

I am sure none of you will need me to tell you that Covid 19 remains a significant challenge. Case numbers are high and as a result our staff absences remain a significant problem. We are aware that this is a similar problem in hospitals and social care and may continue for some time yet. Having said that we do now hope to resume a more normal appointment system with significantly less reliance on daily triage and more pre-bookable telephone and face to face appointments. Our hoped-for launch date will have been Monday 25th April. What this means in practice is that we will increasingly be re-directing patients with 'important but not urgent problems' from triage to a more routine appointment. This is extremely important as it will allow us to deal with our unwell patients needing to be seen on the day more efficiently, will free up clinician time to allow a more thorough discussion of concerns in a booked slot, and recognises what you, our patients, have been asking for. There are still huge pressures on NHS services (including our own) and you may need to wait a week or two for your contact (possibly longer if a specific clinician is requested), we hope that will settle over time. Our receptionists will continue to ask the nature of your problem to assess urgency and ensure you are booked with the appropriate clinician (who may be a nurse, paramedic, pharmacist or even physiotherapist). Patients with less urgent problems in triage will be advised as such and then put on a re-call list for a routine appointment to be made. Administrative requests such as urgent sick notes or medication queries may be dealt with as 'tasks' rather than appointments and we will continue to use our Accurx system to send messages and receive photographs of rashes etc. An up-to-date mobile phone number is essential for that system to work. We recognise this is a significant change from the past 2 years of the pandemic, but we believe an important one to now make. Please remember to use NHS Choices and our local pharmacists as first points of contact for many of the more straightforward ailments before ringing the practice. Also, any queries about or problems with hospital services or appointments need to be discussed with the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) at the relevant hospital before contacting the practice.

Finally, we are delighted to welcome some new members to the practice and primary care network team.

Catherine Convey is a Mental Health Occupational Therapist who will be starting clinics in early May, Natalie Hubbard is joining our reception team on a permanent basis and we are delighted to be resuming our Early Intervention Physiotherapy service with Roger Langridge

Phil Rayner