well.

The GPs will be requesting that more follow ups (test results for example) are booked as a telephone appointment so if the reception team offer this to you please consider it and think of the benefits to all. We will also be releasing some telephone appointments available to book online through Patient Access so look out for these towards the end of January.