

12th April 2024

Important Notice to Wilson Practice Patients

Dear Patients,

Background

Most of you will be aware that our NHS is under extraordinary pressure. This is particularly true of General Practice. There are increased expectations from our Government and our patients about what we should be doing. Increasing hospital waiting lists also have a big impact on us. Patients who are waiting to see Specialists, or for treatment or operations inevitably need more input from us to support them during their wait.

Financial Pressures

There are huge financial pressures on General Practice. We want to let you all know about this, so you can understand the effect this is having on your GP Surgery, The Wilson Practice.

Over the last few years, The Wilson Practice has been under increased financial pressure. Like most of your households we have had increases in all of our costs – everything we buy is more expensive, our energy costs have spiralled, and our staffing costs have also increased. The funding we receive from the Government has increased by approximately 2% each year. This increase does not come close to covering our current costs. You may read about ‘new’ money coming into Primary Care Networks (PCNs). Some of this money funds staff who are making a significant difference to patients across our PCN, but the funding does not help The Wilson Practice Finances.

Current Position

The impact of the financial pressures is already being felt. In recent months we have lost several members of staff, some of whom we cannot afford to replace. As a result, the clinical and administrative teams per patient population are becoming smaller. We have had to greatly reduce locum cover and over-time. The Wilson Practice is a team of hard working fantastic people and we are all very proud to be a part of it. It is the team that makes this a wonderful place to work, and provides excellent care to patients. We are also largely well supported by our patients, and our active and involved Patient Participation Group. This brings enormous value. With this in mind we feel it is important to be honest with you about the situation. We hope this will help you to understand why changes are happening, to us and to Practices all over the country. Without significant change, there is a real risk that this Practice, and many many others, may close.

Steps taken

All of our staff are working extremely hard to provide the best level of care they can. We cannot work any harder. The current financial pressures and staffing levels mean that we will not always be able to offer the same level of service you are used to. We can only offer the level of service we are funded for.

You will likely be aware that we have switched to a 'total triage' model. This allows a senior clinician to review all enquiries to the Practice, by eConsult, or eConsult lite, and allocate the most appropriate service in response. There may be times you are asked to access healthcare elsewhere. For example the local pharmacies are now offering the 'Pharmacy First' scheme, where they can diagnose and manage a number of acute ailments. You may also notice that sometimes, more frequently than we would like, eConsult is closed early in the day. This purely relates to demand, and safe capacity available. We are human beings and have a finite number of hours in the day. If demand for routine appointments exceeds this for our staffing levels, unfortunately we have no choice but to close eConsult. Urgent enquiries will still be able to phone through reception if needed, until urgent capacity is reached.

In the month of February we received and managed **4036** eConsults, and our reception and administration teams answered **3657** calls. This is a total of **7693** contacts, which is equivalent to around 45% of our total registered patient list contacting the Practice in one month.

In order to ensure capacity is available for those who need it, please consider whether you can help by trying to self-manage minor illness, by using other available services when appropriate, and attending appointments and health checks when booked.

What can you do?

We will endeavour to keep you up to date with changes, and will continue to do all within our power to provide you with good quality care. We are very grateful for the support you offer us. Should you wish to support us by contacting your MP, please find a template letter which you can use, or you can write to them in your own words to tell them your own experiences.

We respectfully ask you not to telephone the Practice to discuss the above so that we can ensure that the telephone lines are kept free for clinical enquiries only.

Thank you.

The Wilson Practice Team

Partners:

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