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22nd January 2016

Statement in relation to the appointment system

We reserve a large number of appointments for booking on the day of the request. This enables us to deal with all urgent medical problems. We open these appointments at 8 o'clock in the morning. We have a number of appointments that are booked via the internet. These appointments are made available at 6.30 in the morning to assist patients with job commitments.

On the occasions that the demand for appointments is greater than our available supply we operate a triage system whereby patients will speak to either a doctor or a nurse. All patients requiring an appointment that day for medical reasons are given an appointment. Many issues that initially present to the triage team can be safely managed over the telephone saving patients the need to attend and protecting appointments for those requiring a face to face consultation.

Some medical appointments are forward booked. Examples of these are appointments for medication reviews, follow up appointments when a doctor or nurse practitioner has felt the need to see the patient again and appointments requiring specific clinicians such as those for joint injections and contraceptive device fitting. Our receptionists are able to forward book all appointments for patients who need additional support to attend appointments such as the frail elderly, disabled patients and those with learning disabilities. This helps us to ensure that the healthcare needs of our more vulnerable patients are met. Nursing and healthcare appointments are all forward booked, though there are some appointments reserved for urgent care.

Like most practices around the country we are working with limited NHS resources and high demands on them. To support better access to healthcare in the last two years we have taken on a number of nurse practitioners. Nurse practitioners are highly experienced nurses who have completed additional training which enables them to diagnose conditions and in the majority of cases prescribe any necessary treatments. We have a strong support and supervision system for our nurse practitioners so that high quality care is ensured with every patient contact.

We run a number of chronic disease clinics for patients with long-term conditions such as asthma and diabetes clinics. These appointments can be forward booked. The clinics are run by nurses who have additional qualifications in those conditions. The practice has been working hard in the last year to ensure that more of our nurses are trained in the management of multiple chronic diseases enabling a holistic "one stop appointment" for patients in which all of their conditions can be reviewed at the same time. This will hopefully ensure ideal care with increased convenience for patients.

We have a purpose built modern branch surgery in the village of Goxhill with medical, nursing and healthcare clinics in operation. There is often some spare capacity in the nursing and health care clinics there so we actively encourage all patients, including those living in Barton, to make use of the facilities. The car parking at Goxhill, Village Surgery is easier than at our main surgery which is town based and many patients find this to be a significant advantage.

We do our very best to ensure an excellent standard of service and patient care is maintained at all times. In the event that a patient feels that their care has not been of a high standard then we encourage them to provide feedback on this through various channels. The best way to do this is by speaking to, or writing to, our manager, however if patients do not want to do this then we have suggestion boxes at both surgeries, and an anonymous feedback form on our website. We also have a patient forum group who represent the practice population. The patient forum welcomes input from non-members and works hard to assist the practice in serving its population.

We do ask patients not to use internet forums for providing feedback or complaints as we are unable to respond to these for a variety of reasons such as maintaining patient confidentiality. Sadly on occasion patients have used websites such as Facebook to make unpleasant comments about specific staff members. We strongly discourage this as all our staff are working hard to help people and like all human beings can become very upset and offended by such comments.

We would like to think that the majority of our patients are very satisfied with our service and patient feedback that has been formerly collected suggests this to be the case. We will continue to do our best in difficult times to meet the healthcare needs of our community.

We hope this clarifies the appointment system, however our receptionists are happy to help and provide further guidance if needed.