Your Practice Charter

Dear Patient,

GPs and their practice teams provide the vast majority of NHS care outside of hospitals, supporting you and your family throughout your lives. In a perfect world, we want to be able to offer every patient:

Safety – prompt access to a GP or practice nurse you trust, with well-staffed surgeries and enough resource so that no patient feels left behind.

Stability – a family doctor who knows you, your medical history, and your community – without the stress and difficulty of finding it difficult to get an appointment.

Hope for the future – care that focuses on keeping you well, not just treating illness. We want more time for meaningful consultations, joined-up support closer to your home, from modern GP surgery premises with safe and effective technology to make this possible.

The government talks of "bringing back the family doctor" but what politicians promise is often not planned properly or funded fairly to be able to be delivered in reality.

We aim to respond to all appointment and advice requests promptly, prioritising those most in need. Sometimes we may need to offer you an appointment on another day or direct you to another suitable service.

For safety reasons, urgent medical requests cannot be accepted via our online system. For something urgent, pick up the phone or walk in to our reception.

The need to prioritise urgent cases to keep patients safe can result in longer waiting times for routine/non-urgent appointments.

The new requirement to allow patients unlimited online access for non- urgent medical requests, throughout core hours, makes it more likely that we will have no choice but to create hospital-style waiting lists to meet patient need.

We want to guide you through the NHS, co-ordinate your care, and support you to stay healthy. We want every patient to feel safe and confident in their GP practice – now and in the future.

GPs are on your side.

The Challenges Your Practice Faces

Rising demand, fewer GPs – GPs care for **17% more patients than in 2015**, but with fewer GPs. Funding has not kept pace, so many patients find it hard to see their GP quickly, leading to the stressful scramble to secure an appointment.

Practice closures – Around **2,000 practices have been lost since 2010**, that's one in four surgeries, leaving fewer local practices and longer waits or travel for patients.

Funding pressures – Practices receive just **31p per patient per day** to provide unlimited consultations with our doctors and nurses, making it hard to employ enough staff and sustain services.

Workforce challenges – More GPs are leaving the NHS than joining. While our staff work tirelessly, system pressures and patient frustration can affect everyone's morale and wellbeing. **We have unemployed GPs now – and practices lack funds to hire them.**

Unsafe workloads – Many GPs see far more than the accepted safe limit of patients per day, often working over 60 hours a week. **Recent government changes risk making this worse.**

Ageing buildings – One in five GP surgeries is now over 75 years old – older than the NHS itself which started in 1948. There is very little investment to provide modern facilities fit for today's needs.

Access versus continuity – Government policy means speed of an appointment comes before choice. This lack of continuity of care, means patients often don't get to see a familiar face who knows them well.

Demand management – We always aim to respond to all appointment and advice requests promptly, prioritising those most in need. Sometimes we may need to offer you an appointment on another day or direct you to another suitable service.

For safety reasons, urgent medical requests cannot always be accepted via our online system. For something urgent, pick up the telephone or walk in to our surgery.

The need to prioritise urgent cases to keep patients safe can result in longer waiting times for routine/non-urgent appointments.

The new requirement to allow patients unlimited online access for non-urgent requests, throughout core hours, makes it more likely that we will have no choice but to create hospital style waiting lists to meet demand.

We may unfortunately sometimes face challenges beyond our control:

– difficulties with accessing services at the local hospitals and long waiting lists
– workforce challenges – not enough GPs to look after you
– the need to provide our teams with compulsory NHS training and education
– unforeseen events
– NHS IT challenges with old and slow equipment
– lack of investment in practice buildings and development
– public health emergencies

– Our core contract hours are Monday – Friday, 8am– 630pm.
– Our consulting times are between these hours.
– Please note at certain times, e.g. lunch or the ends of the day, a clinician may not be present in the building (e.g. out on home visits).
– In any emergency, please dial 999 for an ambulance or attend the nearest
– Accident & Emergency department.

We believe patients deserve more

– At present, GPs and their teams are under huge pressure – caring for more people with fewer resources.
– Without proper investment, the safety, stability and continuity of care that patients value most are at risk.
– As your GP practice, we will always do what we can to deliver the best service possible for you and your family. With the right resources and support, we could expand our services, employ more staff, and deliver the safe, timely, and personalised care you deserve.
– Please remember that our current GP contract funds patient care on average at 31p per day per patient, which is not enough to meet rising demand and to provide the care you and your family deserve.

So please bear with us – and thank you for your support as we try our best for you and your family.

See NHS England's You and Your General Practice document here: *You and Your General Practice*