

Dear Patients,

We have had lots of feedback on our current appointment system and, in response to this, have decided to make some changes to improve our service.

Primarily, we are hoping to improve access to a doctor and allow patients more choice as to where they will be seen. We are also hoping to streamline patient care so that you are seen by the correct person first time round. **This will start on Monday 6th January.**

Booking appointments

From the feedback we have received, it has become apparent that most people want to have their problem dealt with on the same day as they call us. We have therefore opened access to doctors on a daily basis. On the day you ring for an appointment, you will be called back by a doctor who will either manage your query on the phone by giving advice or providing a prescription, or they will arrange a face to face appointment at one of our surgeries that day. This appointment will be with the most appropriate health care professional who may be a Doctor, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Practice Nurse or Health Care Assistant.

This new way of working will mean that your problem is being dealt with more promptly, on the day you ring the surgery and the waiting time for an appointment will be greatly reduced. We do ask that you ring on a day that you could come down if needed as the new system means we cannot book appointments for a later date.

We understand that people can struggle to ring in the morning for an appointment so we are hoping to improve our online access. The telephone appointments will be released in the evening at 6:30pm for the following day. A doctor will then call you back during the day and can book you in for a face to face appointment for that day if you need to be seen. The Doctorlink system we currently use will still be available to give you advice and book appointments if needed. We also have slots that 111 can triage into, so please use these too.

Choice of surgery

Since the merging of our surgeries we have heard from many of you that you would prefer to have a choice of site to attend for appointments. The new service will mean this is now an option. There will be clinical staff at both Eaton Socon Health Centre and Cedar House Surgery as well Dumbelton. When ringing to book a telephone call you can request to be booked with a doctor at your choice of site, so if the doctor determines you need a face to face appointment it can be at your preferred surgery, assuming capacity allows.



Improving continuity of care

We are aware that in recent months it has been difficult to be followed up by the same doctor. If you are under the care of a particular doctor for your condition, our new triage service will allow you to request the doctor you have previously seen for a particular problem if they are working on that day. If they are not working that day, they can inform you of the days that particular doctor works, so if you would prefer to speak to them at a later date, you can. We will be publishing the days all doctors have surgeries on our website. We are hoping this will improve your continuity of care.

Phonelines

We are increasing the amount of 'on the day' appointments on a Monday and Friday, as these are our busiest days and we will be winding down our pre-bookable appointments over the next few weeks. Over the Christmas period, the doctors will all be staffing an urgent, same day service for acute illness. Then we will be starting our new, hopefully improved, model from Monday 6th January.

And finally...

This is a new system for all of us. It should significantly improve your ability to speak to a doctor on the day you need it and streamline patient care within the practice. We will continually review the process and make changes as needed.

Please be understanding that we have limited resources. If you are able to speak to a pharmacist, optician, dentist, 111, Doctorlink or 111 online to help manage your problem, please do so. They will direct you to us if they cannot help. This will help ensure that appointments are used appropriately.

Yours sincerely,
Lakeside @ St Neots Partners

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