

CROCUS MEDICAL PRACTICE



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Dear Patient

Friday 11th November 2022

Re: Update from Crocus Medical Practice

This is now a uniquely challenging time, and the practice is currently seeing levels of demand that we have never seen before, as well as dealing with the effect of pressures and backlogs throughout every aspect of the health service. We are dealing with nearly double the amount of workload that would be considered normal for what was already an extremely busy practice. This effect has been seen across the UK and is not a problem unique to Crocus Medical Practice. We thank you for your patience with us and beg of you to be kind and understanding.

Staff at the practice are quite routinely working, well over 12-hour days, and it is not unusual for an individual clinician to face nearly 100 patient contacts in a single day. This does mean that staff are fatigued and are at serious risk of burnout. We are sorry that this means that we are not able to give each and every one of you the time that you would like and are forced to prioritise and work in ways that may not always seem as caring and as personal as we would like.

We also understand there has been a lot of frustration recently regarding access to the practice for booking appointments, including prolonged periods of time for your calls to be answered by one of the care navigation team. We do strongly sympathise with all our patients on this matter. We continue to monitor the impact of increased pressure and demand on patient experience and review what measures we can implement to try and mitigate the challenges. To that end, and as a result of your recent feedback, we have implemented the following:

- We are moving to a brand-new clinical system provider, which goes live on Wednesday 30th November which will benefit patients and clinicians alike, resulting in an increasingly joined-up and comprehensive approach to healthcare
- Whilst we are migrating to this brand-new clinical system staff have to undergo extensive training and therefore, we ask for your support and patience during this difficult period, but it will be for the greater good of both our patients and staff alike. To assist us through the transitional period any patients that would have been affected have been given 2months worth of medication

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- We will also be moving to a total triage service in where appointments will be booked based on clinical need and will be reviewed by our clinical triage team on a daily basis and booked in with the appropriate clinician accordingly. Please note that for any urgent matters or those who are unable to use a computer/mobile/tablet you can still call reception, who will then fill this out on your behalf
- To access our triage service, you will need to fill in a secure webform (Online Consultation) directly from our practice website <https://www.crocusmedicalpractice.nhs.uk/> (for non-urgent medical or admin requests), you can also get someone to fill this out on your behalf and once again this will be triaged appropriately by the clinical triage team
- The triage service will be available Monday to Friday, patients who come through the triage service we will aim to respond to within 24 hours, if deemed necessary you are booked in for a telephone conversation with a clinician you will be given a three-hour window for telephone appointments and clinicians will do their best to call patients within the time frame given, subject to emergencies, etc
- Once we have got used to our new clinical system, we will be looking to reinstate the online booking system for some appointments. You may also be sent a text link from time to time to book in your own appointments at a time to suit you
- We will also be looking to introduce a dedicated cancellation option on the telephone system so patients can cancel appointments without needing to speak to a receptionist, this option will become available on the telephone system in due course, you can also cancel appointments using the online booking system or via the NHS App
- We have also employed more clinical and non-clinical members of staff to try to help with the ever-increasing demands on general practice

We are very hopeful that by implementing the above this will help reduce the pressure on our telephone lines, and the time you are waiting for calls to be answered, we would once again strongly encourage anyone able too, to utilise our online consultation service, as already mentioned above, this will ensure that appointments can be prioritised based on clinical need. This should then free up the phonelines for those patients to contact us who are not able to fill this out themselves or don't have anyone able to do it on their behalf, please do bear in mind that calls will take a little longer to work through as a result of needing to complete the triage form.

We will continuously monitor the performance of our telephone system and ensure the changes implemented have had the desired effect and we do value patient feedback, and once again it is because of your feedback we have implemented these changes.

Once again, we sympathise and apologise for the frustration in being able to obtain an appointment and being able to reach us via the telephone. We all share a united vision of driving forward positive change, for better health and wellbeing, and for modern high-quality services.

Please do work with us on this journey and support your doctors and all the fantastic team that support them, in their mission to help you.

Kind Regards

Ann Sisson & Chris Duguid

Practice Managers

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