

As you may know we made some changes to our appointments system back in March 2015 as a result of:-

1. listening to our patients who were telling us that the waiting time until the next available routine appointment was too long at more than four weeks on occasion
2. reviewing our available GP capacity after a resignation and a round of recruitment
3. reviewing our DNA (did not attend) rate, which averaged at 16 to 18 per cent

The changes put forward were for a largely book on the day service requiring patients to contact the practice from 8.00am on the day they wished to be seen. We aimed to make sufficient appointments available and to continue to offer an “urgent” appointment option too. We discussed this change with our Patient Participation Group, who were very supportive, we advertised the changes, gave notice and trialled it for three months, March, April and May 2015.

At the end of the trial period we opened a survey looking to gather feedback from patients on their experiences of using the new system. This survey was open between mid June and mid July 2015. We also included patient feedback received about the appointment system from other sources; ie our own website, NHS Choices website, face to face feedback in the practice and one or two written concerns.

The results of this feedback were collated, shared with staff and with representatives of our Patient Participation Group who all met on the afternoon of 30th July 2015. Whilst we already knew that patients felt it important to be able to book an appointment on the day and any changes to our systems needed to have this facility built in, 83% of respondents told us that being able to book an appointment in advance was either fairly or very important to them. This was the main outcome from the survey that we discussed how to facilitate.

Agreements reached:

- A re-introduction of some pre-bookable appointments.
- Around one third of routine appointments will be able to be pre-booked up to a maximum of 28 days ahead.
- Pre-booked appointments can be made by the practice or by the patient on the phone, face to face at reception or over the internet via Patient Access to On-Line Services facility (see reception for more details).
- Two thirds of routine appointments will remain bookable on the day.
- Urgent appointments will remain bookable on the day.
- Effective from 17th August 2015.
- Further review to be scheduled with patient representatives towards the end of 2015.