

Dr Astbury & Partners

St Luke's Primary Care Centre

News Letter Winter 2013

Dear Patients,

Over the last 18 months, we have offered you an unlimited amount of appointments enabling you to see us on the same day, no matter whether this has been urgent or routine. The whole practice has worked very hard to deliver this through "Dr First".

Regrettably we have found this system has proved unsustainable with our current resources



Increasing patient demand, what have we done?

- introduced Dr First, offering unlimited appointments on the same day
- built our new surgery
- new clinical system
- more telephone lines
- more receptionists
- more nurses
- more doctors
- become a training practice
- brought in online booking of appointments
- bringing in an automated telephone booking system

Increasing pressure on our doctors, what have we done?

- tried to recruit 3 new GPs for the last 2 years
- advertised nationally 3 times

Has this worked?

- **Sadly no**

What has been the result of this?

- 3 GPs have tendered their resignation during this time
- 1 GP has left
- 1 GP is about to leave
- Further inevitable pressure on the system

What have we done in response to this situation of not being able to recruit, and additionally subsequently losing GPs?

- **We have amended our system of Dr First**

What is the amended Dr First system that we will run?

- The GPs that are in, will have a fixed number of telephone appointments, these can be used by patients for urgent and routine issues
- Once these appointments are full, the triage doctor will see only urgent issues, if it is something that you believe can wait till the next day, you will be asked to call back when further appointments will be made available. Depending upon how many doctors are in, this can range between 200 and 450 appointments per day.
- We will still be offering more appointments than any other GP practice in Northampton.
- We will continue to bring in locum doctors to augment our numbers, please be prepared to see or speak with them. They are fully qualified and trained GPs, they are not a suboptimal choice; they can offer a useful, new perspective.

We are here to help you, we WANT to help you. Please help us to help you.



- 10% of our calls go to patients' answerphones. The time taken to deal with this is the equivalent of a WHOLE NEW GP. Please be available to take the call, we are happy to try, and usually succeed, to ring you in a reasonable time window specified by yourself. Even when we call at a prearranged time, we often get an answerphone. You then go through the inconvenience of having to ring us back.



- Remember we receive 2500 consultation requests per week. Approximately 60 per GP per day. Please understand that although we try our best, if there is a delay, it is for a good reason, such as spending extra time with a particularly poorly patient.



- Please remember we deal with approximately 2500 prescriptions requests per week. So when one goes missing in our building, or it hasn't been done, this has not been intentional, and we will do our best to rectify this quickly. Please be patient with our receptionists.



- We receive and action 1000 letters per week, approximately 22 per GP, per day. Letters take time to be sent from the hospital, and so please do not expect to see the consultant, and then ring to talk about the letter on the same day - we will not have received it. Be understanding and wait a week. If it is recommended that you need an urgent prescription, on that day, it is the consultant's responsibility to provide it directly to you.



- We receive and action well over 10,000 results per week. That is about 400 results that a GP has to interpret, and recommend an action for. What is normal for one patient may not be normal for the next. All patients are unique.



- Results, letters and script requests that total 500 pieces of necessary work by your GP, takes up several hours per day that you will never see. Therefore please understand that when something is not done, in a timely manner, it is the exception and not the rule. Consider that most letters are turned around within 48 hours. This is faster than most expensive, fully funded, private services, such as solicitors.



- Your GPs are working phenomenally hard to deliver the best service that they can. Please be patient with us.