

Sherwood House Patients Participation Group Newsletter Summer 2022

Practice Seeing Unprecedented Demand

This Newsletter focusses on two issues of importance to patients currently:

- getting through on the phone
- getting an appointment

Because of the seriousness of these 2 issues the Patients Group has devoted the whole issue to an interview conducted by PPG Chair with Dr. Miller:

How has the workload changed this year?

Workload has gone up significantly due to a number of reasons. The Surgery is busier due to more patients attending with Long Covid, mental health issues, and patients whose treatment in secondary care has been delayed.

Why is it so difficult to call by phone?

The increase in the demand by phone calls has gone up 400% in the practice since last year

Is this just a problem in our practice?

No, it's a problem nationally and locally. In Birmingham and Solihull, general practice is offering almost 20% more patient appointments on the same day and up to seven days compared to 2019. However, many patients are frustrated that they can't get through.

What has the practice done to improve the phone system?

We have spent many hours discussing changes with our provider to keep pace with increased demand. We have increased call capacity to 20 callers at any one time.

Why are there so few telephone appointments available online?

We are encouraging the use of web-booked appointments where practical. However, we do not want to penalize those that cannot book web appointments (often the frail or elderly) by offering web appointments which are not as much in demand.

Why can't you see as many patients face to face?

This is partly a waiting room issue – keeping patients spaced out.

When to call 119 for COVID

You can call 119 if you have questions or need help with coronavirus (COVID 19) vaccinations, testing, NHS COVID Pass and more. Calls to 119 are free from mobiles and landlines. Lines are open every day from 8am to 8pm. 119 provides support in 200 languages

There is also an issue with surgery and equipment cleaning between patients.

Is the practice fully open now?

Surgery has been open throughout. We are offering every patient the opportunity to book a face-to-face appointment.

Can I get a blood test at the practice?

Yes, but you might have to wait. Tests are also available at Victoria Health Centre, Dudley Road Hospital, Oldbury Health Centre. Check with reception.

Is COVID still a problem for the practice?

Obviously, it can lead to staff shortages which is a problem. Also, we are still getting patients trying to get face-to-face appointments without getting correct COVID tests

How are the vaccinations for COVID going?

The vaccination programme is going well with numbers above the national average.

Has the practice had many staff off sick with COVID or isolating Yes, as per national figures.

Are COVID boosters going to be available at Sherwood House?

Not for the foreseeable future. Harborne Medical Practice was selected to be the site and has worked on behalf of 5 practices to vaccinate their patients, including Sherwood House. We have had feedback from patients that this has worked well. They will continue to do boosters, as well as a number of other sites such as pharmacies.

Has the practice taken on new staff to increase capacity and meet demand?

Yes we now have 2 phlebotomists and extra doctors.

New Staff – Salaried GP Dr. Bennett



I studied in Leicester before moving to Birmingham to complete my junior doctor training. After having worked at Sherwood House as a registrar I am excited to return in my salaried GP role. I look forward to meeting patients and hopefully some familiar faces. I will be taking over from Dr Lad and some of the roles he had within the practice.

In my spare time I love taking my dog Bodhi for walks in the countryside we're able to enjoy in the West Midlands

It's okay... to speak to someone
For urgent mental health support, 24/7.
Just call **0121 262 3555** or **0800 915 9292**.

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