

## **Offering you face to face appointments at Dean Cross Surgery**

You may be aware of the current media coverage about how GP practices are managing the demand on their services and responding to the needs of their patients.

We thought it would be helpful to explain the system in operation at Dean Cross Surgery.

### **Background**

The current pandemic has only added to the pressures on the practice and added to the frustrations of our patients.

Your practice is trying to meet extremely high demand for the services we provide. Alongside this is a reduction in the clinicians we have available in the surgery.

To give you an idea, despite a significant increase in patient numbers, we are now offering 25% less doctor time to our patients than we did back in 1998. The reasons for this are many; doctors have retired or moved to other areas to work and there is also a national shortage of GPs.

The decision to see you face to face is driven by clinical need and throughout the pandemic we have continued to see patients face to face if needed and aimed to maximise both yours and our safety.

We have always had to bear in mind that, until recently, one staff member with Covid would probably mean the closure of the practice for a week or more. Now we have all been vaccinated this is less likely to happen but that still remains a possibility.

### **How the surgery can treat you now**

When Dr Darwich left at the end of February 2020, we decided we had to move to what is called a triage system to meet the growing demand for appointments. This means that as a patient you ring and arrange a telephone appointment and a doctor or advance nurse practitioner will call you to discuss the problem and how best to manage it.

This may be any combination of signposting you to another service, arranging a prescription, arranging investigations or arranging a face-to-face appointment in the surgery.

## **What we are doing to increase the number of clinicians**

We have 2 GP vacancies which we are trying hard to fill. It is proving very difficult when just about every other practice is chasing the same small number of applicants. We have a number of trainee GPs working with us and we hope that we will have that additional GP resource with us in 2022.

We are also recruiting more advanced nurse practitioners and a mental health worker linked to the practice.

## **How you can help us**

Please be patient with us, we are trying as hard as we can to provide the best service possible under the current circumstances.

Please have your COVID booster jab once it is offered to you.

Please have your Flu jab once it is offered to you.

Please consider if another service could meet your needs such as the local pharmacist.

## **And finally...**

We will continue to serve you faithfully, according to clinical need, and always aim to serve you well. Very many of you are kind enough to express to us in consultations how much you appreciate us, and support us, and for that we are very grateful.

We view your care as a partnership between you and your clinician, and hope that we can mutually agree during the consultation the best way to manage your problem. We will always endeavour to take your views into account.

**Dr Wills**  
**Dr Westwood**  
**Dr Holland**  
**Dr Woodward**