



BURNLEY GROUP PRACTICE - Patient Newsletter July 2021

Thank you for bearing with us during this hugely stressful time for everyone.

As many of you may be aware General Practice has seen unprecedented demand on its services over the past 12 months, and this demand continues to increase. It has been the most challenging time of our working life at the practice for some of us.

GPs are dealing with more patient contacts than they did in the previous year. In addition to managing those patients who are suffering with the long term effects of the Covid-19 virus, we are also dealing with those patients who are contacting the practice due to delayed treatment in secondary care. And all this whilst contributing to the biggest vaccination campaign the country has ever seen.

All our staff have been extremely committed to providing a continued service in the face of increased workload and patient expectation.

Infection rates in our area remain high and the safety of patients and staff remains a priority.

The information below sets an account of the hurdles we try to overcome daily. We are not alone with the struggle as GP surgeries all around the country are experiencing the same challenges.

Phone Lines

We have seen an increased number of telephone calls coming into the practice, and this has not been made easy with us having to work around a failing telephone system, provided to us by the NHS. The system supplier recently changed its provider and unfortunately, this has resulted in the whole system being unable to cope with the volume of calls, especially on Mondays. Patients are constantly cut off or are placed in a queue for lengthy periods of time. Wherever possible, you should avoid trying to call us on Monday unless it is regarding a matter which won't wait until the following day. If you are calling for an urgent appointment the best time to call is between 8 and 9 for a morning appointment and 1 and 2 for an afternoon appointment, avoid calling between these times for other reasons if you are able to.

Face to Face appointments

We have never stopped seeing patients and in the past 6 months our Doctors and Nurse Practitioners have seen over 5000 patients face to face, our Practice Nurses and Health Care Assistants are also seeing patients face to face.

To help us manage social distancing within our waiting areas and keep patients and staff safe, patients are booked initially, for a telephone consultation, as a large number of problems can be dealt with over the telephone or by video consultation. A face to face appointment will be arranged where the clinician feels it is clinically appropriate.



The majority of our Practice Nurse and Health Care Assistant appointments have been and remain face to face. Those reviews that can be done over the telephone are done where clinically appropriate.

Face Masks

Your safety and the safety of our staff is our priority. As cases surge locally we will still be asking all who attend practice to wear masks and practice social distancing. Please respect the measures we have put in place for all our benefits, especially the more vulnerable.

Appointment System

You may have noticed that we have made some changes to our appointment system. Our sessions are now split into urgent appointments and routine appointments. Urgent appointments are released at 8am and 1pm on the day, our routine appointments are available for booking in advance and currently we are looking at booking just over a week ahead. The system has been running for one month and we have already seen better appointment availability.

Please help our receptionists to book you appropriately, they will ask why you need to be seen, this is to help them establish what type of slot you need and who is better placed to see you, we now have a wide range of clinicians in addition to GPs.

All clinicians are highly qualified and experienced, other than those who are undergoing training. Those who are undergoing training will have a supervisor and it is likely that they will have more time to be able to spend with you.

It may be that once our reception staff know more about the reason for your appointment request they can direct you more appropriately to a service outside of the practice – this is to help free up our appointments for those who need them. The doctors have asked them to ask for this information so that they see the most appropriate patients and their valuable time is best used.

General Practice Data for Planning and Research – GDPR

The NHS needs data about the patients it treats in order to plan and deliver its services and to ensure that care and treatment provided is safe and effective. The General Practice Data for Planning and Research data collection will help the NHS to improve health and care services for everyone by collecting patient data that can be used to do this. For example patient data can help the NHS to:

- monitor the long-term safety and effectiveness of care
- plan how to deliver better health and care services
- prevent the spread of infectious diseases
- identify new treatments and medicines through health research

Please read more about this using the link below

[General Practice Data for Planning and Research: NHS Digital Transparency Notice - NHS Digital](#)