

PRG Meeting Minutes: 16.8.12

Thank you to those of you who attended yesterday to discuss the planned change to the appointment system as of November 1st 2012, when the walk in surgeries will be entirely replaced by an appointment only system.

The views expressed in the meeting by some of our PRG members and the views of those of you who gave your views via e mail, have been considered in the minutes below and in our plan to instigate the changes.

Points raised by PRG members yesterday and in emails:

- The end of the walk ins is not necessarily favoured, but was described by one member as 'inevitable,' given the size of the walk in surgeries nowadays, and all of the members that commented were supportive of the changes.
- Ending the nurse walk ins, in a similar fashion was discussed and the doctors will consider this further.
- There was mention of these changes being viewed as a 'trial' period but sadly we are unable to adapt this terminology as it could imply we return to the walk-in system if the trial is deemed as a failure, which is something we are not going to do. However, having a flexible and open approach to any complaints or issues that may arise will be vital, and we will shortly be communicating with our whole surgery team to make sure that patients are handled sensitively through these changes, and the reception team feel empowered to handle new and potentially more challenging conversations at the desk.
- Same day appointments will be released after 5 pm the night before, to avoid patients being told that the appointment they would like the following day, is not released until 8am the next morning, and to call back then. We all know this is very very tedious and will do our best to apply discretion and avoid this wherever possible.

Communicating the Changes:

- The proposed letter to inform patients of the changes (sent to all PRG members last month by e mail) was deemed as too long. Members felt it more important that it was a 'brief and to the point' notice of change that could be placed in a diary or on the fridge! For those that are concerned as to the reasons behind the change, they can look at the website or ask further questions at the surgery.
- Following on previous point: We are now looking to send out a colourful postcard informing patients of the end of walk-ins and also a note about

requesting repeat prescriptions over the phone which is no longer considered best medical practice.

- In addition to postcards being sent to all households, information is to be placed on the parish and surgery notice boards, the Amscreen in waiting room, parish and surgery newsletters and Tatler magazine.
- There will inevitably be more phone calls from November 1st as more patients phone in for appointments rather than walk in. We are trying to keep up with this by adding another line for staff to use to call out on. This will effectively relieve pressure on the two existing lines used for patients calling in. (Previously a staff member calling out blocked one of the two lines that patients called in on). If patients report that the phone is engaged a lot, we will consider a call holding facility and the purchase of another phone line.
- Whilst on the topic of communication, we are to consider better signage for the building as PRG members feel that a considerable number of people do not immediately recognise the building as a surgery.

PRG future issues:

- We talked briefly about the patient questionnaire for 2013 and decided to keep the focus on appointments, as it is very important that these changes are audited and views, good and bad, collected.
- We may ask another couple of questions on telephones, surgery access/signage etc but will keep you informed as the new questionnaire takes shape.

Thank you as always for your time and input.

Topcliffe Team