

IMPORTANT CHANGES AT LITTLEWICK FROM SEPTEMBER

After September anyone wanting to see a doctor will talk to the doctor first.

There will be no pre-bookable appointments with the exception of specialised clinics like minor operations and family planning.

Nurse appointments will be unaffected but we hope to have one main member of staff co-ordinating and facilitating practice nurse and health care assistant appointments.

When you wish to see a doctor you will first be asked which doctor you would prefer to consult about your problem. You will then be told when that doctor is next in surgery and be given the opportunity of speaking to them then. If you do not wish to wait or do not have a particular doctor in mind then you will be put in contact with the next available doctor during the half day in which you have rung.

Whilst speaking to the doctor you will agree whether you need to be seen and if so when and this will be arranged for you by the doctor. The majority of the appointments and all visits will be on the same day that you ring. It may be that your problem can be dealt with there and then over the phone or that you need a particular investigation such as a blood test arranging and that this part of your care can be initiated prior to a face to face consultation.

We believe that by so doing we can provide you with better and more efficient care and take away a lot of the worry that patients have about making appointments. We can also almost eradicate the vast wastage of appointments that happens every day due to people booking appointments that they do not keep.

We thank you in anticipation for your patience as we know there will be teething problems but we know that long term there will be huge improvements to a system that has become unsustainable.

Over the last few years we have become increasingly aware of the difficulties patients in Ilkeston have faced trying to make appointments at many of the local surgeries. This really came to a head when the Department of Health under the instruction of Lord Darzi (and using information from national questionnaires) decided that the best way forward was to open a Walk In Centre in Ilkeston.

We opposed, and will continue to oppose, this decision on the grounds that the large amount of money being spent on it would have been more effective and given greater value for money if it had been used for patient care in the existing practices.

However, we have taken your comments regarding access very seriously – we don't like having limited availability any more than you do and we know how hard it makes our staff's job when they keep having to say no. Even putting in more appointments in extended hours hasn't solved the problem. Equally we know that patients like being able to talk to a doctor quickly and that many problems can be dealt with or management plans initiated over the

‘phone. For this reason we are radically changing our approach in September and using a system called Stour triage (named after the practice in Dorset where it was designed).

How this works is that everyone wanting to consult a doctor will be put in telephone contact with the doctor of their choice. The patient and doctor will then decide if the patient needs to be seen, by whom, when and where. The doctor will then organise that contact.

In this way our “DNA” (did not attend) rate should fall to zero overnight so that the great number of appointments that patients waste week in week out will disappear. Appointments can be tailored to your requirements and the system modified as we see how it works best for you.

What can you do?

Firstly between now and September (and even after for nurse appointments) PLEASE cancel if you no longer want to come to an appointment you have booked.

PLEASE think about whether your problem is something we can deal with over the phone and keep appointments for those times when you really need to come.

SUPPORT us by writing to your MP and to the Chief Executive and Director of Primary Care for Derbyshire County PCT saying how important you think it is that all practices receive equal funding per head of population

With best wishes

The Littlewick Team