



An open letter to all Doncaster residents:

There are currently extreme pressures across our health services in Doncaster. This is in common with most other areas of the country where we're all dealing with a mix of complex factors leading to huge levels of demand.

GP surgeries are working through long lists of requests for appointments and call-backs which we appreciate can cause frustration for patients and the perception sometimes that we are not open.

Surgeries and pharmacies have worked incredibly hard to provide services throughout the Covid-19 crisis and continue to do so.

The way patients are responded to had to change quickly over the pandemic with many more video and telephone consultations taking place to help protect everyone and prioritise those most in need. And we know many patients appreciate not having to attend their surgery in person when the problem can be safely dealt with remotely.

However, if you are assessed as needing a face-to-face appointment you can still have one though you may have to wait a bit longer.

We want everyone to understand what we're doing in Doncaster, why we're doing it and what you might be able to do to help us and help yourselves.

What we're doing

GP surgeries are working hard to cope with the additional demands placed on them which includes bringing in more staff in diverse professional roles to help.

Extra funding and support is also being shared across South Yorkshire to help increase capacity and make even more appointments available.

We are also investing more in technology to improve communication and efficiency across the system and releasing people from tasks that can be automated to focus on those that need to be done in person.

Help us to help you

You've given incredible support to the NHS during the pandemic but it's not over yet and we still need your help.

Always think what your first port of call might be for the symptoms you're experiencing. Basic self-management of simple conditions keeps more appointments available for those who really need them. You can always [check your symptoms here](#) or try taking some simple painkillers first before you contact us.

Pharmacies offer a wide range of services and expert advice for a whole host of ailments if you're not sure, and we've had some great feedback from people who've used pharmacies successfully. You can find more information [on our website](#)

Please help to keep Covid infection and admission rates as low as possible in Doncaster by getting vaccinated. Book your jabs by calling 119 or visiting [nhs.uk](#). Details of our walk-in centres can be found at [www.doncasterccg.nhs.uk](#)

If you test positive for Covid please keep others safe by staying at home and following the self-isolation guidance, even if you have been vaccinated <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/>

If you have any symptoms of Covid-19, please don't visit a surgery or pharmacy without first taking a test, [using the information here](#)

You can also:

- Let us know if you need to cancel an appointment. If you fail to attend and don't tell us, it's a wasted slot that could go to someone else who needs it.
- Get information and advice on common childhood conditions at <https://sybhealthiertogether.nhs.uk/> Most fevers and coughs can be treated at home and usually improve within a week. Call your GP or 111 if your child doesn't improve or their condition worsens.
- Call 999 only in a genuine, life-threatening emergency
- Go online to NHS 111 or call 111.

While we understand your frustrations if you struggle to get through to us, or are unhappy with what is available, aggression and abuse towards our staff has sadly become a daily reality which is unfair, undeserved and unacceptable. So please be understanding of us too.

Thank you for your continuing support, from Doncaster's Primary Care Clinical Leaders

