

Dear Patients,

Please can we draw your attention to the impact the continuing Covid pandemic is having on our capacity at the practice at this moment.

- We have a number of staff off sick and this has been the situation for some weeks.
- We have staffs that have to isolate.
- We have exhausted staffs that are now on leave with their families, a much-needed rest in order for them to continue to work effectively.
- We have a huge increase in people contacting the surgery as the hospitals are still dealing with Covid patients and the backlog of work that has built up

This means that, due to lower than anticipated GP time; we are lower than we would like to be in terms of appointments we can offer. It impacts on our reception team when they are understaffed.

As the staffing situation is not particular to our practice but is a national problem, it is proving difficult to find temporary receptionists and GPs to fill in the gaps. As you know we now offer everyone an initial telephone consultation with the guarantee that if you need a face-to-face consultation, you will be offered one on the same day.

It would be helpful if you could;

1. Talk to a pharmacist for minor conditions where appropriate
2. Use e-consult for those with access to the internet via our website. This service enables you to put your symptoms in to the e-consult system and an algorithm will support you in managing your condition yourself where possible or enabling you to get in touch with a Health Care Professional if needed. It can be useful.
3. Use reliable safe NHS websites to help you manage minor conditions <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>
4. Have some understanding with reception who are desperately trying to fit everyone in that needs help
5. If you think your medical condition is urgent of course please call on the usual way

Thank you for bearing with us and supporting us. We want to be able to support all who need help but have to prioritise our care as best we can, given the present very difficult circumstances.

The Lawson Practice