

## Practice News

- We have been given planning permission for our new medical centre. Work is due to start in the summer and take a year to complete.
- If you need urgent care when the practice is closed you now need to call 111. This number is free to call from any landline or mobile. If you need to see a nurse or doctor they will arrange for you to be seen by Primary Care 24.
- The practice scored 98.6% in QOF for 2013/14. QOF stands for “Quality and Outcomes Framework” and measures the practice against a wide range of targets.
- We raised £346.10 for McMillan Cancer Support from all the donations to the bookstall. Donations are now going to John Eastwood Hospice.

## People in the News

Congratulations to **Dr Jack** who is going on adoption leave from June. She will be off for at least 6 months. We are arranging for a doctor to cover her during this time.

**Dr Tetley** has completed her training with us and is now a fully qualified GP working with us 2 days a week.

**GP Trainees** - Dr Chauhan has finished her placement with us. Dr Bryant and Dr Thurland are with us now until the end of July and will be coming back in the future to complete their training.

**Apprentices** – Jade, Alice and Rachael have all recently joined us as apprentices. They will be helping out in reception and other areas of the practice as well as receiving training.

# Clipstone Health Centre NEWSLETTER

## Appointment FAQs

Spring 2014

*“Why can’t you have more appointments?”*  
*“Why do I have to see a different doctor?”*  
*“Why do I have to choose between saying its urgent or waiting a week?”*  
*“Why am I kept waiting so long?”*

These are familiar questions to us and we’re very aware of the problems and difficulties these can cause.

We’ve given over nearly all this edition to try to explain the challenges we face and what we’re trying to do about it. As you will see, there are no easy answers.

We want to work with you to provide the best service we can, with the resources we have, to give you excellent care. We hope that this edition of the newsletter will help you understand how we’re trying to do that.

**Matt Doig**  
*Practice Manager*

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Challenge	Answer
<b>Funding</b> – this is by far the biggest issue when it comes to providing more appointments. The way practices are funded is very complex but the majority of the funding is based on the number of patients we have. If you need lots of appointments or visits we don't get extra funding.	This is both the biggest issue and the one we can do least about. In recent years funding in general practice has stayed fairly level while the workload has increased significantly. There are very limited ways of increasing appointment availability without additional funding.
<b>Demand</b> – demand for appointments goes up and up. Between 2011/12 and 2013/14 we've seen a 14% increase in the total number of appointments we've had (up from 61,000 to 70,000) with only a 2% increase in patients registered with us.	We have very limited control over this and we don't want to stop people coming to be seen. Lots of the appointments are generated by us, e.g. an annual review or following up a result. We could try to reduce those but it wouldn't give you good care.
<b>Space</b> – even if we had the funding for more doctors and nurses, right now we wouldn't have anywhere to put them!	In the summer of 2015 we'll be moving into "Crown Medical Centre". We'll have more clinical rooms and space to grow as well as excellent facilities to benefit everyone.
<b>Continuity of care</b> – it's much better for us and you if you can see the same doctor every time. The doctors get to know you and you get to know them. We realise it's often very difficult to see the doctor you want to see, particularly if it's at short notice. This problem is particularly bad with doctors who have been here a long time and are very well known.	We work very hard to keep excellent medical records on your care so that if another doctor has to see you, they can see what's been happening. But we know this isn't the same as seeing the same doctor. If you want to see a particular doctor you probably will need to wait longer to see them. But if the doctor needs to see you again, they will sometimes bypass the appointment system to make sure you see them.
<b>Wasted appointments</b> – about 5% of all appointments are missed without the practice being informed – 3345 in 2013/14.	Two thirds of you now get reminders for your appointments by text messages and you can cancel appointments online or by leaving a message for us.

Challenge	Answer
<b>Demand for urgent appointments</b> – we want to make sure you can have an appointment the same day if you can't wait until the next routine. The demand each day can vary enormously from 25 to 75. This makes it difficult to plan for. Doctors need enough time to see these patients but this takes away from capacity for routine appointments.	Two of our nurses are qualified prescribers and are trained in treating minor illnesses. We're going to change our appointment system to try to make routine appointments available within 2-3 days instead of 5 days. We hope this will mean more problems can be dealt with in routine appointments and will also reduce the dilemma of choosing to wait for a routine appointment or ask for an urgent same day one.
<b>Providing appointments outside of normal working hours</b> – inevitably, the majority of the appointments we offer are in normal working hours. However, we do receive funding to provide 4.75 hours of "extended hours" each week – that's appointments outside of our core hours of 8am-6.30pm, Monday to Friday.	We've fixed the times when these appointments are available and made more available in evenings. We offer appointments on Monday and Tuesday evenings, early appointments on Thursdays mornings and a Saturday morning once a month. Unfortunately these appointment times can be very popular so aren't always available as soon as you may like but they can be booked further ahead if you want to wait for them.
<b>Waiting to be seen</b> – the average waiting time for all appointments is about 10 minutes. We know in reality this can be considerably longer, particularly for doctor's appointments. We have considered increasing the length of doctor appointments, but this would decrease the total number of appointments available. GPs already routinely work 10-12 hour days and making those days longer and longer is not a recipe for good patient care!	Our doctors do try to run to time but they believe it's also important to give you the time you need and sometimes 10 minutes is not sufficient. This also reflects the priority of most of you; in our recent survey about two thirds of you said it was more important to them to have the time you need with a doctor or nurse than to be seen on time. We do really appreciate it when you ask for double appointments when you've got lots to discuss because that really helps our doctors to run to time.