

Fountain Medical Centre

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01 November 2021

Dear Patients

I am sure you will have heard reports in the media about the difficulty in accessing GP appointments. General practice is busier now than it has ever been for a multitude of reasons. These are challenging times for the practice and our patients, and we recognise that many of you have had difficulties accessing appointments. We would like to share some suggestions with you about how you can work in partnership with us to make sure all patients get the care they need. All our staff care very much about the service we provide and being able to care for our patients. We are doing all we can in the current difficult circumstances.

At the surgery, we saw patients face to face throughout the pandemic and continue to do so. Appointments that are face to face tend to take longer than a telephone appointment, partly because of the nature of the problem's patients are discussing and partly because of the need for the doctor to put on and take off their PPE (personal protective equipment). We, as clinicians, do want to see patients face to face, we recognise how important this is for patients and it often helps us to make a diagnosis and treat our patient effectively. However as much as possible we need to minimise the number of patients in the waiting area to reduce the risk of spreading respiratory viruses such as Covid-19 which is circulating at high levels at the moment, in order to protect our vulnerable patients. One way is the use of remote consultations (video/telephone/one contact). Certain problems can still be managed very effectively via remote consultations and we are aware some people might prefer this option. We have however increased the proportion of face-to-face appointments versus available telephone appointments. We no longer triage our telephone appointments for routine appointments, if you feel strongly that you need to see a clinician face to face please discuss this with our care navigators, as we want to avoid duplication of having to book two appointments for one problem.

With the increase in demand, appointments are at a premium now more than ever. There are many ways that you can help us to use our appointments effectively so everyone who needs to be seen can be seen in a timely manner. For example:

- Many minor illnesses can be managed by self-care. They will improve either with simple remedies that can be brought over the counter, or with no intervention at all. They do not need to be discussed with or seen by a clinician. If you are not sure if this is the case for you then have a look at the NHS (www.nhs.uk) website. It has a wealth of information about how to manage minor infections. Your pharmacist is another good source of advice.

**We are always trying to improve how we communicate with Patients. Please tell us if you need to receive information in a different format or any communication support.
Just let us know when you are next in the surgery or call us on 0113 295 1600**

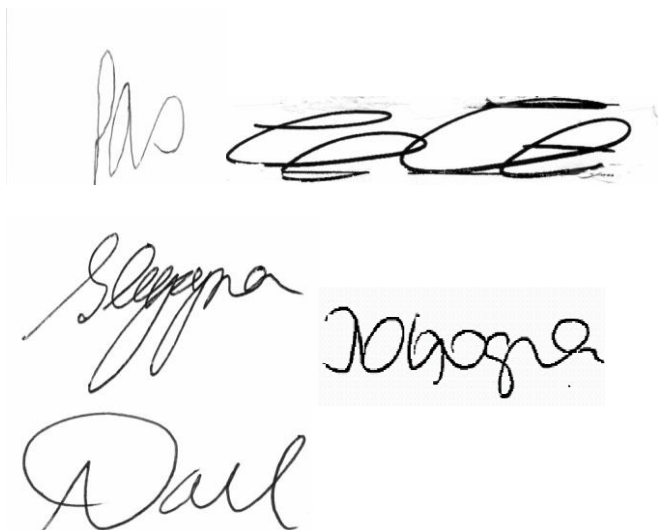
*Partners : Dr Sabodh C Gogna Dr Francis Perez-Carral Dr Suzie Henstock Dr Nicolas Hall
Dr Mike Pointon and Dr Jill Gogna
Managing Director : Tracie J Hutchinson*

- If one of our care navigators asks you for details about your problem it is because they are trying to make best use of the limited appointments that are available. They are not trying to avoid giving you an appointment. Please help them by giving the information they ask for.
- If you have an appointment, please make sure you attend. If it is a telephone appointment, please make sure you have your phone with you and are available to answer it.
- If you have a non-medically urgent problem, you may be asked to wait a few days or even longer for your appointment. This is to make sure there are appointments available on the day for urgent problems. Please appreciate that there are other patients whose medical needs may be more urgent, and we cannot accommodate same day appointment requests to fit working schedules or social commitments. We have to prioritise appointments based on clinical need.
- Our care navigators may signpost you to another service which can help with your problem such as i.e. first contact physio or social prescribers. They can deal with many issues without you having to see or speak to a clinician and this helps to make best use of precious appointments.
- If you have a non-urgent problem, you can use **one contact** (via the practice website) to contact us. This will avoid you having to stay on hold to speak to our care navigation team.
- Please register for online access to request medication or view your medical record / investigation results.

Finally, a request for kindness. This winter is likely to be very challenging for the NHS. We are an already stretched service, but every single member of staff is working incredibly hard and doing their best to provide good quality care for all our patients. We care very much about this and we all feel it when we are not meeting expectations, but our staff should be able to come to work without fear of abuse, harassment, or violence. We will always try to show kindness and compassion and we ask the same in return. Any instances where our staff are subject to serious or persistent verbal abuse, physical harm, threatening or abusive behaviour on social media, over the telephone or face to face will be investigated. We may remove you from our practice list or legal action taken if necessary.

Many thanks

Yours sincerely



The image shows five handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is 'AS'. The second is a stylized signature. The third is 'Suzie'. The fourth is 'Tracie'. The fifth is 'A Hall'.

Fountain Medical Centre Partners

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