

Dear Patients

We are writing to update you on recent changes at the surgery that have been made in order to keep up with the 30% increase on demand in General Practice.

We will shortly be installing a new telephone system that will queue and call back patients. It will also advise when the day's appointments have all gone. It is hoped that this will help to relieve patient frustrations with our current telephone system. New cabling work has started and it is hoped to have this up and running by the end of July, although we are reliant on the supplier.

Within our Primary Care Network - PCN (where we work alongside Abottswood and Sheepcot Medical Centre) we have been increasing the number of appointments on offer by employing additional staff. This will free up appointments for GPs to see more acute problems. So far we have in place:

- A **paramedic** who will help with acute on the day minor illnesses
- A **clinical pharmacist** who will contact patients to discuss their medication and also help with long term conditions by carrying out asthma and diabetes reviews
- **Physiotherapists** (first contact physio - FCP) who will see musculoskeletal problems
- **Social Prescribers** who are helping to support our most vulnerable patients in the community

Our experienced reception team will book patients directly into these sessions which will help to reduce the pressure on GP appointments.

### **Advanced Appointments**

Due to the uncertainty of planning our work during the COVID-19 pandemic, we took the decision to reduce the number of appointments that could be booked in advanced. We do have a small number for some evenings and weekends however these do get booked up very quickly. We are continuing to keep this under review.

We would like to reassure all our patients that we are working extremely hard to provide an appropriate and safe service for our patients and thank you for your support.

Vine House Health Centre

May 2021