

Important announcement from the Patient Participation Group

Dear fellow patients,



The Sustainability of General Practice - we need your help

You will be aware from reports in the media how the NHS is facing an ever increasing struggle to meet the needs of the people it provides for. GP practices are having to deal with a shortage of GPs, a growing number of patients, an increased demand for appointments from existing patients and a national agenda to move care from hospitals to primary care. These issues are affecting all practices and Watling Medical Centre is no different.

The number of people registered at our Practice has gone up by 25% in the last 5 years and patients on average expect to see a clinician 7-10 times a year. You will thus not be surprised that our practice is struggling to keep pace with the escalating demands and the workload is becoming difficult to manage. We hope that you will not have noticed any deterioration, since all our staff strive constantly to keep the impact on patients to a minimum but we now need to introduce some changes. These will help us to maintain a high quality service, with quicker access to appointments, for which we ask for your understanding and help.

One of the services offered by Watling medical centre is telephone call advice from a doctor; this will continue but subject to some restrictions as we can no longer sustain an open access system.

As of 2nd October calls will be by appointment and there will be a limit to the number of calls a doctor can take for patient safety reasons.

Please consider whether your call is really necessary, particularly, if you are someone who makes frequent phone calls.

Please think:

- Can you **manage it yourself**?
- Have you **registered for online service** ? You can book an appointment or request your repeat prescription. If you are not registered for online services talk to the receptionists to sign up
- Can your **local pharmacist** help you?
- Can you **see one of our nurses** or **ask admin staff instead**? We have highly qualified nurses and our Nurse Practitioner Paula can deal with minor illnesses and prescribe medication

We are a part of the local network of practices. Our receptionists can book you an **evening or a weekend appointment** at a nearby surgery

GPs **cannot chase** hospital **referrals**. **Ask the reception team for hospital numbers**. Our administration team is happy to try to help if you are really getting nowhere.

Please note that a number of **letters** for the purposes of: gym membership, fitness to fly or drive, travel cancellation documentation and even sick notes for schools are not part of doctors' contracted work

Don't Need It; cancel It! – Make sure you let the practice know if you cannot attend your appointment – someone else can use it. We have **40 wasted appointments** each week due to patients not attending.

In order to try to improve continuity of patients' care your Patient Participation Group encourages you to get to know at least 2 doctors to cover your care needs. However, don't worry if you can't wait to see your preferred doctor; every doctor with whom you have an appointment, within the practice or the network, with your consent will be able to access your record

Please see the practice website <http://www.watlingmedicalcentre.co.uk/> or the practice leaflet for the days on which the different doctors work.

To find out more about the issues GP practices are currently facing please take a look at <https://vimeo.com/156544270>

Thank you for your co-operation,

Yours sincerely,

Watling Medical Centre Patient Participation Group

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